



2021 Municipal General Elections Candidate Questionnaire

Please answer each of the following questions in 150 words or less. Orange County Affordable Housing Coalition (OCAHC) is a non-partisan association of organizations and individuals interested in affordable housing, and does not endorse candidates. Instead, OCAHC members will share the completed questionnaires from all candidates throughout our networks, including with local media and organizations that make endorsements. (If you do not return a completed questionnaire, we will note that when sending the questionnaires to our networks.) Our goal is to help voters make informed decisions to elect leaders who will prioritize the policies and resources needed to address our community's housing crisis.

Thank you in advance for completing this questionnaire. Should you have questions, please contact OCAHC Advocacy Committee Co-Chairs George Barrett (george@jacksoncenter.info) or Jackie Jenks (jjenks@ifcmailbox.org).

Please submit your completed questionnaire via email to ochousingcoalition@gmail.com by Saturday, September 25th at 12:00 pm.

Jacquelyn Gist Carrboro

1. Describe the current housing situation in our community. What are the main drivers of affordability challenges (property taxes, development types, lack of land, etc.)?

We are experiencing a concurrence of factors rapidly driving up the cost of housing and affecting our low-income residents the hardest. These include: Investors buying houses to turn into multi-tenant rental units which charge per bedroom; the purchase of modest homes to be torn down and replaced by homes costing up to and over a million dollars; investors buying apartment complexes raising rents and refusing to accept Section 8; a market in which homes sell in days often for well over asking price; the increasing popularity of Carrboro as a place to live; the gentrification of once moderately priced neighborhoods; lack of available land; zoning which discourages additional units on built properties.

2. What is the most important role of an elected official/local government in ensuring all community members can afford housing?

It is important for elected officials to play the role of cynic. “Affordability” and “Sustainability” are the key buzz- words used by housing developers when they are applying for permits in our towns; it is what they know we want to hear. Far too often, they fall short of their promise or what they consider “affordable” is not what many families can afford. Recently I had a conversation with a developer who was exploring a project that he said would be “affordable” I ask him if he was willing to give me a price point or AMI % that could be included in his permit-never heard back from him. We need to view all housing development proposals through an affordability lens and hold developers legally responsible for the words they use under oath at public hearings.

3. What is your prior experience in creating and promoting affordable housing?

Served on the founding board of the Orange Community Housing Corp. now the Community Home Trust and later served several terms as Carrboro’s representative.

Served as 1st coordinator of IFC Shelter

Supported Carrboro’s enactment of and later strengthening of the housing density bonus to create smaller more affordable units

Supported creation of the Affordable Housing Fund and Advisory Commission

Advocated for town support of CASA’s Perry Homes

Serve as liaison to the Human Services Advisory which provides funding to housing NPOs

Supported development of apartments for Club Nova members

4. In order of priority, what are three specific policy or funding initiatives related to affordable housing that you will support if (re-)elected

Allow and encourage the use of under underutilized properties such as the parking lot on the corner of Sweet Bay and Roberson, Carrboro Plaza and properties along Hwy 54 corridor for further development if it includes at least 30% units affordable to families/individuals earning 60% or less AMI

Allow for the development of auxiliary dwelling units and increased density on existing lots.

Increase town funding for the maintenance and preservation of existing affordable housing stock and support local agencies such as EmPOWERment, Community Home Trust, Habitat and others.

How would you create affordable housing for individuals 30% AMI and below? I will support more projects such as CASA's Perry Place and the proposed Pee Wee homes project on town owned land, we can use parts of other land currently owned by the town to build more affordable homes .I am excited by the concept of "pocket neighborhoods"- small homes built in clusters on pockets of town owned land or other small parcels. Pocket neighborhoods can include shared amenities and common spaces to build community and decrease costs. I will support more projects such as CASA's Perry Place and the proposed Pee Wee homes project on town owned land, we can use parts of other land currently owned by the town to build more affordable homes .I am excited by the concept of "pocket neighborhoods"- small homes built in clusters on pockets of town owned land or other small parcels. Pocket neighborhoods can include shared amenities and common spaces to build community and decrease costs. When I first came to Carrboro, there were rooming houses in both towns. These provided both a source of income for the owners and dignified place to live for the roomers. Carrboro can encourage the return of rooming houses as viable small businesses through loans and an outreach program to the community to find those who may be interested in the opportunity earn additional income.

5.

6. Our community has seen growing polarization on arguments for increased housing density weighed against environmental impacts. What is your position on this discussion? In our current national political climate, liking apples means you hate oranges. I like apples AND oranges, most do. Most affordable housing advocates also are environmentalist and vice-versa .Low wealth communities are more likely to live with environmental hazards. This is not an either /or situation. Carrboro is currently considering permitting Pee Wee homes on a town owned property near Baldwin Park that has storm water issues, the Storm Water Advisory Commission is recommending against it while supporting affordability. At my suggestion, they are recommending that the homes be built instead across the street on town parkland and the proposed lot be used for recreation. Win/win. As our community, works together to develop our new comprehensive plan we have the opportunity to better define where environmentally responsible density can occur so that each new proposal does not have to debate which is better apples or oranges.

7. How would you implement systemic solutions to inequitable property taxes in our community?

NC law requires “All property... shall as far as practicable be appraised or **valued at its true value in money.the words "true value" shall be interpreted as meaning market value...** the price estimated ... at which the property would change hands” How this law is interpreted is important. The valuations need to be done on an individual home basis; especially in those neighborhoods, experiencing rapid gentrification where recently sold or built homes can be far more expensive than the homes of long-term residents. If the statute is taken to mean that valuation is based on recent sales of nearby properties, taxes will sky rocket as we have recently seen. Before each new valuation, neighborhood meetings should be held to explain the process and allow homeowners to request individual valuation inspections before receiving their tax bill to avoid having to ask for reconsideration which can be a difficult and cumbersome process.

8. How do you view affordable housing as a racial equity issue? True equity cannot be achieved without housing affordability. Homeownership is key to building generational wealth. For decades, Black families have been denied homeownership opportunities through discriminatory lending and real estate sales practices as well as zoning. This coupled with discrimination in educational and employment opportunities is a primary contributor to the “wealth gap”.

As Carrboro has grown and become ever more expensive, many of the Black families who have lived here for generations find they can no longer afford to call Carrboro home. One key to becoming a truly just and equitable community is through the creation of affordable housing opportunities, both homeownership and rental. Tax valuation also impacts affordability and has disproportionality affected long term Black residents adding to housing inequity. (See above)

Please answer the following questions with Yes or No

9. Will you support a new bond for affordable housing within the next two years?
 Yes or No
10. Are you willing to dedicate at least 15% of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds toward affordable housing?
 Yes or No
11. Do you support building affordable housing for people 30% AMI or below on the Greene Tract? (Town of Chapel Hill and Carrboro candidates only).

Yes or No

12. Do you support building affordable housing for people 30% AMI or below on the former American Legion Property? (Town of Chapel Hill candidates only).

Yes or No