



## **2006 Charlottesville City Council Candidate Forum #1 March 28, 2006**

On March 28, 2006, the 10th & Page Neighborhood Association held the **first candidate forum for the May 2nd City Council Elections**. The forum was moderated by Association President Gate Pratt and recorded by Charlottesville Tomorrow at the Region Ten Offices on Preston Avenue in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Participants included all three candidates for the two available seats on Charlottesville City Council: Dave Norris (D); Rob Schilling (R); and Julian Taliaferro (D).

*The audio is available online on the Charlottesville Tomorrow Weblog*  
[http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville\\_tomorrow\\_/2006/03/city\\_council\\_ca\\_1.html](http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville_tomorrow_/2006/03/city_council_ca_1.html)

*Complete election coverage is available on the Charlottesville Tomorrow website*  
<http://action.cvilletomorrow.org/cvilleaction/elections.html>

### **INTRODUCTION**

**Gate Pratt:** [I'd like to welcome the] candidates here to speak in advance of their election and they were kind enough to respond and we have all of them here tonight in addition to the School Board candidates so for the next hour or hour and a half we'll hear some presentations and take questions of the candidates, so I'm going to ask Dave Norris, Rob Schilling and Julian Taliaferro to come up and introduce themselves. It was suggested that people write down questions and give them to me to read, but I think we're a small enough group, maybe we can be a little more informal and we'll just take questions to the candidates and let them respond.

What I'll do, I'll ask them each to give a two- or three-minute presentation and introduce themselves and any issues or topics that they think are important with regards to the upcoming elections and to our neighborhood in general and the City in general and then I'll let the audience ask questions and each of the candidates will have an opportunity to respond if they would like to. I've got about a half an hour down for this forum and if that works, then we'll do that. If we need a little more time, we can do that, too. And then after that we'll start the School Board candidates' forum, so why don't we start with Dave. Do you want to just give an introduction?

## OPENING STATEMENTS

**David Norris:** Great. Thank you, Gate. Good evening. It's great to be with you all tonight and I'm Dave Norris and I am running for City Council here in Charlottesville. I'm very pleased to be with you tonight because I've actually spent a lot of time in your neighborhood over the years. I used to work over at Westhaven. Like Ms. Brown, I've done a lot of outreach work on Hardy Drive. My daughter went to day care here in the neighbor, at Ms. Sarah's Childcare Villa. I currently have an office over in the Legal Aid building so I feel comfortable being here and I know well that over the years a lot of people in this neighborhood felt like this neighborhood was neglected and left behind and so it's very heartening for me to see all the positive things that are happening in this neighborhood and that's really to the credit of all of you in this room that have worked together to make that happen.

I am running for City Council here in Charlottesville because I am concerned for the future of our community. I believe we have a lot of good things going for us here in Charlottesville. We have an excellent school system. My concern though is that there are too many children that are not being well served by the schools. We have a booming real estate market here in our region, but again, I'm concerned that there're too many people that can't afford to buy or rent a home here in our area. We have wonderful vision statements about how we want to treat the environment and be kinder to the environment and yet we really I think fall short sometimes in doing that and I'm particularly concerned about the fact that we are rapidly becoming a community of the haves and the have nots and in too many ways we've made life difficult for the working class and the middle class and in many ways and for many reasons they're being driven out of our community and we're not doing enough to lift the people out of poverty, the 25% of our neighbors that are living in poverty, we're not giving them the opportunities and helping them to help themselves and work their way out of poverty

So, for all these reasons I decided to throw my hat into the ring. I am excited to be running for Council and offering my vision for the community. I've been actively involved, as I indicated earlier, in the community in many ways over the years and most recently I've been working with the coalition of churches here in our community through an organization called PACEM to provide wintertime shelter to the homeless, so I know the community well. I believe I have a proven track record of getting positive things done for the community. I'm looking forward to bringing that experience and my energy and my vision to City Council. I think you all again for having me here tonight.

**Julian Taliaferro:** Good evening to everyone. It's nice to be with you this evening and I appreciate the invitation to have a few minutes to speak with you. I'm running for City Council and my name is Julian Taliaferro and I've spent a lot of time in the neighborhoods myself. I spent 40-some years in the Fire

Department and I used to spend some time up in this neighborhood from time to time when we had some fires and I know some of the folks up here.

I guess one of the reasons that I really wanted to run for City Council is that I spent a lot of time in the local government. I have some ideas about maybe how we can do some things better. I, also, when people ask me if I wanted to run or encouraged me to run I guess I should say, one of the things I really thought about before I did it, could I make a difference and I think I can make a difference. I think I bring a lot to the table. Some of my concerns are, of course, the affordable housing issue and I think I know some of the concerns that you folks have in this neighborhood. I think as the Police Department pointed out a number of years ago, we had some real issues up here with crime and people were afraid and all those issues, and I think the neighborhood has improved a lot. I look at the 10<sup>th</sup> & Page neighborhood down here at the intersection, a big change.

Of course, I also realize that what's happened is the cost of housing has gone up dramatically along with property assessments which is causing people a lot of stress, I guess, for a lack of a better word, and I think somehow we need to find a better balance with that by creating maybe some loan programs to help people, low income people to buy homes in this area and I know a lot of people that I've talked to feel like in some respects they're being forced out of the area and I certainly don't want to see that happen and I know you all don't want to see that happen.

Beyond that, another concern I have, of course, is the public education system in the City. I think it's important that the Council supports the new School Board that's going to be elected. I think we need to support the new superintendent and I think we absolutely have to make sure the schools have the financial resources to make sure all of our children have an excellent education. Beyond that, I think when we talk about the cost of living in this area I think we have a real obligation to insure that the children in the school system gets a decent education whether they're college-bound or whether we can get them into some type of technical program because we need to make sure these children make a good living because they're going to need to make a good living and that is product of education and I think we've got to support that.

You know, the other issue is the financial stability of the City and I'm certainly concerned about that. Our City has a AAA bond rating and we want to maintain that. Beyond that, going back to the rise in assessments in the City, one of the things that when I'm elected to City Council I'm going to spend some time in Richmond at the General Assembly talking with our local legislators and I've done that over the years in the past, done some lobbying down there, but one of the situations we have to deal with is the fact that Charlottesville has what they call a high stress in terms of financial issues. At the same time, there's a group of cities—I think it's the First City or the First Virginia City, but if you look at those

cities, they all have financial issues in terms of providing education, providing services. Charlottesville is just about at the bottom of the list on what they receive in state aid and the formula is not really fair, so somehow or another we've got to go to Richmond and work with folks down there and try to get that situation corrected and hope that will lead us to being able to continue to reduce the property taxes in the City.

With that, I just hope I can count on you all to support me and I hope everyone will vote on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May. Thank you.

**Rob Schilling:** Friends and neighbors, good evening. It's my honor to be here with you tonight. For those of you who I've not had the pleasure to meet, I'm Rob Schilling. I'm currently a City Councilor who's seeking re-election. I'd like to thank the WCEH Neighborhood Association for hosting this community forum. I have enjoyed my visits here with you in the past and I'm happy to be here back with you tonight.

When I embarked on this journey four years ago, I promised you several things and among them I promised you that I would work hard to bring educational accountability to the people of Charlottesville through an elected School Board. In leading a bipartisan group of citizens who were dissatisfied and ill-served by the status quo, together we removed the power of appointment from the powerful few and gave you meaningful input regarding educational policy via an elected school board. I know that you join me in welcoming those who are running for office in Charlottesville's first-ever School Board election to be held here in May and you'll be hearing from them later on tonight, but I'm pleased that they're here and have that opportunity.

I promised you that I would work hard for fiscal responsibility in regard to City spending using the commonsense approach to management that I've gained from my business education and experience. I've made the promotion of affordable living top priority. Year after year, I have insisted that we as a Council spend your money responsibly and that we work to provide better services for less money rather than to provide fewer services for the higher taxes that we've seen recently.

And perhaps most importantly to many of you here in this room, I promise to listen to you with an open mind' for all residents, to be your voice and your ears, your advocate inside City Hall. Some of you here tonight I've had the pleasure and the opportunity of personally assisting in resolving issues that were important to you. Constituent service has been and will continue to be possibly the most meaningful component of my City Council service.

Much still remains to be done, though. Trouble in our schools persist. You've all read about it recently and while many of our young people are academically successful, still too many are not receiving the benefit of a world-class education

that has been promised to our children. We cannot continue to accept unbalanced returns on a \$13,000-annual investment in each City school student.

I'm contacted daily by citizens, many of them seniors and many on low and fixed incomes who are terrified by rising property assessments and the taxes that follow them. They are terrified that they will not be able to afford to stay in their homes or their rents will increase beyond their ability to pay. Council can and must do better to provide the responsible fiscal stewardship that helps to retain and attract a diverse community.

I'd just like to say that I look forward to the opportunity to continue on as your City Councilor. I've taken this job seriously and I have been respectful to each and every person that has approached me during my time as a City Councilor. I've enjoyed the honor to be here and I look forward to continuing to work on the problems that are facing this community and that will be continuing to face us in the years ahead and I think you for the opportunity to be here tonight.

## **QUESTIONS**

**Gate Pratt:** I'll open up the floor to questions and in fairness to all of the candidates, if the question is directed to one candidate, I'll give all the candidates an opportunity to answer and in the interest of making sure we all get home at a reasonable hour, if you could make your questions to the point and if the answers could be to the point, that would be nice for all of us. Would anybody like to start with the questions?

**Audience question:** I have two questions and so now that you're going...

**Gate Pratt:** That's fine.

**Audience question:** My questions originally were for the two Democratic candidates, the new candidates, because I've seen what Rob Schilling has done because he's a current Councilor, so what I wanted to know is what City, not in any other organizations, but what City committee, board or commission have the two of you been on in, say, the past five, eight years. I know being on City commissions and boards for some people is a stepping stone to Council and so I would like to know what boards, committees, commissions that you've been on.

**David Norris:** I guess my most high profile role was I was appointed by City Council to the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority about four or five years ago. This is the agency that oversees all public housing, Section 8 Voucher programming in the City of Charlottesville and after my first year of service, I was elected as Chair of that commission and one of the things that I'm most proud of in terms of my work as Chair of the Housing Authority was for the first time in about 20 years we got the Redevelopment and Housing Authority to agree to get back into the business of housing development because there's

such a great need for affordable housing here in our community and the Housing Authority owns vacant property and low-density under-utilized property and there are tremendous opportunities for infill development, housing development to meet the needs of low and moderate income residents of our community and we drafted a plan. It was adopted unanimously by the Commission and now we're moving forward on actually getting back into the business of housing development to meet the needs of our citizenry. I'm very proud of that and that's probably the one commission that certainly brought me the most visibility and that I feel proudest of in terms of my accomplishments.

**Julian Taliaferro:** Well, I can answer the question pretty quick. Being Fire Chief, I really wasn't involved on any boards or commissions in the City. I will tell you, since I've retired, that I've gotten active in the Charlottesville Community Scholarship Board. I also recently just joined the Charlottesville Volunteer Fire Company to try to help them out a little bit, but as Fire Chief I was really pretty busy and a lot of those boards I really couldn't participate in for various conflicts, etc.

**Gate Pratt:** Rob, did you have experience prior to City Council that you'd like to share?

**Rob Schilling:** I did not.

**Audience question:** I have one other question and then I'm done. This is only unfortunately directly to Mr. Taliaferro and I don't know if I can get through this without crying and the question is directed to him because this was a really bad experience I had with the Fire Department and I just want to be sure it's not carried over if he does get seated on City Council.

I used to be a nurse at the UVA Medical Center and I took the bus, the City bus, to work because I chose to do that for several reasons and on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street & Water— At that point it was a one-way street and this is in the early '90s and some people remember that and 2<sup>nd</sup> & Water where the Live Arts Building is now wasn't there and so that was like the main transfer point so I would get off one bus and get on another bus to the University. Well, one day a Fire Department, a big truck showed up and he parked right where the buses transfer and I went up to the driver and said could you please move your vehicle because this is where the buses come and you're like right there where the buses come and he said no and he just sort of blew me off and I was like really startled because I thought that was a really legitimate question and then after that, they started parking on the other side of street which was some improvement but traffic got congested because buses were going around and I missed buses because the fire engines were there, so finally I tried to get an appointment with you, sir, to talk to you and say can't we do anything about this situation because why are they— The men were going to ACAC, the firemen, they were on duty to go to ACAC. That wasn't my issue.

My issue was where they were parking and not a very good spot, so anyway, I tried for two whole months to get an appointment with you and finally I got the appointment and I showed up for the appointment and I was told that you were busy and you couldn't meet with me and somebody else met with me to try to answer the problem because this went on for a while and I was really upset because I had tried to get ahold of you for two months and there wasn't a fire going on. It wasn't anything like that. Well, to make a long story short, I went to City Council— This is in the early '90s and I said I have to make this a public issue. I told the Councilors and then after that the fire engines no longer parked there. They found another place to park and so I knew that somebody on Council said something to you or to your Department.

Now, I've heard you on the radio say in the last couple of weeks that you and your associate candidate are men who want to be responsive was the word you used and I also heard on the radio that you are men of compassion. What really worries me is you weren't there when I needed you back then. How can I believe that when I come to you about a curb problem or a tax budget problem or crime in the neighborhood or the schools that you're going to be responsive? Can you answer me?

**Julian Taliaferro:** Well, I find it a little hard to believe that you couldn't get ahold of me. I mean, in all honesty I mean people got ahold of me all the time. I'm pretty easy to find, I mean, honestly.

**Audience question:** I couldn't get an appointment with you.

**Julian Taliaferro:** I can't believe in two months you couldn't get ahold of me because I had people call me all the time when I was the Fire Chief.

**Audience question:** Well, sir, this has been on my mind for like 10 years.

**Julian Taliaferro:** Well, I understand.

**Audience question:** So, I'm not making it up.

**Julian Taliaferro:** Well, I'm not saying you're making it up, but I don't think I'm that hard to get ahold of.

**Audience question:** Well, you were then, sir, to me.

**Julian Taliaferro:** Well, my phone number is published in the book. It's on my business card and I'm sorry that happened, but we've had a Fire Department that really provides a high level of service and we're pretty responsive to people and I'm sorry we didn't get to you or something happened, but I can't believe that nobody could get ahold of me in two months.

**Audience question:** Well, it happened. Thank you.

**Gate Pratt:** John, you've had your hand up for a while and then I'll get to the others.

**Audience question:** Yes. This is to all of the candidates. Would the tax rate drop in Charlottesville if it became a town? And if so, would you gentlemen support reversion?

**Gate Pratt:** That's sort of two questions, John. You're asking if philosophically would there be support for reversion to a town and also if we were to revert, would the tax rate drop?

**Audience question:** Well, my first question relates to the tax rate. Sunday's paper had an article related to the housing and tax in the City of Charlottesville and the lower rate of tax in the County of Albemarle and my question is— And they don't have to bother with reversion at all. My question is would the tax rate drop if Charlottesville became a town?

**Gate Pratt:** I would assume that if Charlottesville were to revert to a town, that our tax rate would go closer to or equal to Albemarle County's.

**Rob Schilling:** I would be happy to address that, Mr. Gaines. Thank you. I have actually a friend who did a study in the mid '90s who wrote I think it was a dissertation for school on this whole topic of reversion and what the effects would be. It's almost certain that City taxes would go down and County taxes would go up somewhat to accommodate for the shift in expenses between the two jurisdictions so I think that's probably what would happen and I think, frankly, the reversion question may no longer be a question but a statement in a few years, because Charlottesville at its current rate of increases is essentially driving itself out of viability and we will no longer be able to have people here who are in the middle class because they can't pay their taxes and so we're going to have to answer that question sooner or later if we don't get our financial house in order, sooner rather than later.

**Gate Pratt:** Do either of two other candidates want to comment on reversion or taxes?

**Julian Taliaferro:** No, I think he's correct on that.

**Gate Pratt:** Does that answer your question, John?

**Audience question:** Sure.

**Gate Pratt:** Okay. I saw another question back there.

**Audience question:** My first question is to Mr. Schilling. You just stated that about the taxes and all, you were concerned about the elderly citizens being taxed out of their homes and all, and on the budget this year you don't support the relief for the elderly and the disabled, the relief part of the program. Why you don't support the tax relief program for the elderly and the disabled as far as...

**Rob Schilling:** It's not an accurate statement that I don't support the tax relief for the elderly and disabled.

**Audience question:** It's not?

**Rob Schilling:** No, it's not.

**Audience question:** Why is that?

**Rob Schilling:** Because I do.

**Audience question:** You do support it?

**Rob Schilling:** Oh, yeah. I do and I have.

**Audience question:** Okay. Well, you voted against the— I guess I want to say you voted not to support the budget and the budget has the relief for the elderly and the disabled in it and you voted against the budget.

**Rob Schilling:** I did vote against the budget every single year and I'm proud of it. I think this City has done a remarkably poor job of taking care of its citizens and of practicing fiscal responsibility and the fact that I voted against the budget doesn't mean that I did not favor every single item in the budget. It means that a majority of the budget I found unacceptable and I alone was willing to stand up and take a stand for this community that we're not doing a good enough job of managing people's money.

**Audience question:** So you do support the relief for the elderly?

**Rob Schilling:** Yes, indeed, thank you.

**Audience question:** And the disabled?

**Rob Schilling:** Yes.

**Audience question:** Okay. One more question. They were talking earlier about— The police were talking earlier about not having enough and it's probably has something to do with the— Well, I'll just say the police were saying

they didn't have enough policemen to do certain jobs here in this area. One of the jobs where they needed a certain policeman to keep track of some of the crimes that were going on in the area and you don't— I'm a fire fighter here in the City and, again, as far as the budget I guess, do you support the funding for public safety?

**Rob Schilling:** I've been a strong supporter of the Police Department on City Council and I'll stand by that record. I've been out with the Police on many occasions. I've ridden in the cars, ridden on the bikes, walked on foot through neighborhoods, been involved in times when the police were dealing with stabbings and shootings and I've been out there on the lines. I've been out with the cars and ridden along with them on several occasions during my Council tenure and would continue to do that except that I have a two-year-old in the house now. It's a little harder for me to get out these days, but that also doesn't mean that we don't have a responsibility in the City to prioritize our spending and we don't have that discussion on the City Council. It's very unfortunate, but I know that when we sit down to prioritize, the public safety and education are two things that would be near the top and I look forward to those discussions on Council in the next four years. Unfortunately in the past four years Council has been resistant to having any such conversations and, again, sooner or later, it's going to happen.

**Gate Pratt:** Would any of the other candidates like to comment on the budget, budget process, tax relief issues or the public safety?

**Dave Norris:** I'll just give other people a chance to...

**Audience question:** I've got one question. Well, first, I have one comment and I'm not from your neighborhood. I grew up here, though, and I really found it disturbing that some of you would say, well, this is better than 10 years ago. Really, the difference 10 years ago was there were more people that looked like me that were your grandchildren and your children and that's the only thing that's really changed and they grew up in pretty houses which are too expensive for us to afford, so I'm really kind of— That's really kind of slap in the face for people my age of my color. That's why too many of us aren't here.

**Gate Pratt:** Kenneth, I think what I was referring to—

**Audience question:** The other thing—

**Gate Pratt:** The drug dealing and the crime has gone down in the neighborhood.

**Audience question:** Well, we weren't all drug dealers and criminals.

**Gate Pratt:** That's what's gone away. That's good.

**Audience question:** Well, that's good, but I think it's sad when minorities move out the neighborhoods become better all of a sudden. I think that's sad. The City should've put more money instead of on Main Street and Downtown into our neighborhoods and I'd have stayed.

**Gate Pratt:** That's neither here nor there. That's a separate conversation.

**Audience question:** My question is straightforward. I've heard all you talk about responsibility, going down to Richmond, how much Charlottesville gets from the state. The fact of the matter is given Charlottesville's population, we are considered a rural area. We are also an area, given our population who has one of the largest City governments— [This is talking about] directors, associate directors and things like that. Before going down to State or looking for a way out, would we figure out solutions, would you guys be willing to figure out solutions right here in your own backyard, cutting expenditures that we do not need, cutting positions that we do not need, and if so, where would you start? And that's directed at all of you.

**Julian Taliaferro:** Well, the first place that I would start is with the general government expenditures because I mean I'll be the first to agree with you that general government expenditures are high. If you look at the averages around the state, our percentage of expenditures is way above the average, so yes, I would certainly want to take a look at that. I don't know whether that answers your question or not.

**David Norris:** I'm going to talk to your first point first because I think you raise a very important issue about gentrification in this community, in Charlottesville, and what we can do in terms of making sure that when we invest public dollars in a neighborhood revitalization initiative, that it primarily benefits the existing residents of that neighborhood and uplifts that neighborhood and targets existing residents of that neighborhood for jobs, for home ownership opportunities, for small business opportunities, and that any time we're looking, whether it's 10<sup>th</sup> & Page, Cherry Avenue, wherever it is in our community, we're not using revitalization as a way to displace to people. Just exactly your point. I agree with you point.

In terms of government expenditures, I agree with Chief Taliaferro. I think any time you look at an organization that may be a little top heavy, you've got to look at that central office. You've got to look at some of the upper management positions and where can we cut there. I'd rather cut there than to cut the front line positions and I'm very concerned in terms of the front line positions that we have teachers in our community that can't afford to live in our community because we're not paying them enough. I'm very concerned we have police officers that can't afford to live in our community because we're not paying them enough, so I don't want to cut the front line positions but I'm confident that we take a hard look. I know Council's already taken a hard look and continue to take

a hard look at what can be trimmed on the upper management level rather than on the front lines.

**Rob Schilling:** Thank you for the question, Mr. Jackson. I think that more people in this community need to be asking that question because we've able to get by for too long. I had a conversation about— Well, not long ago with the former mayor or somebody who was the mayor here in this community in the 1960s who told me that this City government with a population that was roughly equivalent today, with the school population that wasn't far off from today, ran on about 270 employees and now we have over 900 and there's a game being played in City Hall—at least some people have called it that—regarding how we're classifying employees and how many people are working for the City, but I think really it comes down to management and I think that we have gotten out of control. I don't think that we have a good handle on how our resources are being managed and where money is being spent.

I read a book right before I was elected to City Council and it was written by a Democrat who's the mayor of— I believe it was in Milwaukee. His name is John Norquist. It's called *The Wealth of Cities* and one of the things he talked about was how do you re-imagine city government to get it to be better and the first thing that he did was to make it more competitive and when I say that, what he did was all the things that were going on in the city, and let me take an example: one of the things that they spent an enormous amount of money on was photocopying in the city for all the various city departments. He said from now on what I'm going to do is I'm going to go over here and I'm going to give this private business who happens to be a minority-owned business in this community a chance to do the business and see if the city can compete. City departments can go there if they can get a better deal, if they can get a good deal, a better deal in the city, they can go back to the city and do the business here.

And what happened was a bunch of people started outsourcing because they were able to save money. It saved a tremendous amount of money for a city of that size and eventually the department within the city had to become more competitive and they did eventually and so that kind of balanced out. They did the same thing when they were servicing community vehicles. The police cars went over to a new shop that was opened up down the street by somebody who'd grown up in that community. Instead of going to city yard, he was able to do an oil change for \$30.00. The city yard was able to do the oil change for \$90.00. That was the cost out and so it's this sort of creative thinking that needs to be applied to City government but we will not do it if we just keep saying we're going to do things the same way that we always have.

I think that's, you know, it's ridiculous for us to think that we're operating at 90 or even 80% efficiency in the City and I think there's a lot more that we could do but it starts with taking an open-minded approach to how we've always done things and saying maybe that's not how we should continue. I think there's a lot of

opportunities for that, but it's going to take a confluence of City Council and the majority of Council to direct our City Manager and others to do that work and he has not been directed to do that and so I think that's where it starts.

**Gate Pratt:** More questions?

**Audience question:** I had a question for Dave Norris. One of the points that you brought up at the beginning that you were going stand for is to help people out of poverty and I was curious of what exactly you were proposing?

**David Norris:** Sure. I think there's a number of things that we need to do with regard to lifting people out of poverty. I've always said and many people have always said that the best anti-poverty program in the world is a job, but if you're working 40 hours a week and you're still not able to lift your family out of poverty, something is seriously wrong with this picture and so we've got to look at the level of wages that we're paying with the City, with the University, the schools, the entire community. We have to look at the wages. When somebody's only earning \$7.00 an hour, \$8.00 an hour, it's impossible for them to raise a family in this community with those kind of wages, so I'm a big supporter of the idea of a living wage. I wanted to see it expanded.

The other thing is job training. I don't think we're doing nearly enough, a good enough job in terms of workforce development in our community in training our residents for the kinds of jobs that are going to be able to lift them out of poverty. We have down there on Ridge-McIntire Road we have the One Stop Workforce Development Center. Now, one of my former jobs where I created a program to help public housing residents get connected to training and educational opportunities. I toured a lot of One Stops all over the country and this is basically the idea of a One Stop place where anybody can go that may be unemployed, under-employed, trying to better themselves and go and get assistance in finding a job, writing a resume, getting training, getting an education. Our One Stop— I don't mean— I hope nobody here works at the One Stop but it really pales in comparison to— And if we're really the world-class city that we claim to be, we need to have world-class facilities for helping people to improve themselves and lift themselves and their families out of poverty, so that's just a couple of things and I'd be happy to answer any other questions.

**Gate Pratt:** Do any of the other candidates want to comment on that point?

**Julian Taliaferro:** Yeah, I'll just— Basically, I certainly agree with what Dave said and I would certainly support the living wage. During my years as Fire Chief, I've been in a lot of homes in the City and I've seen people doing well and I've see a lot of people over the years that struggle to make it day to day and that has always concerned me and I can tell you that I will certainly work to try to work hard on the work force development issue because I think it's important. I think I mentioned that earlier, because children in our school system, we have the

children who are college-bound, we have the children that aren't and we've got to capture those children that aren't and ignite their imagination and get them doing some things and I think as Dave said, a good job is the way out of poverty and I certainly agree with that.

**Gate Pratt:** Rob, did you want to comment?

**Rob Schilling:** Well, I think we need to be very mindful that we don't want to give up on any child and I don't know that we want to identify any child as being not prepared to go to college, particularly at a young age. I do agree that vocational training is excellent. I've taken classes at CATEC. We need to promote that sort of thing, but we need to keep an open mind and an open attitude towards every child in our system and see where it is they'd like to be going.

**Audience question:** I have a question about privatizing. Mr. Schilling just said that the book that you read, the city went out and hired the minority for the job. Do you support privatizing and if you do, what would you do about the persons in the City as far as that was doing the job, how would you help those guys that probably would lose their job because of the private citizen?

**Rob Schilling:** Well, as it turns out in this particular book and I'd encourage you to read it because I think that there's a lot to be learned from it, that the people in the city ultimately if they were no longer needed in that particular position, there were other things for them to do or even better yet, they stopped working for the city and went over and went to work for that, whatever establishment that was, because he had more business than he could possibly handle. It wasn't that the work wasn't being doing anymore. It's that somebody was able to do it more efficiently and probably was able to provide even a better job and a better experience for an employee, so I think that's the thing we need to look at and I don't think that those jobs disappear. They just move from one place to another.

**Gate Pratt:** Is there any follow-up comment on that?

**Julian Taliaferro:** No.

**Gate Pratt:** We're going to take one or two more questions.

**Audience question:** This is a very quick question. One is how much does a Councilor get paid?

**Rob Schilling:** It's \$10,000 a year and the Mayor is \$12,000.

**Audience question:** And I would really like to— Everyone has brought up the issue of affordable housing. We all, I think, agree that this City is getting phenomenally out of control, but— And I don't think there's really enough time

here for everyone to really go into their plans or ideas about addressing that. Where could I find more information for each person?

**David Norris:** For me, I have a little green booklet in the back there that says “Vote for Dave” [<http://www.votefordave.org>] and I have a— Not to sound like a politician although I was reminded this evening I am politician now, but I have a 8-point plan in there for adjusting for affordable housing issue in our community. Rob’s done I think an effective job in raising the visibility of the impact, the negative impact that high property taxes have on making our city difficult to live in for low and moderate income families. I think there’s a lot more than just the taxes that make the housing unaffordable and so, for instance, young families just trying to buy their first home can’t find housing that they can even purchase. People that are working these six- and seven- and eight-dollar-an-hour jobs can’t find housing they can rent in our community. The waiting list for rental assistance are outrageous.

My very first— The very first thing that I will do if elected to City Council is I’m going to push for the creation of what I’m calling the Charlottesville Affordable Housing Investment Fund which is a dedicated source of revenue. This is a tool that over 350 communities all over the country have used to leverage additional sources of financing for the creation of affordable housing for low and moderate income residents of the community. It’s something—we don’t have to reinvent the wheel. It’s something that we need to be doing here. There’s lots of other proposals in my booklet but that’s where I would start.

**Gate Pratt:** Any other candidates want to comment?

**Julian Taliaferro:** You could to go to “Yes to Charlottesville” [<http://www.yestocharlottesville.org>] and there’s a link to my web page and I’m certainly supportive of some sort of program or plan to increase funds for the affordable housing issue.

**Rob Schilling:** Schillingforcouncil.com [<http://www.schillingforcouncil.com>] and I would also be happy to speak with you personally about it if you want to give me a call.

**Gate Pratt:** We’ll take one more question and then wrap up.

**Audience question:** Dave, that’s what’s been done through the [UMI or PMI?] Trust and it’s nationally recognized and something I put on my platform two years ago when I ran as an Independent for Council and it’s the same thing he’s recommended now. UMI Trust is well recommended and the same idea of what you do is you put money into a trust. You give it to the person who’s buying the house and when they sell the house, what they make out of the house they in turn pay back into that amount for the Trust. It’s quite a simple procedure. It was

done in San Francisco which is very expensive and New York is too, done in those areas. It will work. The UMI Trust...

**Gate Pratt:** Any concluding remarks? Would you like to wrap up?

## **CLOSING STATEMENTS**

**Rob Schilling:** I'll be happy to. I want to thank you again for this opportunity to join you tonight. The upcoming City Council election insures that two of the three of us before you tonight will be your next City Councilors. I know that I would enjoy serving with either of these men and I've worked with both of them in some capacity during my first term on Council. However, I bring several unique qualities, qualities that no other candidate here tonight possesses. I bring four years of City Council experience. More than just experience in any one area, I know how the entire system works and I know how to work within the system to help you resolve your day-to-day issues and the long-term issues that face the City.

I alone among the candidates and Councilors advocated for your right to elect your School Board members and you need my voice on the next Council in order to insure that future School Board elections provide a fair opportunity for representation for all members of our community. Everyone deserves a seat at the table. And I'm the only Councilor who has been and will continue working hard to make sure we have fair representation and fair opportunity in regard to our newly elected School Board.

For four years I've been only the voice on City Council who has reliably advocated for budget reform to stem the escalating cost of living in Charlottesville. The property tax rate has been reduced more during my first term on Council than it was in the entire 20 years prior to my election. Instead of wringing my hands and saying we can't, I roll up my sleeves and say we must and we can. And for the sake of the citizens of this community, I will continue to work towards increased fiscal responsibility.

Having competing points of view is essential in having a responsive, efficient and proactive governing body. The problems that we face today are in large part due to the fact that for years no one was present to challenge the status quo, the way we've always done things. I am that voice, that person that asks the hard questions, that is not beholden to a central power structure, that looks at issues from the perspective of the public and not from the perspective of City Hall. I look forward to serving with one of these two gentlemen, but I stress to you the importance of my unique presence on the City Council.

Thank you for the trust you've placed in me in 2002 and I welcome the support of Democrats, Independents and Republicans across this community and I ask you for your vote on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Thank you.

**Julian Taliaferro:** As pointed out, I have a lot of experience in local government. Beyond that, I've had some other financial experience. I've served on the Board of Directors of the International Association of Fire Chiefs since 1992. I've currently the Treasurer of the International and one of the things that I was successful in doing a number of years ago was making that Association debt free for as long as anyone can remember and the Association's over a hundred years old and I had to do that by consensus building. We had to change some things we were doing, but I was successful at that.

I also ran the airport one time for a while, so I've done some different things other than the Fire Department. I will tell you that and I pledge to you if I'm elected, I will be responsible and I'm be responsible to people and I will deal with your money responsibly. Also, I'm very interested in creating opportunities in the community because we've talked a little bit about that tonight and I think it's important that we do create opportunity.

Also, I'm going to tell you that I'll will govern with a great deal of compassion because I'm a compassionate person and I'm a civil person and I will treat people civilly and beyond that, you can be assured that I will keep my eye on the ball and by that, I mean I will keep an eye on what's going on in City Hall. I've been there a while. I will tell you that I think I know a lot of the right questions to ask. Beyond that, I hope I can depend on you for your support and I hope I have the honor to represent you on City Council and I can assure you that I will come back and visit with you and to thank you.

**David Norris:** Thank you again for having [us] and to Gate and the WCH Neighborhood Association for having the three of us here tonight. It's been a real pleasure. When I am out on the campaign trail I think and I talk a lot about what kind of community we're becoming and it's partly because I'm very interested on a public policy level, you know, are we providing the affordable housing that our young families need, are we providing the quality services that our taxpayers expect, are we insuring that we're using tax dollars as efficiently and effectively as possible. Are we providing the best educational experiences possible for our kids?

So on a public policy level, it's of great interest to me, but for me it's more— It's personal and it's personal because I have two children that I'm raising here in this City who are both in the public schools, both here at Venable Elementary School and for me the work that I do is all about leaving this community a better place for them and leaving this community a better place for their friends, for your children, your grandchildren.

I think a lot about just recently a little baby that was born in Charlottesville about a week and a half ago to a homeless woman seven months pregnant, a premature baby, born at UVA Hospital, and this woman had basically been cut off from— Had cut herself off from her family and friends and was alone,

homeless, and had nobody to turn to and I think so much about that little baby that she brought into this world and, again, it's personal. What kind of a community are we building for that young child, what kind of a future are we creating for that child so that he will end up in a better place than his mother is today.

So, I'm very optimistic, but it is going to take a lot of work to build the beloved community, to building the kind of community that we need to insure a brighter future for all of our children. Thank you again, and please do come out, whether you support Julian, Rob or myself, please do come out and vote on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Thank you.

**Gate Pratt:** Thank you very much for coming tonight. We appreciate it and all the good discussion. I'll just take a minute or two to get the School Board candidates up here . . .