

Salisbury: Choose five for City Council

By MARK WINEKA
Salisbury Post

What about mayor?

Salisbury voters choose the five members of City Council, who in turn elect a mayor from among themselves.

Incumbents on Salisbury City Council say they're running for re-election on their record and, after a combined 48 years on the job, they really have no choice.

Council has been a strong voice for diversity and inclusion, controlled growth, neighborhood revitalization, community policing, customer service, historic preservation, the arts, downtown improvements and protecting and expanding the water-sewer utility.

Most recently, its initiative against gangs and youth violence has struck a chord in the community, and a second Gang Summit already is planned for late November.

William "Pete" Kennedy, who seeks his eighth consecutive two-year term, has been the second-longest serving councilman ever.

Susan Kluttz, Bill Burgin and Paul Woodson were all elected for the first time in 1997, and they're seeking their sixth terms at the Nov. 6 ballot box. Kluttz has become the longest-serving mayor in city history.

Councilman Mark Lewis, seeking a third term, is the youngster among the five incumbents.

It's no accident that the council seems to be of one mind, Lewis said. It's simply the result of the planning council does each February at its retreat, he added.

The council has established 12 "outcomes" for the city, 31 goals under those outcomes and seven one-year tactical goals.

Challengers

Trying to break into this club and oust some of its members are Bob Boone, Laura Lyerly and Bill Ward.

Boone and Lyerly are on the Nov. 6 ballot. Ward

announced late that he would run a write-in campaign.

Boone, who owns a used car dealership and has been a candidate for five straight elections, said things could be different in the city with new blood on the council. He has described the current group as more of an administrative body rubber-stamping what comes to it from city staff.

Boone said he simply offers himself as a plain-spoken, straightforward alternative — someone who is not "silver-tongued" and is a businessman who makes good decisions.

Lyerly, at 28 the youngest candidate, said she cares about the community, sees it changing and wants to be part of the future leadership. She works with Historic Salisbury Foundation.

Lyerly has stressed working toward a cleaner and more attractive city, marketing the history and arts, creating a healthy and walkable community, promoting community-based programs to support education and supporting the downtown.

Ward, a retired disabled veteran who moved to Salisbury about five years ago, said he has been an owner-president of two businesses and the managing partner of a third. In Charlotte, he was a publications manager for an engineering firm and ran his own technical publishing company.

Ward said he helped to set up the PBS affiliate television station in Charlotte, WTVI, in

the late 1960s.

Ward has touted his conservative, Republican credentials and early on has communicated with voters mostly through e-mails and party connections.

The Post asked each of the incumbents what he or she is proudest of as a city council member. For the challengers, the Post asked what kind of issue they saw themselves being involved and identified with.

Issues, achievements

Boone said communications between the city staff and council and with the general public need to improve. "By the times things make the rounds, no one is responsible for anything," he said, saying communications have been "sorely lacking."

Burgin, an architect for 32 years, said he's proudest of his council work dedicated to managing Salisbury's growth. He chaired the committee that formulated the Salisbury Vision 2020 growth plan and co-chaired the Land Development Ordinance Committee. The new ordinance, which is

headed toward council approval, is meant to streamline the development process while codifying zoning and design standards.

Kennedy, a retired educator and owner of a Salisbury realty company, said he convinced the council that Salisbury was only as strong as its weakest neighborhood. It led to establishment of the Salisbury Community Development Corp. to help first-time homebuyers in the purchase of homes in targeted neighborhoods.

Kluttz said a good working relationship among races is the foundation for a successful city. A better understanding of all populations can only help the city provide better services and make it a safer place for all citizens, she added. Kluttz said race relations are the first step in dealing with issues such as public safety and youth problems.

Lewis, senior vice president of a bank, pointed to his work with Burgin as co-chairmen of the Land Development Ordinance Committee. Lewis said the ordinance could enable imple-

mentation of the Salisbury 2020 Plan — which calls for sustainable development, recreational open space and infrastructure that respects the needs of pedestrians as well as the cars.

Lyerly said the city must focus on its water supply. The severe drought and Gov. Mike Easley's call for conservation, the city needs to examine all possibilities for maintaining its future water supply, she said.

Ward said Salisbury can begin to grow by taking a step into the 21st century by not letting the city's history and preservation efforts overshadow other important issues. Historic preservation in measured doses is fine, he said, but it shouldn't head the list of civic obligations.

Woodson, owner of a dry cleaning business, said he has always been accessible and is constantly meeting with citizens and responding to their needs. He makes decisions as a council member based not on what he wants but what citizens want, he said.

Susan Kluttz



*candidate for
re-election to
the Salisbury
City Council*

*urges you to vote tomorrow.
Polls are open from
6:30 A.M. to 7:30 P.M.*

*"You will be selecting the City Council members
who will mold the future of Salisbury.
Your vote counts."*

Paid for by Committee to Elect Susan Kluttz

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Uncontested races on ballot

Granite Quarry and Faith have uncontested races for their town boards, and mayoral candidates in Cleveland, Landis and Spencer are running unopposed. Candidates are:

Granite Quarry Board of Aldermen: Jacob (Jake) E. Fisher Jr., Jim LaFevers and Mary S. Ponds.

Faith Board of Aldermen: Gary Gardner, Bill Johnson, W. Todd Peeler, Maxey Sanderson, Mark Shores.

Cleveland mayor: James A. Brown.

Landis mayor: Dennis Brown.

Spencer mayor: Jody Everhart.