

2020 Candidate Survey

Candidate Name: Steve Morris

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Please reply briefly & legibly in the space below.

1. Will you accept Political Action Committee contributions? YES

I was elected to the Cabarrus County Commission in 2012 and re-elected in 2016. I have served as Chairman of the Board for 5 years. I am running for re-election to continue the positive momentum we have created.

2. Please provide your background and why you're running for office.

I have served on the Board of Directors for the Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce and I am a past Chair of the Board. I am a charter member, past president and Paul Harris Fellow of the Cabarrus Rotary Club. I serve on the Board of Directors of the Academic Learning Center, the Cabarrus Partnership for Children, the Cannon Memorial YMCA, the Cabarrus Board of Health and I serve on the Board of Trustees for Rowan-Cabarrus Community College. My previous community involvement includes board leadership for the American Red Cross - Cabarrus County Chapter, Cabarrus Advisory Board, Friends of the Kannapolis Library, Kannapolis Chamber of Commerce, Cabarrus Economic Development Corporation, and the Kannapolis Kiwanis Club. I have also served as a board member for the Barber-Scotia College Board of Visitors, Cabarrus Library System, Cabarrus Economic Development Corporation, Piedmont Preservation Foundation, Residents of Historic Concord, and the United Way of Central Carolinas.

3. What are the top three challenges your community is facing? If elected, how would you address those challenges?

1- Our greatest challenge is handling the rapid growth that we are fortunate to be experiencing in Cabarrus County.

The most effective way to meet the requirements of keeping up with transportation needs, school construction, maintenance needs and retaining quality teachers is aggressive recruitment of commercial and industrial investment to balance residential growth. A diversified tax base will keep our tax rates reasonable and competitive.

2- Mental Health and substance use issues plague Cabarrus County like most counties in North Carolina.

I have lead the establishment of a Mental Health Task with all parties at the table to identify mental health needs and increase the availability of services. Our "Stepping Up" initiative in our jail is reducing recidivism. Our community paramedics program is reducing hospital re-admissions and emergency room visits.

3- Increasing Recreational and Cultural opportunities in a time that demands so many of our resources in other areas.

We must continue to do an effective job of enhancing our parks and recreational activities in order to attract quality companies that bring jobs and investment.

4. Give an example of how the city could play an active role in economic development and land use/smart growth, including job creation and work site development.

The top opportunity in Cabarrus County is the smart development of The Grounds at Concord (former Philip Morris site). We have to continue to collaborate with the City of Concord, the State of North Carolina and the property owners to maximize the industrial tax base and job opportunities that will result from the smart development of this property. I have personally traveled to China and other states in recent months to demonstrate our willingness to provide competitive incentives, job training resources and necessary infrastructure. The collaboration of the county with all municipalities creates the environment that demonstrates that we are a community that will be attractive to companies and their employees. We have participated in creating a TIF district in the City of Kannapolis to fund redevelopment of their downtown and the new Sports Entertainment Venue. We have participated in the development of the Farmington project in Harrisburg. The county has constructed a parking deck in downtown Concord in cooperation with the city that will serve our new courthouse as well as providing parking for new multi family residential, existing and future retail and enhanced dining and entertainment opportunities. The demonstration of stable governmental bodies at both the elected and staff levels is one of our most valuable selling points. These relationships do not happen by accident but require strong leadership and the willingness to communicate and cooperate. These are just a few examples of what it takes to create the "total" package that makes us attractive to industry.

5. What plans or policies should be in place to grow affordable housing at all levels of income? Are there any plans or policies in place that you would change or remove? If so, why? Please give a brief explanation.

We have to explore all options to assist developers to be able to profitably offer affordable housing. This may consist of more inviting regulations in regards to land planning and construction options, availability of incentives, governmental grants including local, state and federal programs. As an example Cabarrus County has committed our HOME grant funding to go towards an affordable housing for seniors program in Kannapolis over the past few years and this year towards affordable housing units included in a multi family development in downtown Concord. I would be in favor of examining our density requirements for residences, cluster developments, accessory structures or any other requirements that might impede innovative "out of the box" ideas or plans. We have to have the flexibility to try new approaches whether it might be clusters with common space shared by multiple units, tiny houses or other innovative approaches that do not fit our current regulations.