



## **2005 Board of Supervisors Candidate Interview October 2005**

*Candidate: Thomas Jakubowski (I), Rio District*

*Complete election coverage is available on the Charlottesville Tomorrow [website](#).*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is Charlottesville Tomorrow. An Advocate for Our Future Today. Charlottesville Tomorrow is a non-partisan community organization working on land use, transportation, and community design issues. Visit us on the web at [cvilletomorrow.org](http://cvilletomorrow.org).

On November 8, 2005, Albemarle County voters in 3 magisterial districts will be electing members to four-year terms on the Board of Supervisors.

This recording is Brian Wheeler's interview of Thomas Jakubowski, candidate for the Rio seat on the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Jakubowski is running as an Independent. His opponents for this seat are David Slutzky and Gary Grant.

### **INTERVIEW**

Tom, thank you for participating in this interview with Charlottesville Tomorrow. The complete audio and written transcript for this interview will be available on the Internet. Information from this interview, from some of the candidate forums, and from your campaign materials, will be used in the compilation of Charlottesville Tomorrow's non-partisan voter guide. As you know, Charlottesville Tomorrow does not endorse any candidates and our goal is to provide information to the public so they can make an informed vote on issues related to land use, transportation and community design.

As you are aware, some of the questions you will be asked have been provided in advance, others have not. All candidates will be asked the same questions. Are you ready to start?

#### **1. Please describe your past political experience.**

Well, this is my third run for Albemarle County supervisor and I hope I've learned something from the other two runs. I am past President of the Charlottesville

Albemarle Restaurant Association. That's the only elected office I've ever had, but I'm kind of a student of politics. I took a course when I first came to Charlottesville back in, I think it was '81, a course that then Professor Sabato gave and it was a course about political campaign and the thing I remember from the course vividly was the fact that he showed a TV commercial that Lyndon Johnson ran to counter Barry Goldwater and what it was was an atomic bomb exploding and, of course, it was very vivid and very effective and it was meant to point out the fact that maybe Senator Goldwater was not the candidate you should vote for because he would have a loose grip on the cannon, so to speak, and as a matter of fact, Professor Sabato was very instrumental in having me to decide to run in this campaign because I met with him last January and I told him that I was thinking about it and wasn't sure and I said I certainly didn't want to run against an incumbent again because that's kind of a tough situation. Professor said, "now, don't be so sure that Mr. Bowerman is going to run again," and I said, "why is that?" And he says, "well, he's got a lot of 'splaining to do, so if I were you I would go under the assumption that he's not going to run and, of course, that's just what happened.

## **2. What makes you better qualified than your opponent(s)?**

Been there, done that, and I'll tell you another reason why I'm running. In 1986, I suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and I'm probably the luckiest guy in Charlottesville and I had a vein and artery in my brain that were too close together and they popped one day and the great brain surgeon Dr. Neal Kassell went in there and got the plumbing right and so I've been improving ever since and during my rehab, I used to see a neurologist by the name of Dreyfus and the first thing I would ask him every time I visited him was, "Fritz, am I ever going to get back to a hundred percent?" and he said, "physically you won't," but he said, "mentally"--

And they've done neuropsych evaluations on me; they've done a number of them and my mind did not get affected by the stroke, so I do little things to keep my mind sharp. I do the crossword puzzle every day and I usually finish it and there is an office at UVA; it's called the Institute for Aging and what they do is they take people my age, senior citizens 60 and up, and check on their dexterity, their IQ, and on how they're getting along because as you age, you start losing certain things and I took the test the first time in 2004 and I took it again in August and the second time I took it and I noticed something and I said to the student who gave me the test, I said, "you know, I think I did better on this test than I did last year," and she said, "well, let me get Dr. Salthouse."

Dr. Salthouse is Director of the Institute on Aging, and he came in and I told him what happened and he said, "I'll tell you what. I'll check. We've got the test that you took in 2004. I'll take this test and match the figures with it," and he came back about 15 minutes later and he said, "you know, you're absolutely right. You improved in all categories except one," and one category I didn't improve was the

one where they would tell you a story and you have tell them the story back or as much as you remember of it, and I didn't do well in that because it was such a dumb story that I wasn't paying attention and so I didn't do well in that, but I had an average an 18% increase on everything else and that included dexterity, it included IQ, and the doctor said to me, "well, now, this doesn't happen." He said, "this is very unusual. What have you been doing to keep your mind sharp?" and I said, "well, I do the crossword puzzle every day, but, the one thing that I have been doing that I really am not supposed to be able to do is, I'm not supposed to be able to do multi-task functions. I run the scoreboard at the UVA Baseball games and for somebody who's had a stroke, it would be almost impossible and yet I haven't made a mistake on the scoreboard since May and so I think that really has helped me in my rehab."

And I don't know if that answered the question, but that will give you a little insight.

**3. What do you think is the best water supply source to meet our community's needs for growth and for drought, and a follow-up, would you support a pipeline to the James River to address our water supply needs? Please explain why or why not?**

Okay. Well, that's a good question and that's something that's been getting a lot of print. As you know, we have a new Water Authority Director, Tom Frederick, and I've got a copy of a publication called the *Clarion* and in it, it tells us what he thinks the best solution is and that is the-- I don't know what it's called, but it the one where we take a six-mile pipeline from I think Ragged Mountain. I don't know what it's called exactly, but I think you know the one I'm talking about. It seems to be the answer to the problem and, interestingly enough, it was a problem that was first recommended by just an average citizen and it's probably the one that they're going to go with because it's the one that makes the most sense.

As far as your second question, the James River pipeline is a pipe dream. It'll never happen. It'll never work and I certainly would not be in favor of that.

**4. The Board of Supervisors will approve ordinances to support recently adopted changes to the rural areas portion of the comprehensive plan. Do you support the rural areas portion of the comprehensive plan and what new zoning ordinance strategies do you think stand the best chance to protect the rural areas for future generations?**

Well, I attended a seminar the other day. To my dismay, I found out that each year in the state of Virginia 150,000 acres of rural farm land is lost each and every year and we have to do something to stop that, so I think that the County is going in the right direction with their plan.

The second part of your question was—

**What new zoning strategies do you think stand the best chance to protect the rural areas?**

Well, of course, we have conservation easements and we have phasing and we have cluster zoning, but I still think that the plan that Fairfax County worked out a few years ago is one that definitely deserves to be looked into and that, in a nutshell, is where you ask citizens for donations of part of their property to be used for future park land and the one that you give them in return is you promise that you will name the park after them. It's something that worked out. It was tremendously successful in Fairfax County and I'd like to see us do something like that here in Albemarle.

**5. Consider the growth we see in Northern Virginia. What mistakes have local governments made there and, if you are elected, what will you do differently here?**

Well, that's a good question and I'm not exactly sure what the answer is, but I did come here from northern Virginia and I certainly wouldn't want to go back there. As a matter of fact, I came here from Chantilly and one thing that the supervisors there are able to kind of postpone the tremendous sprawl that they've come across in northern Virginia. For the longest while, there was no water to support the development that developers wanted to build and so that worked for four or five years and then they came up with I think it was the Chantilly interceptor and that made water abundant and the developers just had a field day. They already had the land. If wasn't zoned properly, they had a super zoning attorney by the name of Hazel who if he walked into the room the supervisors would cringe and they were so afraid of him that they just caved and so we have to guard against that and like I said, I'm not sure exactly what the answer is, but I know what the problem is.

**6. Goals of the "Neighborhood Model" form of development, a form intended for the County's population centers, include interconnected neighborhoods and more compact, walkable communities with a mix of housing types that allow a larger population to live, work and shop in a smaller area. Do you support these goals of the Neighborhood Model for new development?**

Yes, and I'm really amazed that my opponents don't because I think of all the things that we've come across in the last couple of weeks, to me that's the one that's mostly a no-brainer and I can't believe that any responsible candidate would be against it.

- 7. One example of a significant Neighborhood Model project is Old Trail Village. Do you think Old Trail will be quality growth for Crozet and Charlottesville-Albemarle? And a follow-up, will it provide affordable living choices for our citizens and how will they remain affordable?**

Well, of course, the jury will be out on that for a long time. It's not something that I would've voted for, mainly because of the rural atmosphere that you had in Crozet and when I used the word "had" that is exactly right. It's had, because it's not there anymore and I think that's a shame. And if I lived in Crozet, I would be kind of upset right now. They're trying to turn Crozet into a Loudoun County and they don't have to.

Let me say one more thing about that. Our present Board of Supervisors voted a number of years ago on a railroad crossing or a railroad overpass that was paved with cobblestones and everybody knows that the city of Crozet or the town of Crozet is really kind of a historic town and they wouldn't come up with the money to do what they had to do preserve the cobblestones and I think that's a shame. If they can come up with money to buy fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, they certainly should be able to maintain our historic values.

- 8. Our designated growth areas tell developers where we want them to build. Should we also tell developers through zoning what form we want that development to take? Why or why not?**

Well, I think you should try, but if they've got one of the super zoning attorneys it probably won't work, but we definitely should try.

- 9. What types of incentives should exist for developers to build in our population centers or designated growth areas? Can you name some specific regulatory or financial examples? Should the development here be required to conform with the Neighborhood Model?**

Oh, definitely. And as far as examples is concerned, Four Seasons is a good example. The County has just has to go in there and spend thousand and thousands of dollars to retrofit Four Seasons with sidewalk. Now, the developer should've had to have put sidewalks in when he made the development and it would've been cheaper and it would've saved the County a lot of money.

- 10. Do you support construction of a Western U.S. 29 bypass around Charlottesville on the currently proposed route or some other route? Please explain why or why not and where another route might go.**

Well, yes, I definitely think we need a Western bypass, but unfortunately, I think we're about 20 years too late and we just won't be able to afford to build it now. Twenty years ago we could've, and as I've said time and time again, when I went to a Places 29 meeting and the meeting broke up into little groups of five or six

people and every table had a map on it, and when you see a map that shows you the area from Madison to North Garden, you just take one look at it and you say to yourself, well, that obviously is not a local problem. It's a regional problem or even a state problem and we've got a state senator who used to live in Earlysville. I don't think anybody really has played that card and I know George Allen personally and I know that he would do everything he could to help our area and I'm not sure anybody's even asked him.

**11. Please describe any other transportation projects on the Route 29 corridor that you would support to reduce congestion.**

Okay. Let's start with a real small one. Dominion Drive which is a road that goes between Commonwealth Drive and 29 North and it borders on a bank on one side toward 29 North and on the other side, the shopping center, Shoppers World. We recently have installed about a 25-foot road that goes from Dominion into the shopping center and I work at Ragazzi's Restaurant and living here and using Commonwealth Drive, I use that every day and it saves me from having to go on 29 North twice going and coming and so when you talk about connecting neighborhoods, this is the kind of thing that-- The kind of benefit of a connecting neighborhood. I support the Hillsdale Drive extension. Now, there's been a lot of talk about the fact that I'm a senior citizen and that I'm an advocate for seniors and my opponents have also spent a lot of time telling us how many people they've talked to. Well, I actually talked to five different people when I was getting my petition signed. I was over there at the Food Lion and they all lived in Branchlands and so we were looking right on Hillsdale Drive and I said to them, "I bet you all are thrilled about the Hillsdale Drive extension," and one guy said to me, "listen if that road gets built just like all the other roads around here, by the time it gets built, I'll be dead and buried so I don't care what they do." But to be fair about this now, can you talk to the rest if the registered voters in the Rio District which would be another 9,995, they would all overwhelmingly support it because it's going to alleviate traffic on 29, so it's a no-brainer. As far as about the seniors is concerned, I, of course would have empathy for people who have to work in that area but I think that it could be made user friendly by having a sidewalk setback or maybe even a bridge to go across Hillsdale Drive to go from-- If you're going to the Senior Center.

**12. What are your overall transportation priorities?**

Alleviate traffic on Route 29 North. The bypass will do that and you know what the bypass will do? The bypass will get the 18-wheelers off of 29. We had a-- As you know, Brian, we had a debate in Earlysville and in 2001, the big topic of discussion at the Earlysville debate was the fact that 18-wheelers were using Earlysville Road as a go-through road and they wanted to know what the Supervisors were going to do about it. Well, obviously, Mr. Bowerman didn't do anything about it, but on the day of that debate, I did try to get in touch with Chief Miller who was not available. A lot of people don't know, but the Chief had a

heart attack and I somehow can't help but feel a little bit guilty about that because the first thing that went on my website was Operation Crash and how I didn't approve of their handling of street drag racing and they since have stopped that position and they don't harass the teenagers who drive Hondas any more and I like to think I had something to do with that.

What was the last part of that question?

**Overall transportation priorities.**

Yes, well, it's to get the trucks off. Oh, so, I didn't get in touch with Chief Miller that day, but I did get in touch with the policeman who was hired to serve-- Regulate the commercial vehicles and he spends a lot of time on Earlysville Road and the truckers know that if he's going to be there, they'll go back to 29 and they'll get off on Earlysville Road and so the problem I think, in my opinion, has been solved to a very great degree.

**13. What is your top priority for action by the Board of Supervisors if you are elected?**

Two. Both involve money. No. 1 is to raise the amount of income a senior citizen couple can have to allow them to get real estate relief. In the City, it's \$50,000 a year. If you earn \$50,000 a year, you are still entitled to get real estate tax relief; in the County, it's only \$30,000. Well, most people make \$30,000 on Social Security and they need the tax relief, so that's my first priority.

The second priority, and I'm not sure I can do anything about it as a Supervisor and that would be to put some kind of cap on the real estate assessment increases. I know that some of the state candidates are talking about that. That's something I'd like to do and I would like to sit down and negotiate with the City about revenue sharing which is a \$10 million deal right now and they no longer have the leverage of annexation and you talk about cooperation between the City and the County. You'll never get cooperation between the City and the County as long as the County residents feel like they're subsidizing their City neighbors.

**14. What are the greatest challenges facing the Albemarle County Planning Commission and what type of person will you nominate for a position on the Commission?**

Well, Brian, I think I told you I haven't even thought about the second part of that question and I will think about it, but I don't have an answer for you now. The first part, what type of person-- What was the question?

**What are the greatest challenges facing the Albemarle County Planning Commission?**

Well, the greatest challenges are going to be to decide which development they're going to approve and we're going to have to tighten our requirements and try to limit development because we have to do something about sprawl. And the last final thing if we can't limit that, then we're going to have to plan our land use very carefully so that's going to be the final answer, because there's only so much land available.

**15. Do we have appropriate resources in County government to achieve the objectives in our comprehensive plan? And a follow-up, in what way, if any, do we need to make changes and what impact will your recommendations have on staffing and the annual budget?**

Read that again. I'm not sure I understand that.

**Do we have appropriate resources in County government to achieve the objectives in our comprehensive plan and what changes would you make and what impact would they have on staffing and the annual budget?**

Well, the answer to the first question is yes. And as far as change in staffing, that's a little bit premature because I don't exactly know exactly what the staff is now.

**16. Have you received any endorsements yet that you would like to make the public aware of?**

Actually, I'm not seeking any endorsements because one of the things I said when I filed was that I didn't want to have to owe anybody anything, so I feel like if I get an endorsement from the realtors, then I would have to-- Then I would owe them something when in fact the only thing I owe the realtors is-- And the first thing I'm going to do when I get elected is I'm going to have the sign ordinance looked over because they are the biggest violators of the sign ordinance and we're going to put some teeth in that law. It's going to cost them money every time they put up an illegal sign and so to answer your question, I'm not looking for any endorsements. I don't want to get endorsed by my constituents.

**Thomas, thank you very much for participating in this interview.**

You're welcome.