

Thursday, November 8, 2007

City Council hopefuls appeal to student voters



CLINT LATHINGHOUSE - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Student Body President Tristyn Card and another student discuss the issues plaguing students and citizens of Asheville with City Council candidate Brownie Newman out on the Quad last Thursday. Council hopefuls gathered on the Quad to talk to students, who they said represent a very large voter base.

As City Council elections campaigns come to a close, candidates continue to appeal to student voters

By Caroline Fry
STAFF WRITER

The majority of Asheville City Council candidates visited UNC Asheville last Thursday, answering students' questions and addressing their concerns on the Quad.

"There are 3,500 students at UNC Asheville, and that is a significant number of voters," said Bryan Freeborn, a city council member running for re-election. "If they all registered to vote, it would make a huge difference; they could choose the direction of the city. If there's anything that we can do to get students to come out and vote, it's a good thing."

Along with Freeborn, the candidates in attendance were council member Brownie Newman, Bill Russell and Dwight Butner. Jan Davis and Elaine Lite were not present, although Lite had a booth set up. The Student Government Association sponsored the event.

"There is such a large gap between UNC Asheville and the city of Asheville that it is important for students to get more involved," said Emily Pomeranz, administrative assistant to SGA president. "These people are making decisions that affect our everyday lives, like development, water usage, and public transportation, and I think it's important for students to take a stand on these issues."

Bill Russell said the biggest issue in Asheville is a lack of jobs to keep recent high school and college graduates nearby.

"I'm working toward trying to keep students here in Asheville," Russell said. "We're losing our brightest students to other markets when they graduate because we don't have jobs here. One of my biggest issues is what the city is doing to help attract better, higher paying quality jobs now and decades in the future."

The way to keep students in the area is by providing affordable housing as well as high paying jobs to young people, according to Russell.

"Asheville needs to become a

portal to bring groups to work together, do some long term planning, and ask ourselves what we can do to attract employment to this area," Russell said. "I want my kids to have the opportunity 20 years from now to live, work and enjoy this area like I do."

Current council member Brownie Newman said the environment is the key issue he is focusing on for his re-election.

"I want to make Asheville the environmental sustainability capital of the Southeast, and I'm proud of the steps we've made in that direction already," Newman said.

These steps include the achievement of making Asheville one of four cities in the United States committed to making city buildings LEED certified, the nationally accepted benchmark for the construction and operation of green, environmentally friendly buildings, according to Newman.

Newman said if he is re-elected, he hopes to work with UNC Asheville administrators and students to make the campus greener.

"Young people have the most at stake for the future of our community," Newman said. "Students have done a lot of work on this, and I think the city and UNC Asheville could be strong partners in the future."

Dwight Butner, a UNC Asheville alumnus, said his main goal is to make sure Asheville citizens are able to support themselves financially.

"The number one reason why I'm running is because I want young people to be able to get a job, buy a house and build a life here," Butner said. "We have to put vehicles in place to help this happen, by bringing good jobs to the area, building our economy and attracting companies to the area that agree with the Asheville quality of life."

Younger people tend not to vote in municipal elections and candidates tend to neglect them, focusing their attention on older voters, according to Butner. He said this is unfortunate, because voting at the local level is critical.

"Young people are not fully addressed in the political process, which is a shame because I think they should be engaged especially at the local level," Butner said. "I personally think that this election has more impact on young people's lives than presidential or congressional elections. It is very important that they get involved."

Current council member Bryan Freeborn, a UNC Asheville alumnus, said because UNC Asheville students represent one of the largest voting blocks in the city of Asheville, it is extremely important for them to vote.

Freeborn said the main issue he is focusing on is the future of young people and families in Asheville. Some of his main objectives are to provide Asheville citizens with good jobs, ensuring UNC Asheville students get good internships and to give high school students the opportunity to have real jobs, according to Freeborn.

"When I decided to run for city council, I didn't think we had a council that represented the future interests of Asheville," Freeborn said. "The future of Asheville is the young families and young people who live here."

Matt Dinsmore, a junior psychology student, said he was disappointed by the small amount of students who came out to talk to the candidates.

"As far as I'm concerned, it's really unfortunate only five or 10 of us students for the past hour that I've been here have shown up and expressed interest," said Dinsmore. "But it doesn't discourage me to the point of not bothering to come out."

The election for Asheville City Council will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 6. All candidates expressed interest in as many students coming out to vote as possible.

"The Constitution of the United States says 'We, the people, in order to form a more perfect union,'" said Butner. "If people aren't going to vote, we can't unite. Get out and vote."

Police

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I think it's good," Sherard said. "They should actually have more because I see a lot of pointless driving that they do in the Suburban. Like last week I saw an officer drive from Vance Hall to Phillips Hall, which is like a 50-yard walk. If they're going to drive, they might as well have something electric."

The Green Fund donated the GEM car to help parking enforcement become more environmentally friendly, according to Lewis.

"One of the donor's requests was that it be used primarily for parking, due to the fact that the conventional, traditional vehicles sit idling so much while you're running in and out," Lewis said. "If you write 75 tickets per day and you start and stop that conventional vehicle that many times, it's not going to hold up either."

The Green Fund comes from student funds, and purchases like the GEM car is what they should be used for, according to Corey Scheip, junior environmental studies student.

"I have no quarrels with it," Scheip said. "I thought it was awesome. It's really cool that they are using that car instead of their Impala or whatever they usually use because it's going to use a whole lot less fuel, and it's quiet going around campus, which is really cool too."

It also saves money because of less maintenance and gas, according to Lewis.

"We get a set price per vehicle, and that price includes our fuel, maintenance, service, oil changes,

"If they are going to drive, they might as well have something electric."

KYLE SHERAD
Sophomore Art Student

tires and everything," Lewis said. "For our four vehicles it's roughly \$20,000 per year so the easy calculation would be \$5,000 per year that we're saving because we're not having to pay for an additional vehicle."

There is actually very little maintenance involved with the GEM car, other than charging the battery, according to Thompson.

"On a daily standpoint, there's no more maintenance to it than your cell phone," Thompson said. "You plug it in, walk off from it, come back and it's fully charged, unplug and you take off and start your shift."

But there are other less obvious advantages as well, according to Lewis.

"It generates conversation," Lewis said. "Sometimes so much of what we have to do is negative, whether it be parking tickets or other types of tickets or whatever, any time that you can have a tool or an item that generates positive conversation, I think it's a good thing for the police department to have."

The second new piece of equipment is a new radio system that allows campus police to talk directly to Asheville City Police

in case of emergency, according to Lewis.

"It's an 800-mega-hertz radio system that's interoperable with the Asheville Police Department," Lewis said. "Prior to the use of these radios, we had to call one dispatch, our dispatch called Asheville, and Asheville would call the officer in the field for us to be able to request assistance. And with these radios, we will be able to merely flip a button to another channel and talk directly officer-to-officer real time out in the field."

This will mainly be used in times of emergency when campus police cannot handle a situation by themselves, according to Lewis.

"We have limited resources," Lewis said. "We typically have two, three or four officers on at a time and a lot of situations warrant a response from more than two officers. This allows us to get on the radio and request assistance from them while it's happening rather than third or fourth hand information."

This will make students across campus feel safer in times of emergency, according to Scheip. "That was a great idea," Scheip said. "There is absolutely no reason that they shouldn't have had it before."

It is also important that campus police will be able to get help faster, according to Maldonado.

"The longer it takes to get help the worse a situation will be before it gets handled," Maldonado said.

NEED MONEY? RECENTLY DIAGNOSED?

We need you!

to donate blood for research,
if you have been diagnosed with:

Lyme Disease

Hepatitis A

Rubella

Lupus

Cytomegalovirus

Toxoplasmosis

Epstein-Barr Virus

Autoimmune Diseases

Ask about other conditions.

\$200 per donation*

Multiple donations per month are possible.

Please call today for information
888-806-5215 x2211

All calls strictly confidential.
Interpreter services available.



SeraCare Life Sciences, Inc.
Donor Recruitment Program

* Plus mileage reimbursement. Screening may be necessary to qualify.

Your campus news, just a mouse click away...

The **Blue Banner**
Online

www.unca.edu/banner