

Issues in the 2011 Greensboro elections

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STAFF WRITER AND GUEST WRITER

The 2011 Greensboro municipal elections are in full swing. The primary votes have been tallied, leaving a narrower playing field for both mayoral and city council candidates. Early voting begins Oct. 20 and lasts until Nov. 4, with Election Day on Nov. 11. This election has seen Greensboro voters making their voices heard on a myriad of controversial issues.

Recently, the possible reopening of White Street Landfill has been causing controversy in Greensboro. Candidates on the ballot for this year are largely in favor of a regional landfill as a long-term solution.

"A regional approach is the most responsible solution in the long term for Greensboro," said at-large candidate Chris Lawyer, according to Yes! Weekly. "We have to reduce waste with a more robust recycling effort as a part of the long-range plan."

Other candidates agree that recycling and waste-reduction is pivotal in managing our solid waste, according to Yes! Weekly. The solutions range from green technology to making sustainability a higher priority than a landfill.

"White Street Landfill was a very polarizing issue, and it showed the true colors of the council at large," said Wesley Morris, staff member of the Beloved Community Center. "Response

by people on the council either affirmed the dignity of the citizens or denied it, and in most cases the response by the council did not affirm the dignity of citizens: they either ignored them or responded offensively."

In a recent article analyzing the primary results, the News & Record noted that the mobilization against the re-opening of the landfill was a key factor in increasing voter turnout.

"There were some connections between (at-large candidates) Yvonne Johnson, Marikay Abuzuaiter, Wayne Abraham and (mayoral candidate) Robbie Perkins," said Rebecca Klase, political science professor at Greensboro College, according to the News & Record. "They were all out front during the landfill issue."

The possibility of reopening the White Street Landfill brought to light the potential racial division in Greensboro and how candidates will deal with the division.

"Yes, Greensboro is racially divided," said Assistant Professor of Political Science Maria Rosales. "I couldn't think of a city in the U.S. that is not racially divided."

Some residents believe that the racial division in Greensboro causes a lower retention rate of students and fewer economic and job opportunities.

"I think that it's very difficult for young professionals to stay and work in this city for a couple of reasons," said Morris. "One has to deal with

... lingering issues around race and economic disparities."

Economic opportunity in Greensboro is at least partially dependent on our elected officials, even in the current economic climate.

"The city council has a lot of influence concerning what jobs come to Greensboro," said Mitchell Brown, the chair of the Greensboro Collegiate Coalition. "They have a list of companies to offer business to. This directly affects what opportunities our city has."

Part of the city administration's role is to make the city a welcoming environment for both young professionals just out of college and businesses ready to hire those graduates. Some feel the council has failed to create such an environment due to economic restraints and the dynamics of the council itself.

"There is a lot of discord on the city council," said Brown. "When you're divided you can't govern people."

Students have the power to make a difference in this election. According to the Greensboro Board of Elections, only 35,152 citizens voted in 2009. There are nearly 50,000 students in Greensboro, according to Brown, which is more than enough to win the 2011 municipal election if they all voted.

For more information about the upcoming elections, see our candidate profiles online at www.guilfordian.com.



EXPLORING SEXUAL ASSAULT

Aftermath of sexual assault: part three of a three-part series

By Victor Lopez
STAFF WRITER

The aftermath of date rape, rape and sexual assault is a long journey for the victim. There is often internal mental scarring which remains for a lifetime.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, at least 70 percent of sexual assault victims know their attackers — compared to about half of all violent crime victims — which can lead to confusion as to what to do following a sexual assault.

Director of Student Counseling Services Gaither Terrell told The Guilfordian that early reactions typically include shock, fear, anger, anxiety, confusion, loss of trust in others, decreased self-esteem, detachment, disbelief, embarrassment, guilt, shame, grief, difficulty concentrating, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, flashbacks, panic attacks and somatic symptoms.

"Later responses might also include depression, anxiety, difficulty with sexual relationships, intense feelings of powerlessness, even suicidal thoughts or feelings, all while trying to appear normal to the outside world and often succeeding," said Terrell.

Terrell added that those reactions can last weeks or even months and that one third of sexual assault victims go on to develop rape-related post-traumatic stress disorder.

Associate Dean for Campus Life Tammy Alt told The Guilfordian that the college does not turn a blind eye to sexual assaults or victim services, the college wants to help.

"We want students to be educated not only about sexual assault but also about sexual health in general," said Alt. "We strive to make resources available to students so they know how to report and have a safe reporting system."

Guilford College relies on many community resources for those who are victims of sexual assault and rape, though according to Alt, the actual number of reported assaults at Guilford is extremely low.

The Counseling Center offers counseling for students who have experienced sexual assault. Also, most counties in North Carolina have a North Carolina Rape Crisis Center.

Guilford County offers two centers: Family Services of The Piedmont in Greensboro and Family Services of the Piedmont in High Point. These offer a 24-hour hotline (336-273-7273) for help immediately following an assault and later counseling, referral and victim advocacy.

Guilford County also has a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program through the emergency department at Cone Health System, which provides nurse practitioners specially trained in physical exams following sexual assault.

Besides counseling, reporting options extend outside of the Guilford community. The Greensboro Police Department has officers who are trained in how to handle cases of sexual assault and rape and can be contacted at 336-373-2222.

Moreover, according to the National Center for Victims of Crime, rape and sexual assault survivors who had the assistance of an advocate are significantly more likely to have police reports taken and are less likely to be treated negatively by police officers.

Terrell told The Guilfordian that it is important that sexual assault victims receive immediate physical and psychological help and support, whether or not they are planning to press charges related to the assault.

"Rape crisis workers, SANE nurses, and counselors are trained to allow victims the right to make their own decisions about whether or not they take legal action," said Terrell.

OCCUPY

Greensboro becomes part of national protests

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to what he calls "the underprivileged 99 percent."

"Most Americans are overprivileged when compared to most of the rest of the world," Clark wrote for News & Record. "And we don't even realize it. How can someone with two college degrees consider himself underprivileged when it's a privilege just to go to college? It shows how spoiled we've become when we can't appreciate the opportunities we've been given."

The Greensboro demonstrators, however, see it as an opportunity to generate positive change.

"There are a lot of unsuccessful movements based only around one issue," said Kat Siladi '09. "And this seems to be a gathering space for people to creatively solve issues that are all impacting each other."

The demonstrators discussed various subjects at the protest. Topics ranged from the polarization of the media to the notion of a participatory budget.

"For several months now, there has been a group of us that have been calling for Greensboro to participate in a participatory budgeting process," said Greensboro resident Alexandria Jones. "And essentially that means setting aside a small percentage of the (city's) budget for direct democracy."

Participatory budgeting would allow Greensboro residents to decide how to spend one percent of the city's estimated \$450 million budget, allocating \$4.5 million for community projects.

"We want to go toward a more democratic nation and construct the new world that we want," said Ed Whitfield, a member of the drum group Cakalak Thunder.

OG also attempted to reach out to President Barack Obama with letters of grievances and an open letter to the president. Part of the open letter reads as follows:

"As you might surmise, one of the most frequent

discussions we are having ... involves the First Amendment and how it states, rather categorically, that we the people, collectively and individually, may speak freely and peaceably assemble to petition our Government for redress of grievances ... So here we are, peaceably assembled, seeking to petition our Government for redress of grievances. Desiring to expedite this process, we thought it best to start at the top and invite you to visit with our Assembly and hear why the people gathered here are upset with our Government."

The protesters sent a delegate with the individual letters. Obama did not receive the letters, although he lodged at the Proximity Hotel that evening, according to Yes! Weekly. Some people see occurrences like these as evidence that the movement is largely ignored, and therefore doubt the movement's efficacy.

"It's not like I completely disagree with the protest," said junior Matt Willis. "I just don't know how effective it will be. People just aren't listening."

Others believe the demonstrations will develop productive agendas geared toward democratic processes in local governments.

"So I think it's just going to keep on going on, and then at some point, we'll start to push an agenda of some sort to help America get on the right track," said Greensboro resident Mark Sevigny. "To help take corporations out of politics, the money out of politics, and put the government back in the hands of 'we the people.'"

Such an agenda encompasses the many complexities of the financial system that has fueled the demonstrations that enveloped the country. OG will continue with the goal of maintaining a sustainable, democratic, and just Greensboro.

"Our challenge is to harness the energy from the fifteenth, from Wall Street, from this movement to make positive and sustainable change," said Alyzza-May Callahan '10.