

Candidates focus on Walkertown's future growth

By Melissa Hall

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WALKERTOWN

The way that Walkertown grows is the important issue to the candidates for town council. Six candidates are running for four seats.

Mayor Doc Davis is running unopposed. Council members who are elected Nov. 6 will hire a town manager to replace Ronald Bell, who resigned June 28.

Jeff Larrimore is running for his first public office. He said that roads and recreation are his main priorities, and that he would develop a long-range plan for recreation.

Larrimore said that the council has approved several housing developments and a lot of families with children would be moving into the area in the next three to five years.

He served on the committee that was appointed to decide what to do with the \$100,000 that Spencer Waggoner left the town in his will to use for recreation. The town declined to follow the committee's recommendations and has not made a decision yet.

For town manager, the town should hire someone who is experienced, said Larrimore, who is the controller at Summer Industries.

Council Member Wayne Hester, the mayor pro tem, is running for a second term. He said that controlled growth is his top priority.

Hester said he would like to work with such agencies as the N.C. Department of Transportation to make sure that roads can handle the town's growth.

"We don't want another Stratford Road," he said.

Hester also said that the town should hire a stable and aggressive manager with experience in writing grant applications, and who knows code enforcement and zoning.

Council Member Brenda Mabe is running for a second consecutive term. She served on the council from 1993 to 1997.

She said she wants to protect Walkertown's small-town feel and values. The town has started some projects that she would like to finish, such as building a central park or town square.

Mabe said she would like to see the town open a museum.

She said she is not sure that the town needs a full-time manager. Council members are having a work session in November to discuss the position.

Marilyn Martin is running for her first public office. She is a former co-chairwoman of the Walkertown Planning Board's comprehensive land-use committee.

"We're growing fast and we have to be careful," she said.

Council members should think about how their decisions affect the town, Martin said. She wants to work toward closing up the "doughnut holes" within the town limits. She said that the town should hire a manager who has experience getting grants.

Randy Mendenhall is running for his first public office. His primary concern is improving the roads in Walkertown.

"It's congested all day," he said.

Mendenhall said he wants to use common sense to make decisions for the town.

He wants a town manager who has experience working with the DOT and can work with the council, he said. He is a lifelong resident of Walkertown and runs Mendenhall Pest Control.

Council Member Sarah Welch is running for her third term. Her priorities are law enforcement, and recreation for youth and senior citizens.

"We really don't have anything," she said about recreation.

Welch said she was pleased that the town recently approved opening a satellite office on Main Street for the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office to use. She said she would like to see the town get a new building for town offices.

Welch said she would like to see town officials use the Waggoner money, but that Waggoner's will did not stipulate that there was a time limit.

Council Member Ralph Landreth is not running for re-election.

Walkertown is changing to four-year staggered terms this year. The top two vote-getters will serve four-year terms and the other two will serve two year terms.

The mayor will serve a four-year term.

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