


**Chapel Hill - Carrboro NAACP
2019 Council/Alderman Candidate Questionnaire**

Please type out your responses in full below; take as much space as you need to answer the question in full. We thank you in advance for your participation.

Full Name:	Sue Hunter
Age/Race/Gender (with preferred pronouns):	51/White/Female – she, her
Occupation/Title/Retired:	Research Compliance
Position sought:	Chapel Hill Town Council
Headshot Photograph (published with your questionnaire responses):	

Background

1. Please provide an overview of your local civic leadership/organizational affiliations. What specific insights into our local community have you garnered from this service work?

I began volunteering locally in 1990 with the Orange County Rape Crisis Center and the Orange Durham Coalition for Battered Women, then went on to manage a domestic violence shelter for Family Violence and Rape Crisis in Pittsboro. These experiences motivated me to get my graduate degree in Public Health. During my graduate school years, I managed an Atlanta domestic violence shelter, worked for Planned Parenthood (teaching sex ed in the public schools and evaluating a male mentoring teen pregnancy prevention program), conducted community asthma research for the Centers for Disease Control, worked with Kurdish refugees, and did outreach work with injection drug users and commercial sex workers to prevent the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. More recently, I've served as a board member for the community organization NEXT, which advocates for diversity, inclusiveness, economic growth, transportation options, and housing choices.

I've always worked in the non-profit sector, and the first 9 years of my career were spent working with low resource and marginalized populations. I was a weekend shelter manager for FVRC, and I lived at the shelter with my clients from Friday evening until Monday morning. I spent a significant amount of time with my clients and their children and that helped me understand the challenges they faced. Many of my clients struggled to find affordable housing, or experienced frequent moves due to financial hardship. The frequent moves cause stress, impact community support and involvement, and limit access to opportunity. The significant energy that must be devoted to managing housing makes it difficult for families to manage basic needs, work and chronic health conditions. I see these same challenges affecting people who struggle to live in Chapel Hill.

All of these experiences helped me understand the relationship between the place you live, access to opportunity and the burden of disease in a community. The groups I worked with were people that, because of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and poverty, had been marginalized and excluded from access to basic human services. I came to appreciate that the challenges they faced, while immediate and specific, were the result of institutionalized inequities that need to be addressed at a policy level. The knowledge I've gained from my work and volunteer experiences would bring a unique and valuable grassroots perspective to the Chapel Hill Town Council.

2. What has motivated you to run for the office you seek?

I care very much about making Chapel Hill a sustainable and equitable community for the future, environmentally, economically and in terms of affordability. The fact that we have 38,000 people commuting in to Chapel Hill to work every day is a strong indicator that our housing is not affordable. I count family members and friends among the people who cannot afford to live here. I would like to see us increase housing access for people of all incomes and all ages. We are a community that is highly dependent upon cars, especially for commuters, but also for running errands within town. This contributes to traffic congestion and our carbon footprint, as well as unaffordability. We can only reduce our carbon footprint and mitigate climate change if we couple urban, walkable development with investments in transit and bike/pedestrian mobility to get people out of their cars and effectively connect homes, education, and jobs. I also want to see Chapel Hill strengthen and diversify our tax base. We need to make our town an attractive option

to attract employers and entrepreneurs, create jobs and draw more people in to support our local businesses.

3. Have you attended the Racial Equity Institute (REI) training or any other racial equity trainings in the past three years? (Note: This training is not the same as diversity or cultural competence training.)
 - If you have, what was the most impactful aspect of the experience?
 - If you have not, if elected, do you commit to register and attend this type of training?
 - Describe instances or situations in which you have applied racial equity frameworks in your work.

I have not attended a racial equity training. I am currently registered to attend racial equity trainings in October and November.

I'm a member of the community organization NEXT, which promotes diversity, inclusiveness, economic growth, transportation options, and housing choices. With NEXT, I've been a strong advocate for transit infrastructure, including the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit project, and for equitable transit-oriented development. One challenge in the transit debate was highlighting the broader context of how effective transit would positively impact affordable housing and enhanced economic opportunities.

I'm a member of the NAACP housing committee, and our group has submitted statements on the Greene tract in support of the Rogers Road Community, advocating for an equitable approach to development and the creation of affordable housing. The housing committee has also submitted statements regarding the Amity Station project and the impact on the Northside Community.

Housing Affordability and Local Taxation

4. What strategies do you support for increasing the supply of affordable housing in Chapel Hill/Carrboro?

I strongly support the use of government-surplus land to create affordable housing, creating affordable units through the inclusionary zoning ordinance and development agreements, and working with community partners, such as CASA, the Jackson Center, DHIC, EmPOWERment, the Community Home Trust, and Habitat for Humanity. Town funds for affordable housing, generated from taxes and the affordable housing bond are limited and must be used strategically for both repairs (to maintain existing affordable units and prevent displacement) and the creation of new units. We must work with our local government partners to maximize efficient use of resources and to effectively meet shared challenges.

5. Do you have specific ideas on how to make affordable housing, both rental and owned (and especially housing accessible to transit) available to people who work and provide essential services in our town? There are several things we can do to make new affordable housing units accessible to transit. One of the most important things we can do is coordinate transit service expansion with new housing units to ensure the residents have access to jobs and services. If we are going to make transit-oriented development work, we need to be creating diverse and higher density housing. I would like to see us increase the diversity of our housing stock, adding in townhomes, duplexes, triplexes and more multifamily housing. There may also be opportunities

to work with our nonprofit housing providers to develop incentives or priorities for our lowest paid employees.

We need to prioritize rentals for individuals making 30% of AMI, and this can only be accomplished with significant subsidies. Using government surplus land is one of the best tools we have to create affordable housing, as it greatly reduces the overall cost. Our partnership with DHIC on Legion Road resulted in 149 rental units. I'd like to see more successful collaborations like this one, which used surplus land, low-income housing tax credits, and collaboration with a community partner to leverage limited resources for maximum benefit to the community. The Town Council is currently engaged in discussions with UNC Healthcare on the Eastowne Master Plan. I would like to see affordable housing be part of this project as UNC and UNC Healthcare create much of the need for affordable housing in Chapel Hill.

I would like to see the Town Council explore HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration program, starting with the Trinity Court complex, which is currently vacant. The Durham Housing Authority is pursuing this option for several properties, and we should consider it as well. Many of our public housing units are centrally located and have good access to transit. RAD presents an opportunity to renovate our existing housing units. Protecting the right of return is critical, although it would not be an issue if we start with currently vacant complexes.

We haven't seen a lot of owner-occupied units contributed through the inclusionary zoning ordinance in recent years, primarily because the ordinance does not apply to rental housing. The Town Council is looking at ways to make the inclusionary zoning ordinance more clear and consistent for developers, to better encourage creation of on site-units (instead of payments in lieu). I support this step, but we should also consider if a task force would help us identify additional strategies to make inclusionary zoning a success. The rental market will eventually become saturated, and we need to be ready to make the inclusionary zoning ordinance a successful component of our affordable housing strategy.

6. How can we better engage residents of public housing in municipal governance?

I think we need to do more outreach and take municipal governance to them. Meeting attendance can look very different depending on where the meeting is held. Town council meetings and work sessions can run very long, making it difficult for people to attend if they work at night or rely entirely on transit. We should experiment with having town halls in community centers, and identify and work with community ambassadors in our public housing complexes, and solicit feedback from residents when accessing services. We should also undertake an internal study/survey of residents to find out how we can be more accessible or increase participation. Is it an issue of physical access (as noted above), or should do more to get people the information they need, in a manner that is clear, about issues that may be important to them?

The Chapel Hill Peoples Academy did a great job with outreach to underrepresented communities, including residents of public housing, and provided childcare and transportation to make participation feasible. The Chapel Hill Police have a new program, Girls Empowered Motivated Spectacular (GEMS), to help young women explore future opportunities in community-oriented careers like public safety and local government. We should have more outreach efforts and programs like these.

7. What initiatives or changes in existing policy would you support to make it possible for seniors to “age in place”? How can the town support more affordable assisted-living options?

This is an issue that’s very important to me as my own in-laws struggled with aging in place. I believe we need to create more affordable housing for seniors, and we can best do this by collaborating with community partners to leverage our limited resources. Our collaboration with DHIC is a good example of using town-owned land to create new affordable units for seniors (Greenfield Commons). It’s equally important to develop coordinated strategies to link housing settings with services for seniors, such as health monitoring, access to food and transportation.

For existing housing for seniors, we must build on the existing infrastructure of housing and community service networks so our seniors can stay and thrive in their home environments. Some affordable housing resources can be dedicated to repair and renovations of homes of aging residents. The town should also consider whether local property tax relief programs (similar to existing state programs) could be created.

8. In what ways would you like to see our town's tax base diversified? How should we move towards that?

We need to attract more businesses and retail to better balance the tax base. The retail landscape has evolved with online shopping, and the challenge is finding the right types of businesses that can be successful. Because I am a strong transit supporter, it’s important to me to do my shopping in Orange County, where sales of goods and services (as well as car rental and car registration fees) fund the transit tax and return other sales tax revenues to our community. We must make Chapel Hill an attractive option for businesses and entrepreneurs, which will help us create jobs for workers in town. I support improving our permitting and inspection process so our local businesses can open more quickly, create jobs and bring in revenue.

9. How should the town address future possible displacement of residents of mobile home parks?

The county has a displacement fund that can be used to assist residents of mobile home parks, but we should focus on preventing the need for this and preserving this housing whenever possible.

The current proposal for 1200 MLK is a good example of a development project that aims to preserve mobile home units while also adding and updating commercial structures on the same site. We should prioritize projects like this one, that maintain existing housing.

Several mobile home communities have converted to resident-owned cooperatives. It would be worth considering if that is a feasible option for any of our Chapel Hill mobile home communities. Depending on the cost of land and the number of mobile home units, the residents could potentially afford to purchase the land themselves.

All strategies should begin with the needs and priorities of the potentially displaced residents.

10. What is your position on the Rosemary Street Vision and its impact on the Northside neighborhood?

For me, some of the key messages of the Rosemary Street Vision are around housing and creating a vibrant community that isn’t dominated by students and student housing. There is a national

trend in building rentals, and we see that in Chapel Hill as well, where building student housing is particularly lucrative. My preference would be to see more owner occupied multi-family housing in downtown, with affordable housing units created through the inclusionary zoning ordinance.

11. How can the town address the pressures of rising regional population growth, increased student population, and rising land prices in ways that do not disproportionately negatively impact communities of color and low-income neighborhoods?

Chapel Hill established a compact growth strategy when it put the rural buffer and urban services boundary into place. This was a good move in terms of controlling sprawl, but we must also acknowledge the impact it has on rising land and housing prices. We can't stop growth, so we must come up with successful strategies that allow us to grow and keep our community affordable for people of all incomes, races and all ages.

Communities of color have a wealth gap as compared to the white, non-hispanic population. We cannot select applicants for affordable housing by race, but we can do a better job of promoting these opportunities to communities of color and providing support for the application process.

For the first time the town is working on a joint student housing plan with UNC; this is a step in the right direction. This could help mitigate the burden on neighborhoods like Northside. If we focus on making other places in Chapel Hill great, we can avoid putting so much pressure on Northside. The town must also make a commitment to increasing density and other affordability measures more broadly throughout the community.

Transportation, Infrastructure and Environmental Justice

12. What can the town do to make public transportation function better for low-income workers, hourly workers, senior citizens and the disabled?
 - o Describe your own public transportation usage; in what ways has your use of public transportation informed your perspective on our present system?

We have a fare free transit system, which is of benefit to everyone in our community. It's important that we link transit service to housing that serves low income workers, senior citizens and the disabled. We have the Senior Shuttle for our senior citizens and the EZ rider service for individuals who cannot use our fixed-route transit service. Although all Chapel Hill transit buses are ADA accessible, the same cannot be said for our bus stops, many of which are not accessible and lack bus stops or benches. Chapel Hill transit has tried to make improvements in this area and use transit tax dollars to improve the accessibility of our bus stops for all riders.

In terms of my own transit use, I am a working parent of two elementary age children and I rely on my car to travel between home, work, and kid activities within a fairly strict schedule. I take the GoTriangle 405 bus to work once a week, and I also use the Duke campus bus system and GoTriangle Durham buses. I enjoy my weekly bus ride to work, but it takes twice as long as driving, and a lot of extra walking (I'm one mile from the bus stop). I value the experience as it makes me consider how other people are impacted when transit, walking or using a bike may be their only option (and for some, a preferred option). I appreciate the great bus service that we have, and recognize that frequency of service, hours of service, and capacity (my bus is always full) are critical to meeting the needs of our community.

13. Define "environmental justice" as it relates to our community. Do you see any model environmental justice work being undertaken locally?

- Describe how you believe a racial equity framework should be applied to new sustainable infrastructure or greenway projects?

Environmental justice means ensuring that there is no disproportionate impact or burden from development on communities of color.

Community planning around the Greene tract is an example of environmental justice work at the local level. It took decades of activism by the Rogers Road community to finally close the county landfill on Eubanks Road. Orange County and the Town of Chapel Hill enlisted the help of RENA and the Jackson Center to implement a “Community First” planning process to determine future land use planning for the Green Tract. The Rodgers Road neighborhood was long marginalized from the political and planning process, and the community first engagement process was an attempt to overcome the wrongs of the past. A shared vision was developed to retain families, connect to the community, preserve diversity and preserve green space. Although sewer and water lines have been extended to the community, we are still in the early stages of making their vision for future growth a reality. As we start the process for additional community meetings, we must continue to respect the previous effort invested and wishes expressed by the Rodgers Road stakeholders.

Sustainable infrastructure and greenway projects should have an equitable distribution in Chapel Hill. People of color are more likely to use bikes and transit, and less likely to be car dependent. We should prioritize those communities to have more sustainable infrastructure. Our greenways should serve a dual purpose, for both recreation and connecting community members to work and school. Outreach efforts must be directed at communities of color to ensure that they have a voice in the process for bike and pedestrian connectivity.

Policing

14. How would you work to ensure improved relationships between citizens and law enforcement? What suggestions do you have to increase diversity (by race, class and gender) in our police department? We need greater transparency around law enforcement, particularly in parts of our community that are most heavily policed. This could include regular community meetings, ongoing public education and outreach, and targeted recruitment of new officers from in-town residents. Additionally, this public information, outreach and engagement must include residents from less-heavily policed areas, so that they also become invested in how law enforcement is functioning in town. Increased diversity is critical, and will require focused recruitment and advancement opportunities, as well as ongoing racial equity training opportunities for officers and administrators
15. Do you support citizen review of police departments? Why or why not? What is your position on citizen review of the UNC police department? Yes. Citizen review boards help serve two important functions: first, to provide independent oversight in allegations of police misconduct; and second, to improve transparency, accountability, and accessibility between the police department and the residents. The recent high-profile and controversial actions by the UNC police department during the confederate monument protests has shown that there is a need for such oversight on both elements. The hiring of a new chief at UNC provides an excellent opportunity to engage the university on this issue.

16. [If a candidate for Chapel Hill Town Council] What is your present understanding of the co-jurisdictional authority of the Chapel Hill Police and the UNC Police? The UNC police have primary law enforcement jurisdiction on campus and any UNC owned property. Chapel Hill police have primary jurisdiction in all municipal areas, and play an supportive role in enforcement on campus if requested.
- What is your assessment of the current relationship between the two entities? What has been in the past a generally collaborative relationship has become increasingly strained over the past few years, primarily around UNC's strategy and tactics regarding confederate monument and anti-racist activism, which I believe have been inconsistent with the values and ideals of town residents.
 - What responsibility should the Town of Chapel Hill ultimately bear for the conduct of UNC-Chapel Hill campus police on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus? As long as there is an expectation or agreement regarding mutual assistance or collaborative policing of events, the Town must establish clear expectations, lines of authority, transparency, and accountability for UNC police and administration. Any legislative or jurisdictional constraints should be reviewed and assessed, and if necessary, revised—in conjunction with other local jurisdictions, UNC administration, our legislative delegation, and leaders in other university communities.
 - Do you feel it is important that the public know the specifics of the co-jurisdictional relationship between the two departments? Yes. It is vital for residents—student and non-students—to understand the dynamics of the intergovernmental relationship. If so, how do you propose to engage the community on the matter? Again, given the hiring of a new chief at UNC, this is an opportunity to convene a series of public meetings about the relationship, how it has functioned in the past, the legal and jurisdictional limitations, and the recent challenges and concerns, and hear from the community on how the relationship should function going forward.
17. [If a candidate for Carrboro Board of Alderman] What is your assessment of the town's response to the racial profiling by the Carrboro Police Department as outlined in the recent Dr. Frank Baumgartner study on race and policing?

N/A

Business and Labor

18. What more can our town do within its jurisdictional authority to promote living wages?
I think we should continue to use incentives for businesses that are willing to meet certain criteria, such as paying a living wage, offering fair benefits and hiring locally.
19. What do you believe are the main reasons or barriers as to why people of color are not attracted to Chapel Hill/Carrboro to start (or relocate) a business?

Chapel Hill is a predominantly white community, much more so than surrounding cities like Raleigh and Durham. Opening a business in Chapel Hill can be very expensive, due to high rents, and the permitting and inspection process. Minority-owned businesses have disproportionate access to financing and more limited wealth networks. All of these factors make it less likely that minority-owned businesses will start or relocate here. This is supported by the available data - the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce's 2018 State of the Community

Report listed 13.7 percent of businesses in Chapel Hill as minority-owned, compared to the state's 22.8 percent.

20. What are the existing governmental policies or programs that harm or promote business development for entrepreneurs and/or people of color? Minority business owners are less likely to be approved for small business loans, and more likely to receive smaller loans at higher interest rates. The legacy of structural racism continues to impact minority business owners in the present day, as they are more likely to have fewer financial resources and lower credit scores, both of which affect their likelihood to be approved for a loan. Additionally, given this reality, as well as the challenges described in the preceding answer, there is critical and unmet need for programs that can provide outreach, mentoring, and ongoing support for minority entrepreneurs.

Demography and Engagement

21. In what ways can local governance better promote student engagement?
- What are you doing to engage the student community in your campaign?
 - What should be the role of local elected officials in engaging with student-lead, anti-racist organizing on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus?

I believe student participation in local elections is important and I'm excited we have a UNC student running for Town Council. I've reached out to the UNC Young Democrats, will participate in an interview with the DTH and submit an opinion piece to the DTH.

Local elected officials must recognize that UNC students are also their constituents, and that the issues they are facing on campus do not end at the wall on Franklin Street. While much "town/gown" effort seems to be dedicated to issues of land use and planning, not enough has been focused on the particular challenges students have raised, including anti-racist advocacy and related issues of policing. A coordinated effort to engage student activists and explore ways the town can support efforts that reflect our stated commitment to racial justice should be made, especially given prior resolutions regarding confederate monuments and our police department's collaborative relationship with UNC police.

22. Assess the town's response to shifting demographics in our community. In what ways can the town improve access to services and communication generally with non-native-English-speaking populations?
- How can our town do a better job of welcoming immigrants to our community without creating tensions with other underserved communities?

I strongly believe the burden is upon local government to improve communication with our non-native English speaking populations. In the fall of 2018, the town launched the Chapel Hill People's Academy to communicate about the town's operations and services, diversify the Town's boards and commissions, teach leadership skills, and engage people not already communicating with the Town. The Peoples Academy did a great job with outreach, targeting racial and ethnic minorities; immigrants, refugees, and others with limited English proficiency; parents of school-aged children; teens and college students; and those served by affordable or public housing. This is a great model that we can build upon.

Addressing perceived tensions regarding newcomers and access to resources is always a challenge. Many outreach programs are offered by community organizations rather than by local government. I believe strongly that we must put forth our best effort to promote opportunities to historically marginalized residents in our community as well as meeting the needs of newcomers. One strategy is focusing on

shared challenges and values. Fostering more diverse participation in town government will give all communities a voice in the process.

23. How would you characterize our town's readiness to ensure a full and accurate count in the upcoming census? How can our municipal government increase citizen participation?

The Town is an active member of the county-wide Orange County Complete Count Committee, with both staff and Council representation. The purpose of the committee is to design and deploy ways to assure a complete and accurate count of every resident in Orange County, along with the collection of complete and accurate demographic data about each woman, man and child. Among the anticipated challenges to a complete count are fear and distrust of the government, as well as the fact that the 2020 census will be conducted primarily online. The Complete Count Committee's efforts will enhance those of the US Census Bureau, and field office staff. The committee is using data to design outreach strategies focusing on hard-to-reach communities, including minorities, non-English speaking, low-wealth families, people living in non-traditional housing, and the refugee populations within the county. The committee includes community partners and will work with "trusted ambassadors" to those communities to encourage participation. The Complete Count Committee will produce marketing materials, such as posters, flyers, utility bill inserts, public service announcements and more, to be shared with community partners. Participation is very important as the next census will determine the allocation of annual federal government funding to state and local communities and the reapportionment of representatives for Congress, state legislatures, and county and local voting districts. It is critical that the Town take a leadership role in this effort and continue to allocate sufficient staff resources and - if needed - funding.

Matters of State-Level Jurisdiction

24. How should municipalities like ours express our values or policy positions in matters which are generally the domain of the state legislature (e.g., living wage policy, immigration policy, reproductive rights, etc.)?

We can clearly communicate our values and lobby the state government to support our legislative priorities by issuing proclamations and resolutions. Given our legislature's strict control over local governments, it is important that we take progressive stands, with our local government allies whenever possible, on issues that broadly impact our community. Locally, we can work to support and attract living wage employers, speak out against ICE, support reproductive rights and access to healthcare.