

Valencia Applewhite
Candidate for City Council - District 7
Home Builders Association of Fayetteville Inc.
Forum Questions

1. What do you think is the economic impact of the home building industry in our community?

The home building industry has a significant role in the planning and development of any city. As a Realtor, I am personally aware of the economic impact the homebuilding industry brings to our community. The August 2006, JUD & Associates report of Economic Impact of Residential Real Estate Development in Cumberland county reflects the significant impact on new job creation, personal income and extra tax revenue. The data contained in this report is relatively supported by U.S. Census Bureau data.

2. How do you see the home building industry fitting in as stakeholders in the decision making process?

Planning must be a collaborative effort between the local government, citizens, and all major stakeholders that have a vested interest in the development of our city. As representatives of the citizens of the city, the local government is accountable for evaluating information and making the final decisions that will affect its future growth.

3. Please explain how you favor PWC. In its current status PWC is able to operate and manage its resources effectively under the watch of the city council. In its charter the PWC is required to provide disclosure of its operations to the city council on a regular basis. Without significant cause, I don't believe there is a need to change PWC from its current status.

3b. Do you agree with taking money from PWC to support and fund the city budget? Yes, currently the PWC transfers 5% of its electric revenue to the city's general fund. I would further support this transfer by developing a formal funding agreement between the city and PWC.

4. Do you agree with the current proposed timeline and plan to provide services to the newly annexed areas? What are the priority services and how do you propose to pay for them?

No, I don't agree with the currently proposed time line of 12-16 years. Roughly 8,000 annexed homes do not have access to city sewage and have the financial burden of an estimated \$124 Million. The city did not have a plan to pay for it in 2005, and I certainly don't have a "fix-all" answer now. However, I believe we must continue to explore ways to lessen this unplanned burden and implement them sooner rather than later.

5. What is your position on joint planning with the city and county and metro

government? There are many issues to consider regarding the unification of city and county government. I don't believe it is something that one can take a position on without studying the impact and hearing the views of our citizens. I do believe that as stewards of tax dollars, we should consider any plan that could clearly bring about greater efficiency and improved services and accountability from our government. For those reasons, I am open to the idea of having a conversation about this issue. There are areas that I believe joint planning would be beneficial; specifically in the development of transportation.

6. Do you consider it acceptable, as a city standard, to install strip asphalt paving with no concrete curbing on unpaved streets in the city? If yes, explain why it is acceptable for the city to have one set of standards for the unpaved streets located in the city and a different set of standards for private industries? I honestly have not formed a clear cut position on this issue. I realize the impact that this issue has on the Home Building Industry. As a city council representative, I would look forward to studying this issue and discussing it with major stakeholders and subsequently, sharing my position with you.

7. What is your stand on the current county sales tax referendum?

I support the sales tax increase over a land transfer tax. I would like to see it tied to a two cent property tax reduction. A sales tax increase will provide additional revenue from visitors to our area's retail locations. A property tax reduction is estimated to save tax payers approximately \$3Million dollars. If combined with the \$8M surplus could result in about \$5M for project funding. Reducing property taxes may also help our community to attract people relocating here due to BRAC.

8. What is the city's role in preparing for BRAC recommendations that will affect our community? The city has done a commendable job in preparing for BRAC but there is still much to be done. The establishment of the Local and Regional BRAC Task Force and the involvement of the CCBC will provide a solid course of action as we prepare for BRAC. The city must be in the forefront of this preparation and fully engaged in the decision making process if we are to successfully leverage the opportunities BRAC will bring to our community.

9. What is your position on term limits for elected city officials? Would you favor maximum consecutive terms? When citizens are fully engaged in their local governments and exercise their right to vote - there is no need for term limits. The system will purge its self of ineffective leadership. However, a community must have citizens that are willing to commit to run for political office. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be true for Fayetteville. In the current municipal elections, there are several incumbents running unopposed. Voter apathy is apparent in our community - in this environment I'm not certain maximum consecutive terms would be beneficial.

10. What experience do you have that qualifies you to evaluate and establish the

city budget?

I have over 10 years of experience in researching, developing, and prioritizing budgets in the Air Force. My efforts were an integral part of major multi-million dollar Department of Defense budgets for Headquarters Air Force in the Pentagon and subordinate bases throughout the United States. The challenges associated with defense spending often required hard looks and serious justification and prioritization of programs and projects.

11. If elected what are your top two priorities during your term?

There are numerous issues that need attention in our city. I am concerned about the safety and security of our neighborhoods, sidewalks and road paving. Creating green space that will improve the quality of life for our families and help to make Fayetteville more attractive is also important. However, in terms of physical needs, I will make extending sewer lines to our recently annexed areas a priority. I plan to put the issues of economic development/BRAC and improving our transportation system at the top of my priority list. .

12. List your accomplishments in the non-political arena.

I am proud of my service to my country. I have 25 years of service in the Air Force; 20 years active duty and 5 years as a civilian employee in the Pentagon. My have an extensive background in Telecommunications, Communications Security, and Training. My extensive management experience and leadership ability led to my current position as the Local Census Office Manager for the U.S. Census Bureau. I am one of only two managers selected to test the processes and procedures that will be implemented across the country during the 2010 decennial census. I am also a licensed real estate broker in North Carolina. I hold an AAS in Telecommunications Technology and an AAS in Instructional Technology and Military Science.