

MARK KLEINSCHMIDT | Chapel Hill Town Council

BY JAKE POTTER
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

Mark Kleinschmidt is no stranger to the spotlight.

A Chapel Hill Town Council incumbent running for re-election, Kleinschmidt — one of five openly gay elected officials in state history — made headlines earlier this year thanks to his efforts to reach out to the area's gay and lesbian communities by asking the town to oppose the Defense of Marriage Act.

Kleinschmidt's stance on gay rights recently won him the endorsement of Equality N.C.

"Mark has been a stellar leader in the community," said Equality N.C. Executive Program Director Ian Palmquist. "We expect that he will continue to lead ... and con-

tinue to be vocal."

But Kleinschmidt is about more than sexual orientation.

Students for a Progressive Chapel Hill and the N.C. Police Benevolent Association also have tipped their hats to Kleinschmidt, citing his progressive views on a variety of issues.

At 35, Kleinschmidt is staying busy — he splits time between the council and the Center for Death Penalty Litigation in Durham, where he works as a nonprofit attorney and sits on the board of

directors for the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Kleinschmidt's main campaign points focus on two of the area's most-heated debates — affordable housing and town-gown relations.

The incumbent is in favor of simplifying the affordable housing process. Kleinschmidt said the council's approval of a reworded clause in the affordable housing section of the town's 2000 Comprehensive Plan is a step in the right direction.

But keeping open discussions between affordable housing proponents and developers subject to the town's affordable housing regulations also is crucial to moving the initiative forward, he said.

"You can't be successful with new regulations unless the devel-

opers are active in discussion," he said.

Kleinschmidt said collaboration between town and University representatives on growth projects such as Carolina North, UNC's proposed satellite campus, and downtown development might be a door to a closer relationship.

"The relationship has improved a great deal over the past couple of years because everyone realized the players' roles," he said.

That said, Kleinschmidt said there still is work to be done.

"(Several years ago) we clearly didn't have an understanding of each other's roles ... but hopefully many people are recognizing that a critically assessed plan isn't a statement of contempt," he said.



WILL RAYMOND | Chapel Hill Town Council

BY TED STRONG
CITY EDITOR

Will Raymond just looks like a technology type of a guy.

From his bright red and blue Chuck Taylor shoes to his bushy black beard, ponytail and round glasses, he projects the image of an experienced traveler on the information superhighway.

But Raymond says that Chapel Hill voters will judge him on his platform, not his facial hair.

"The people of Chapel Hill, I think, will decide this race on policy and not appearance, and that's one of the great things about living in Chapel Hill," he said.

But technology, while clearly not the only plank in Raymond's platform, definitely has been a

major issue for him in this year's Town Council race.

Raymond, who serves on the town's technology board, is highly knowledgeable, said Gregg Gerdau, the board's chairman.

"Where he's strong, he's an expert, and where he doesn't know, he's able to figure out very quickly and understand," he added.

Raymond wants to ensure that Chapel Hill's economy develops, including the growth of businesses that pay what Raymond called a Chapel Hill living wage — enough

to raise a family in Chapel Hill.

One way to encourage that type of business, he said, is amenities, including water fountains, bathrooms downtown and municipal networking, whereby the town provides high-speed Internet access as a sort of public utility.

The plan could integrate fiber optic cables, WiFi and WiMAX — a technology that provides high-speed wireless Internet for distances of eight miles to 30 miles.

Raymond also wants to apply his background as a technological entrepreneur to the town's day-to-day processes, working to increase cost efficiency in town processes.

"I'm very good at ... (creating) a very efficient organization using technology and a very cost-effec-

tive organization," he said.

Raymond also wants to change policy in another area: Carolina North. The project, a proposed University satellite campus, calls for a massive construction with 17,000 parking spots.

Raymond understands that the project never will be vehicle free but said that the University needs to use that goal and similar goals for air, noise and light pollution as starting points, rather than specifications on the table.

"I don't think that the development that they have on the table is worthy of a fantastic research university," Raymond said.

He added, "I think that UNC itself would not be happy with it if they actually built it."



BILL THORPE | Chapel Hill Town Council

BY JAKE POTTER
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

Bill Thorpe makes no bones about it — he's still running the "man of the people" campaign he did a few decades ago.

"It is a new day, but I've always been in tune with Chapel Hill," said Thorpe.

Thorpe served two terms for the council, between 1977 and 1981 and again between 1983 and 1987. He was mayor pro tem his last two years in office.

He said he is again vying for a seat because of his passion for the town. "I care about the town," he said. "You mature and you learn as everyone else does over time."

That doesn't mean he's changing his political leanings, however.

"People know Bill Thorpe in terms of what I've done," he said. "I'm not someone that's just coming in."

Originally hailing from Oxford, Thorpe has resided in Chapel Hill with wife, Jean, since 1970.

His establishment in the local political arena is reflected in the funds he's

received from current council members Edith Wiggins and Dorothy Verkerk, former council member Joe Herzenberg and Carrboro Alderman Joal Hall Broun.

Herzenberg, who served with Thorpe during the 1970s, said he

admires Thorpe's return to politics. "He's been active in local politics longer than anyone else running or currently holding office," he said.

If Thorpe wins a seat, he will be the only black voice on the council — Wiggins, the current mayor pro tem, is leaving her post this November.

"He did a good job representing the black community back then," Herzenberg said.

Thorpe made national history in 1984 when he initiated a successful movement to get the town to recognize Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a paid holiday for town employees — making Chapel Hill the first U.S. municipality ever to do so.

Thorpe has made neighborhood protection, an issue he also focused on in his prior council terms, a

focal point in this election. He is supportive of the neighborhood conservation districts four historic subdivisions applied for this year.

Thorpe also wants to further incorporate affordable housing into developments and begin student internships at Town Hall.

Thorpe also has called for the council to become more visible in discussion on the Carolina North, a UNC's proposed satellite campus.

Now retired, Thorpe is a former director of apprenticeship and training for the N.C. Department of Labor and once was an analyst for the Office of State Personnel.

Thorpe said he's happy to be active again in town politics.

"I'm just fortunate that I'm still able to do this."



Nice to meet you

Age: 35

Job: attorney for the Center of Death Penalty Litigation

Favorite movie:

Brazil, Lord of the Rings trilogy

Inspired by what album:

10,000 Maniacs, Our Time in Eden

Political figure he would

like to meet and why:

Harvey Milk, former member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, one of the first openly-gay elected officials

Nice to meet you

Age: 43

Job: a software developer for TibcoExtensibility

Favorite movie:

Lillies of the Field

Inspired by what album:

Billy Bragg, early Clash, Liz Phair

Political figure he would

like to meet and why:

Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of Burmese martyr and general Aung San, because of her ability to persevere in spite of incredible resistance

Nice to meet you

Age: 64

Job: retired political consultant

Favorite movie:

Ray

Inspired by what album:

albums by Luther Vandross

Political figure he would like to meet and why:

Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., because he'd like to learn about her past experience being First Lady of the United States and her leadership in the U.S. Senate