

Posted on Thu, Aug. 23, 2007

[email](#) [print](#) [reprint or license](#)[AIM](#) [del.icio.us](#) [Digg it](#)**CITY COUNCIL****Transit, crime split GOP candidates**VICTORIA CHERRIE
vcherrie@charlotteobserver.com

Six Republicans vying for at-large seats on the Charlotte City Council agree that crime, transportation and quality of life are the city's top issues. They differ on which is most important and how the city should handle them.

Voters will choose four of the six during the Sept. 11 primary. The winners will face four Democrats in the Nov. 6 general election.

The candidates outlined their views Wednesday at a debate at WTVI organized by the League of Women Voters. An example of how the candidates differ came during a question about whether they support the effort to repeal a half-cent sales tax that pays for buses and trains.

Four of the at-large candidates oppose the effort. Two support it.

Two candidates -- a finance officer and retired retail manager -- also are in the GOP primary for the District 7 City Council seat being vacated by Don Lochman. The winner faces Democrat Nicholas Heath in the general election.

A snapshot of the candidates, their priorities and their statements:

AT-LARGE

Chris Bakis

Welder, 46. Aims to reduce cut-through traffic, improve communication among neighborhoods. Supports effort to repeal transit tax. Says there is much wasteful spending on Charlotte City Council.

Best line: Where could more revenue be found? "All you have to do is cut out the fat ... and believe me, there is a lot of fat."

John Lassister

Incumbent council member/small-business owner, 52. Says he will continue to preserve city's quality of life. Will focus on creating a safe environment, dealing with congestion and creating jobs. Opposes repeal of transit tax.

Best line: "I approach my service on the City Council first as a businessman, second as a volunteer."

Geraldine "Jerry" Mudge

Mother/youth advocate, 65. Says the council needs to focus more on crime. Opposes light rail, supports repealing transit tax and wants ads on buses as alternative revenue stream.

Best line: "I want to give our children a voice on the City Council."

Edwin Peacock III

Insurance and investment marketing, 37. Opposes repeal of transit tax. Says comprehensive transportation system essential. Following father, Edwin Peacock Jr., who served on council and as mayor.

Best line: Other than property taxes, should other sources of revenue be sought in the city? "We've got to debate this thoroughly. Our growth is going to have to be met with other revenue sources."

Dan Ramirez

Mecklenburg County commissioner/GIS, surveying and mapping, 60. Says City Council must focus on crime problems, transportation and being fiscally responsible. Opposes repeal of transit tax.

Best line: "Our revenue stream must be restructured. People, I believe, don't mind paying for services if they are good services."

David Romero

Benefits consultant, 34. Opposes repeal of transit tax. Has zero tolerance for illegal immigration and says city needs to focus more on solving crime problems.

Best line: What are your qualifications? "As a taxpayer, as a property owner, I certainly feel I am qualified. ... I'm committed to serve as a workhorse, not a show horse."

DISTRICT 7

Dick Yoder

Retired retail manager, 74. Opposes repeal of the half-cent sales tax. Says the city needs more affordable housing for people on fixed incomes.

Best line: What major issues face your district? "I'm concerned about transportation. I can't imagine what it's going to be like in 10 years. It's going to be like one big parking lot."

Warren Cooksey

Finance officer, 37. Fighting for more roads, less crime and affordable taxes. Opposes repeal of half-cent sales tax.

Best line: "I'm focused, experienced. I know what city government is. I know its role."

City Council City Council