

Coleman seeks to represent all of Edenton

Editor's note: The answers are directly from the candidate. Little to no editing for clarity or minor errors was done.

BY MILES LAYTON
Staff writer

Roger Coleman is running unopposed for the Edenton Town Council at-large seat. Active in civic affairs, Coleman is a retired minister (Christian Church—Disciples of Christ) and past director of the Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry. He is married to Elizabeth Cockrell Coleman. They attend St. Paul's Episcopal Church where Roger is a member of the church's vestry.

Question: Why are you running for Town Council?

Answer: I have received much in my life through kindness shown and love received. At the heart of my commitment to serving on the Town Council is a sense of gratitude and a desire to give back to our community. Having served as the former director of the Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry, I recognize that many residents feel their needs and concerns are not being heard. As an at-large councilman I will seek to represent all of

Edenton. Greater inclusiveness can only strengthen our town.

Q: What do you see as the biggest challenge facing Edenton today, future?

A: Our biggest challenge is reversing the population decline experienced over the past 10 years. This loss puts increasing pressure on small businesses, institutions, infrastructure and quality of life.

To do this, we will have to work harder to attract new residents by creating more "living wage" jobs, developing a welcoming "youth-friendly" culture and continuing to promote Edenton as a home for retirees.

As part of this effort, we need a way to welcome and support new residents when they arrive — a letter from the mayor, information on organizations, etc.

I also think we can do a better job of caring for the residents we have. We need to focus on vocational and technical training for high school graduates not going away to college and for maintenance-free and assisted living facilities for our elderly.

There is no silver bullet. I believe we have the

resources to reverse our declining population. The question is whether we have the will power to come together for the common good.

Q: Do you think there is a racial/economic/political divide in town? If so, how you plan to bridge that gap?

A: Living at N. Granville St. and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., I am daily reminded that Edenton is a racially and economically divided town. To help bridge the gap, I have proposed the creation of a Human Relations Commission that would address the separations and the lack of inclusiveness that weaken our community.

Studies show that towns with strong, inter-connecting relationships are more capable of resolving major issues such as population loss.

We can talk about the beauty of our town and the significance of its history. The real resource here, however, is in the relationships between its residents.

Divisions weaken. Togetherness strengthens.



COLEMAN

Strengthening our community will be my initial priority as a council member.

Q: Is there an issue the council could handle better?

A: In the recent

Grow Edenton Resident Survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-F68R8W8V/>) confusion was expressed about the role of the Town Council as well as a lack of confidence in the council's ability to effectively address Edenton's future.

As a result, I believe that the Council needs to do a better job of creating awareness of its leadership role in the community. The council needs to be more visible, support increased community awareness of key issues and invite greater citizen involvement in decision making. I believe this can be done through additional use of social media, more community forums and by holding regular Town Council meetings outside of the Council chambers.

Q: What is your position on what, if anything, the council should do about the Confederate

statue?

A: I would prefer not having the Confederate statue centrally located at the entrance to our waterfront. For some it is a monument to history. For many, including me, it is also a monument to the evils of slavery.

State law prohibits such statues from being moved. An alternative is to follow the example of Savannah and Richmond. Both cities are considering adding signs to their Confederate monument sites that acknowledge the racist history of the Confederacy. The specific wording could be developed by the proposed Human Relations Commission.

While my primary commitments are improving sub-standard housing, finding additional jobs, attracting new residents and creating a more involved community, I believe that as a town we can work together to find creative solutions to the issues that divide us.

Q: As demographic trends indicate a sluggish or even downward trend, please elaborate your vision/plans to attract more residents to Edenton.

A: Much of the social fabric of Edenton is built on

attracting retirees who can volunteer and help fund organizations like the Cupola House, the Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry and the Edenton Lion's Club. We will need to continue this focus.

We should also begin to take decisive steps that will make Edenton more appealing to a younger, tech-oriented population. This will involve developing high-speed internet access, more informal gathering places, increased shopping opportunities, additional recreational activities and affordable housing.

"Jobs, jobs, jobs," is what I hear. We cannot give up on attracting new businesses that will improve employment opportunities for existing residents as well as attract additional residents to our community.

Q: Since it appears that town/council supports keeping JAHHS at its present site, do you favor a new school or renovations/repair?

A: I support whatever structure is necessary to ensure the best possible education for our youth.

Ideally, I would like to

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Sambo Dixon 'believes in the future of Edenton'

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BY MILES LAYTON
Staff writer

Edenton Town Councilman Sambo Dixon is seeking re-election for the 2nd Ward seat that he has represented since 1997.

A local lawyer, Dixon was born in Edenton, attended school in Edenton and graduated from Virginia Episcopal School in Lynchburg, Virginia. He received a bachelor's of arts degree in political science from UNC Chapel Hill and a law degree from Wake Forest School of Law.

Dixon is a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Edenton, where he was formerly on the vestry. He was president of the First Judicial District Bar in 2001; he is a member of the Edenton Historical Commission, and was reappointed last week to the North Carolina Historical Commission.

Dixon was Edenton's Town Attorney from 1993 to 1997. Since 1997, he has been a member of Edenton's Town Council. Dixon

serves on numerous local, state and national boards including Main Street America — a group that visited Edenton earlier this year.

Dixon is an active member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He is among a group local notables who are spearheading the effort to restore Kadesh AME Zion Church.

Question: Why are you running for mayor/council?

Answer: I am running for town council because I believe in the future of Edenton. I am on the National Main Street Board of Trustees and the Board of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Both these positions provide me with access to national thought-leaders in small-town sustainability. I use what I learn from these leaders in the field of community development to help make Edenton vibrant and a place where people want to live and visit.

Q: What do you see as the biggest challenge facing Edenton today, future?

A: By far the biggest challenge facing Edenton is economic sustainability.

We must continue to attract employers who will hire the people that live in Edenton. One of the ways to create more jobs is to help our current employers grow.

Regulator, Colony Tire, Jimbo's and Daedalus Yachts have all taken advantage of grants and have agreed to add nearly 200 new jobs. I also support the continued funding of the Edenton-Chowan Partnership which recruits new businesses to the town.

Q: Do you think there is a racial/economic/political divide in town — please, somewhat briefly, elaborate? If so, how do you plan to bridge any gap?

A: Edenton is "our town." I think a diverse town is a strong town. While we are all different I believe that the town government should first and foremost provide all services to everyone equally. I have worked tirelessly to make sure that everyone feels that they are a respected member of this community.

Job recruitment, safe streets, electric, sewer and



DIXON

water and a thriving downtown are issues that are important to everyone. I have worked hard to promote public parks and spaces where we can all gather. The waterfront and the new playground

are important public spaces and are being enjoyed by all our residents on a regular basis. I have worked hard to make sure that places that are so important to African-American history and culture are protected and celebrated. I have continually promoted the restoration of Kadesh Church and the East Gale Street neighborhood, the creation of the Moseley Street and North Oakum Street redevelopment zones, and the construction of the new police station at its new location.

Q: Is there an issue council could handle better?

A: There is always room for improvement. The trihalomethanes level in the water caught the town leadership by surprise. Fixing the problem took longer than expected from engineering to imple-

mentation. I wish the process could have been completed sooner. The good news is that both of our treatment facilities are going to be up and running very soon and all the water-quality issues should be eliminated by the end of this year.

Q: What is your position on what, if anything, council should do about the Confederate statue?

A: North Carolina General Statute section 100-2.1 was codified into law in 2015. This law prohibits towns and counties from removing "objects of remembrance." Under this law the town of Edenton is prohibited from removing the Confederate statue at the end of Broad Street.

However, this law does not prohibit the town from adding context to the area around the monument. Contextualization to the area around the monument should truthfully recite the story of the struggle that enslaved people endured as well as a narrative of the process of emancipation.

I also support erecting a monument in a very prominent location to the many African-American leaders

who have contributed so much to Edenton.

Q: As demographic trends indicate a sluggish or even downward trend, please elaborate your vision/plans to attract more residents to Edenton?

A: We are very fortunate to have Win Dale, Nancy Nicholls and Jennifer Harris all working diligently to help attract more individuals to Edenton. Our vibrant downtown is one of the most cited reasons that people move to Edenton. Making sure that the downtown remains vibrant and economically sustainable is important. I am hopeful that we can in the future improve the plantings and streetscape on Broad Street.

We need to also continue to increase the opportunities for water-based recreation that attract visitors to our waterfront. Projects like the restoration of the Taylor Theater draw visitors from nearby communities who eat dinner in local restaurants and then go watch a movie.

When people visit Edenton they are always potential residents and they tell

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Stallings wants to continue council's good work

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BY MILES LAYTON
Staff writer

Longtime town councilman Jimmy Stallings is a candidate for mayor.

Stallings represents the town's 1st Ward, which includes most of the neighborhoods from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue down to Edenton Bay and some of the downtown area, west of South Broad Street. He has served 19 years as a town councilman.

Stallings retired as agency manager of Chowan County's Farm Bureau Insurance Office after 43 years. He is a Food Pantry volunteer and serves on a number of boards such as the Edenton-Chowan Partnership and Edenton Housing Authority.

Question: Why are you running for mayor?

Answer: My time on the Council has been both

productive and busy. We have voted through an annual budget that has kept taxes low while still providing the services our citizens have come to expect. We have welcomed new businesses and rejoiced with others on growth and expansion.

During my tenure we improved our harbor by adding the breakwater and pier and enhanced the public playgrounds throughout our community. I want to continue the good work that our current council has started. I love Edenton and it is my desire to do all I can to lead this town in a productive manner into the future.

Q: What do you see as the biggest challenge facing Edenton today and into the future?

A: Growing our population and tax base thru the creation of new jobs is a big challenge. Providing a community where all families, but particularly young families, can work, live and play. We have two main draws going for us... our location on the water and the friendly people. Fig-

uring out how to adequately play on these things to bring in young families is the key to our future. We are already hands down the most pleasant place to live; but, learning how to become more economically prosperous will be my goal. People want to live in a town on the rise, with growth and prosperity for their future. While continuing to nurture Edenton's past, it is time we also move Edenton forward together.

Q: Do you think there is a racial/economic/political divide in town?

A: I do not believe we have a divide; however, if there are areas that need attention, we can make improvements through open communication. We must be more tolerant of people that look and see things differently from us. As your Mayor, I will always have an open door and an open mind to hear from all citizens of Edenton.

I want to make life



STALLINGS

better for all citizens. I also pledge to work with Law Enforcement and the Boys and Girls Club to find ways to inspire our youth to become good citizens and to provide meaningful ways to fill their time away from school.

Q: Is there an issue that council could handle better?

A: There are always improvements that can be made in any town. We need to continue our program of the Oakum Street and Mosley Street rehabilitation where we are purchasing deteriorating properties and selling them to people who have the means and vision to rehab and update them. We must continue to prioritize, repair streets and infrastructure, and seek ways to offer affordable housing.

Q: What is your position on what, if anything, council should do about the Confederate statue?

State law prohibits our

removal of this statue. Arguing over it does not move Edenton forward; but, rather backwards to a time of violence and turbulence. Let's choose to move forward together as one.

Q: As demographic trends indicate a sluggish or even downward trend, please elaborate

your visions/plans to attract more residents to Edenton?

A: I understand how vital economic development is to our town and I will embrace new ideas that will help grow our existing business and industry while recruiting new

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