

Randee Haven-O'Donnell, Incumbent Carrboro Board of Aldermen

1. What are the highest priority affordable housing issues in your community?

Most important priorities: Affordable homeownership, Senior housing, Critical repairs, Permanent housing for homeless
Top priorities, but not most important: Rental housing, Mobile homes

2. Should local government provide more money or less money to support affordable housing in your community?

Much more money. Local governments need innovation ways to build funds together and form creative partnerships with non-governmental organizations. No one governmental or non-governmental entity can meet the challenge alone. Local government and non-government collaboration and partnerships can overcome the obstacles of funding, land acquisition, and construction, to name a few.

3. Do you support donating surplus government-owned land to affordable housing developers?

Yes. I am an advocate of re-purposing underutilized land and land-banking government lands. The Northside Land-bank in Chapel Hill is a prime example of how land can be redeveloped for affordable housing. I agree that if a local government has "surplus" land it is wise to consider donating the land to affordable housing developers. When I think of government "surplus" land, I ask, "why is the land surplus"? The land may not be topographically suitable for habitation or have environmental issues that prevent it from being used. The last thing a government wants to do is donate land that is unsound environmentally. An example of this is land in a flood plain or land that was once superfund site (as in the case the Boyle Heights project in Los Angeles that has an abandoned oil well on its site).

4. Do you think local jurisdictions do an effective job coordinating housing policies and programs with other jurisdictions in the county, including Orange County government?

Moderately effective. Within the last few years we have broken through to a new era of intergovernmental collaboration and partnership on housing policies. We are seeking to address the issue across jurisdictions. Current strategies that are being proposed are only just being implemented. Time will tell how strong and effective a solid, coordinated approach will be. We're certainly working with more focus and intention on collaboration and coordination than ever before.

5. What's one example of an affordable housing program or development that you think worked well. Please explain why you think that was successful and how you will support more of these successes in the future.

In 2012 Carrboro established an Affordable Housing Special Revenue Fund to improve our affordable housing supply. Within in the Special Revenue Fund are three programs worth noting:

1. Funding for off-setting the cost of constructing affordable housing.
2. Funding for rental and/or utility deposit assistance.
3. A buyer identified homeownership program that would subsidize applicants for market-rate homes as part of a permanent affordable housing stock.

In Carrboro and Chapel Hill the coordinated CASA Housing Project of 24 apartments on Merritt Mill Rd. is an excellent example of collaboration and partnership to address affordable apartments. I look forward to its opening. Empowerment has been a strong partner in building community and providing rental housing in the Northside, Lloyd, Carr and Pine Knolls neighborhoods.

In Chapel Hill, the Northside Landbank and Neighborhood Initiative is a superb model. It demonstrates the strength of a creative partnerships. I strongly advocate this model because it supports community from within, empowering neighbor's to direct development within their own neighborhood. Two other successful programs I support and think model the way are the Farm at Penny Lane and Pee Wee Homes Church Collaborative programs because they address a critical need of varied housing needs in our community. The strongest response is to embrace collaboration and innovation to assemble a wide range of options to respond to the diverse spectrum of need.

6. What are your ideas for ensuring that the new Town of Carrboro Affordable Housing Advisory Commission will be effective?

To ensure the effectiveness and success of the Affordable Housing Advisory Commission:

1. Promote the Affordable Housing Task Force's recommended comprehensive plan
2. Advocate for the revenue to support the Affordable Housing Special Revenue Fund
3. Advance the efforts of the three special programs to address affordability:
 - Explore options to ensure the sustainability of the Special Revenue Fund
 - Explore creative partnerships to off-set the cost of affordable housing construction
 - Enhance funding for rental and or utility deposit assistance
 - Expand work with our local non-profit organizations such as CASA, Empowerment, Habitat to build a diverse stock of affordable housing.
 - Help community build community-Involve neighborhoods and non-governmental organizations in a Buyer Identified Homeownership Program. Examples: Northside Initiative and the Jackson Center, Self-Help, Downtown Housing Improvement Corp. (DHIC) that helps first time home buyers.