



**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:	Lydia Ellen Lavelle
Age/Race/Gender (with preferred pronouns):	58/Caucasian/Female (she, her, hers)
Occupation/Title/Retired:	Law professor at North Carolina Central University
Position sought:	Mayor of Carrboro

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 have been honored to serve as the Mayor of Carrboro for the last six years. Before that, I served six years on the Carrboro Board of Aldermen. During this time, I have interacted and dialogued extensively with many of our area non-profits and civic organizations. These contacts have been invaluable in showing me how much these organizations do, and how much they contribute to our community.*

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

*I am running for re-election because I enjoy public service, and in particular, the opportunity to nurture Carrboro's progressive community spirit. I believe participatory democracy is one of the most critical foundations of our country.*

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.)

*I first attended an REI training several years ago (not within the last three years). I also attended the first day of another REI training as an alumnus in March of 2017.*

- If you have, what was the most impactful aspect of the experience? *Being reminded of my privilege.*
- If you have not, if elected, do you commit to register and attend this type of training? *N/A*
- Describe instances or situations in which you have applied racial equity frameworks in your work. *I am proud that our Board recommended that our town became a member of the “Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE),” a national network of governments working to advance racial equity and increase opportunities for all. GARE is “a membership-led, membership-driven network of governmental jurisdictions that are committed to advancing racial equity.” It offers “pathways for new jurisdictions to begin doing racial equity work, including contractual technical assistance and year-long learning cohorts” and supports and builds “local and regional collaborations that are broadly inclusive and focused on achieving racial equity.” This membership helps us bring an equity focus to the day-to-day work of our town employees.*

### **Housing Affordability and Local Taxation**

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

*Our Board of Aldermen adopted an Affordable Housing Plan (with goals and strategies) a few years ago: <https://www.townofcarrboro.org/DocumentCenter/View/2695/Affordable-Housing-Goals-and-Strategies?bidId=>. Our Board has supported a number of the strategies in the plan financially and proactively the past few years. The progress of the plan can be tracked by looking at the Town of Carrboro’s web page, and it is encouraging: <https://www.townofcarrboro.org/1105/Tracking-Progress-Towards-Goals>. This progress has been aided by the work of our Affordable Housing Advisory Commission.*

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?

*While there are many good strategies in our Affordable Housing Plan,, I believe one strategy in particular can help us work toward expanding our affordable housing stock: to “[w]ork with Orange County, the University, and other landowners to examine, identify and reserve one or more tracts for future LIHTC and/or HUD-restricted rental communities.” This collaboration is extremely important in order to leverage money to get bigger projects approved on jointly-owned or jointly-jurisdictionally-owned land. We have seen this at work on our efforts with jointly owned property on Merritt Mill Road (working with CASA), and recent conversation about the Greene Tract.*

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

*I believe going directly to these locations is the best way to inform and engage people who live there with local government. Conversation, flyers, meetings, surveys, one-on-ones – especially when you are looking to get feedback from the very people who live in the housing.*

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?

*Over the next 2-3 years, we will be creating a comprehensive plan for Carrboro. There will be lots of community engagement during this process, and we expect this newly created plan will reflect Carrboro's goals and values. Through this comprehensive plan, I am hopeful that we can expand our definition of accessory dwellings, to make it possible for more seniors to age in place. Additionally, I believe we should work to support projects that include a senior housing element, such as Lloyd Farm.*

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

*Our Board should support sensible economic development projects that contribute to our tax base. I have a track record of voting for several of these projects over the years (for example, the Lloyd Farm project, South Green, and Shelton Station). These plans can also provide other community benefits (for example, affordable housing and green building features).*

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

*We need to proactively identify mobile home parks that we know may be vulnerable, and be thinking ahead to opportunities to help people living in those transition to new housing.*

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

*I am not familiar with the Rosemary Street Vision (I assume this is a Town of Chapel Hill policy document). I do know that the Town of Carrboro will very thoughtfully consider any development along Main Street in Carrboro that is close to the Northside neighborhood.*

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?

*For one, I believe we should continue to support our long-standing neighborhoods of color and our low-income neighborhoods. Key to this is engagement and reaching out to these community members to ascertain their needs and concerns.*

## **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?

*Our local jurisdictional leaders, via the MPO, need to work (as we have started to do already) on a re-boot of our county (Orange and Durham) transit plans, now that light rail is no longer included in our multi-county planning effort. Our MPO needs to review studies that have already been completed for the Highway 54 and 15-501 corridors in analyzing how to re-boot our transit connections (using buses rather than light rail). Lots of data has already been collected about traffic patterns (during the light rail effort), and it is incumbent on the MPO to make this a priority so that both counties can amend their plans accordingly and move forward. This effort will require regional collaboration, and all jurisdictions must understand this and get behind this effort.*

Carrboro needs to show strong support for the N-S BRT, which connects our community's busiest corridor to downtown, and is in need of increased capacity and frequency. I wrote a letter to the Federal Transit Administration recently in support of this project.

- Describe your own public transportation usage; in what ways has your use of public transportation informed your perspective on our present system?

*I occasionally ride the 405 to get to my job at North Carolina Central University. However, this requires a one mile walk and three transfers; it is not convenient. I am best able to try to do this when I can eliminate one or two of those transfers. When I travel to downtown Raleigh for meetings, I always try to take the Raleigh Express. I purchase a GoPass so that when I am able to use transit, payment is convenient. I also try to randomly ride various Chapel Hill Transit routes for my own knowledge and education. Through these experiences and from my involvement with the Transit Partners Committee (on which I served for six years), I am aware of the challenges of too much time between headways and lack of evening and weekend service. I am encouraged that some of these challenges will be addressed in the next year or two by expansion of transit service.*

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

*To me, environmental justice means working through policy and law to compensate identified areas or communities that have shouldered disparate environmental impact for the benefit of the greater community. Although long overdue, I believe our multi-jurisdictional work with the Rogers Road community can serve as a model to other communities of how to address these inequities.*

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

*Our Board has tried to take a systematic approach to viewing all of our decisions through an equity lens. To that end, when looking at new sustainable*

*infrastructure, one goal is more efficient and reduced utility costs. Additionally, studies have shown that owning and maintaining an automobile makes up a great percentage of a person's monthly and annual budget. Creating infrastructure which is near transit routes, sidewalks, and greenways is smart sustainable development which every urban area should implement for financial, environmental and equity reasons. Suburban areas can also support sustainable infrastructure by building to scale around transit nodes for these same reasons.*

## **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?

*In Carrboro, we have regular presentations at our Board of Aldermen meetings by our Police Department of statistics related to arrests and other policing matters. We also have community meetings, and "Know Your Rights" sessions. Our police are visible at events in the town, and encourage interaction and conversation through events such as "National Night Out" and "Coffee with a Cop." These are all regular events in the year, but we also work to be prepared for incidents that may arise unexpectedly.*

*Increasing diversity by race, class, and gender in our Police Department is a challenge facing departments everywhere – locally, as well as nationally. It is important to be competitive in terms of salary and benefits. It is also important to be able to explain to prospective applicants what Carrboro's community policing ethic looks like. We need to continue to cultivate relationships with local university and college criminal justice programs, particularly places where we might be able to recruit persons who meet these demographics (for example, HBCUs and women's organizations).*

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?

*I do not blanketly support citizen review of police departments. I would have to consider the particular jurisdiction, the history of the community and the police department, the trust and confidence in the local police department, the extent of power of the citizen review, and other factors before moving forward with some type of citizen review committee. I am not against formation of a committee to give feedback and suggestions to the local police department.*

*To address the second part of this question, I direct the reader to my answer to the first part. Before forming a position about a citizen review of the UNC Police Department, I would have to consider the factors I outline above. However, the UNC Police Department is not in Carrboro's jurisdiction.*

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? N/A

- What is your assessment of the current relationship between the two entities? *N/A*
- 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? *N/A*
- Do you feel it is important that the public know the specifics of the co-jurisdictional relationship between the two departments? If so, how do you propose to engage the community on the matter? *N/A*

17. [If a candidate for Carrboro Board of Aldermen] 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?

*I support our town's response to Dr. Baumgartner's study on race and policing in Carrboro. Our police chief Walter Horton and his department have followed up on the statistics presented in the report, and have worked to identify ways to address disparate impact identified therein. This is an ongoing process, and our police department continues to work on this with integrity and concern. It is important to note that Dr. Baumgartner's study involved ten years of data collected prior to 2013. More recent data has been encouraging (see this Carrboro agenda item from April 2018:*

*<https://carrboro.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3477569&GUID=7C965CF3-0BAF-4CBD-B79D-A35D94AEE467&Options=ID/Text/Attachments/&Search=profiling>*).

### **Business and Labor**

18. What more can our town do within its jurisdictional authority to promote living wages?

*As you are likely aware, the state of North Carolina has preempted the ability of local jurisdictions to require living wages. I believe it was an important step for the Town of Carrboro to start offering a living (actually, a housing) wage for all of its employees a few years ago. This was a challenge particularly because of the number of part-time employees in the town, and the desire to also include these positions.*

*I regularly highlight the work of local non-profit Orange County Living Wage (this organization certifies local businesses that decide voluntarily to provide a living wage to their employees) by issuing proclamations highlighting their work and urging other employers in the town to follow suit by offering a living wage.*

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?

*Many of the barriers for people of color to start or relocate a business in Carrboro are barriers for all people. The expense and dearth of commercial property, the high cost of living, competition from corporations such as Amazon, and new technologies or methods of delivering a product are many of the reasons for this. MBE programs can help level the playing field in some*

*instances, but making certain that Town and Orange County loan and grant opportunities are known to all applicants, including persons of color, can help provide a boost for a business to start or relocate in our community.*

20. What are the existing governmental policies or programs that harm or promote business development for entrepreneurs and/or people of color?

*I highlighted a few in #19 above, but another way to promote business development for entrepreneurs/persons of color is to identify ways through policy or ordinances to make it easier for persons to start businesses. Our Board of Aldermen has tried to do this lately with revisions to our zoning on properties on Rogers Road. Additionally, through our upcoming comprehensive plan process, I am hopeful that we will more definitively identify locations for commercial development, providing more certainty and cutting down on costs for rezoning.*

### **Demography and Engagement**

21. In what ways can local governance better promote student engagement?

*Members of the Board of Aldermen, including myself, are contacted on a regular basis by reporters from the Daily Tar Heel, UNC-CH's student newspaper. I also am contacted frequently by the DTH editor. I always try to make time to respond to these emails and phone calls, as I believe this is important for many reasons. As a college professor myself, I know this is a learning exercise for these students, and will inform the way that they go about their reporting in the future. I also take advantage of these opportunities to educate these students on matters of local government about which they may not be familiar. I believe it is important for board members to continue this practice. I also am frequently asked to speak at events on UNC's campus, or with UNC departments, and I try to do this as often as I can.*

- *What are you doing to engage the student community in your campaign? The Daily Tar Heel has reached out to conduct an interview with me about my campaign (as I believe they have with other candidates for office). I plan to take advantage of this opportunity, as well as any others that may arise.*
- *What should be the role of local elected officials in engaging with student-led, anti-racist organizing on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus? While I am supportive of student led anti-racist organizing on the UNC campus, the campus is in Chapel Hill and not in Carrboro's jurisdiction. My role is different than it would be if the campus was in Carrboro.*

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?

*The Town of Carrboro has a good relationship with El Centro Hispano, and we have talked about how to reach out better to our Hispanic community. We have been able to quickly mobilize messages through texting and social media channels when we need to get word out to our*



*immigrant community in a timely fashion. We have also organized community meetings with this community quickly when necessary. As for our other non-English-speaking communities (example, or Burmese and Karen communities), we have largely relied on our work with various refugee organizations to communicate with them. We can be more intentional about this.*

- *How can our town do a better job of welcoming immigrants to our community without creating tensions with other underserved communities? I believe we have made our message loud and clear – all are welcome here, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status. For centuries, there has been tension between various underserved communities, but history is clear - all communities move forward better when they work together.*

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?

*This is a matter of monumental importance, and a countywide committee of leaders (the Orange County Complete Count Committee) has been created to specifically address and brainstorm about this issue. This labor will require extensive messaging, education, and outreach in the weeks and months to come so that we get a full and accurate census count by or on April 1 of next year. The Town of Carrboro intends to be a strong voice and advocate in this effort.*

### **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.)?

*Carrboro is no stranger to speaking out loud and clear about its values. We will continue to do so. I teach a seminar law class on State and Local Government Law, and I published an article a few years ago entitled "Grassroots Gay Rights" which explores in depth successful approaches in a state such as ours, i.e., a state without home rule. The concepts therein are adaptable to the examples provided in this question.*