



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:	Steve Friedman
Age/Race/Gender (with preferred pronouns):	52/White/Male (he/him/his)
Occupation>Title/Retired:	VP, Marketing, Mutual Drug
Position sought:	Carrboro Alderman
Headshot Photograph (published with your questionnaire responses):	 A headshot photograph of Steve Friedman. He is a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a brown and white checkered button-down shirt. He is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The background is a dense forest of green trees.

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 am a lifelong Democrat and have been active in our local entrepreneurial community trying to help small business grow in our area. I was involved in support of various organizations within Carrboro High School having put both my children through our school system. Having spent my entire career working with small businesses, which I believe to be the backbone of our economy, I have gained a real insight into some gaps in our community and our efforts to support the growth of business to create a more vibrant and diverse economy for our town. It's a great town but I have real concerns that we can be doing more for all of our citizens. My perspective is that we need to take significant steps to improve communications about the major public projects that impact hundreds of citizens. I will work every day to improve access, to encourage small business, diverse businesses to flourish and to take steps to improve sustainability.

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

I'm running because I believe all politics are local and what goes on counts. I am disgusted by the discourse that we are having at the national level and the abandonment of our values not just as Americans but as humans. I am running because I want to make a difference in local politics and help to make Carrboro a model for what responsible and sustainable local government looks like. But most importantly I want to help represent all of Carrboro and not just the most vocal or influential. I want to improve communications within our town to include all voices in the decisions that are made. I am running because I want to be able to assist our citizens start their own small businesses, live in affordable housing, and ensure that we manage our growth in a way that makes accommodation for the people who are here now and that gentrification does not push out our most vulnerable citizens.

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 the REI but if elected will commit to register and attend. In my professional career I have had the opportunity to work with a broad range of people from a diverse background. In my leadership roles I have consistently advocated for a team that crosses racial, gender, and ethnic lines as it is not just the right thing to do from an equity standpoint, but it is also smart from a business perspective. As our workforce becomes more diverse, I have had to advocate for the need to have these voices at the table. Additionally having a diverse group of leaders attracts a diverse and engaged group of employees which creates a more sustainable work environment.

Housing Affordability and Local Taxation

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

To grow the supply of housing in Carrboro will require multiple strategies to build on what is currently underway. The Town offers modest tax support to support affordable housing. This is important but must also be coupled with efforts in long term planning and zoning. In order to grow affordable housing, this must be a clear priority rather than an add on to our agenda. There are workable options to be explored however we must encourage developers to take the risks needed to create additional housing, mini houses, cohousing, student rentals, and senior housing. To create the space for the housing we could work with private owners who have existing tracts of land that are being taxed but not being used. This would provide an excellent opportunity for us to gain the real estate needed to build the housing and then earmark the dollars collected to build, dense, affordable housing that would couple well with the desire to expand public transportation. This effort requires commitment and a willingness to work with all parties and to ensure the infrastructure is in place to support it. We know that Carrboro is a great town with a variety of housing options, but frankly, we are limited. We need to directly address the barriers that we face and pilot initial options in order for us to be the inclusive community we strive to be. I would offer to convene housing forums to discuss opportunities for our town and promote these among residents, renters, developers, and real estate professionals. To gain the public support we need for these initiatives, the residents of Carrboro and Orange County at large must understand the need.

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?

We have to be circumspect as we initiate plans where we offer housing as a defined benefit of working for our town. I wholeheartedly support the ideal that people should be able to work where they live and live where they work for a number of reasons. It creates a more cohesive community, lessens our environmental impact, and engages a broader sector who both have residential and professional concerns. We can provide benefits similar to a 401(k) program where the town provides matching funds to municipal employees that can be used to help offset the cost of housing in Carrboro. I don't believe our town should get involved in real estate ownership and management of specific housing for town employees. Instead we can work with local landlords to help them with their vacancy rates through offering programs for town employees who can receive discounts through town initiatives and providing an inventory of available housing that has been identified at predetermined rates.

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

A key tenant of my campaign is engaging all residents of Carrboro and the residents of public housing deserve to have their voices heard. The sad fact is that often these residents are the ones who often don't have time to engage due to time constraints based on transportation, employment, and family issues. I don't expect everyone to come down to public hearings at Town Hall however as a town we can do a better job of engaging residents in their homes and neighborhoods and bringing their concerns to our board. Our town has in place a number of "Advisory Boards" who inform leadership about a broad range of topics. Our current "Affordable Housing Advisory Commission" can work to not only address policy but work to actively bring the voices of the community to the Alderman. We must work together to fully engage these residents, especially when there are policies and proposals that impact them directly and/or they can provide feedback on the execution of current efforts.

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?

Aging in Place (AIP) is a central issue for one of the businesses that I work with today. AIP is becoming not only a desire for seniors but a necessity for communities as care for our elderly becomes a larger issue over the next 20 years. And the fact is that it is far more economical to support AIP than it is to provide institutional housing for our seniors. To do this effectively requires investment in technology to put the monitoring and controls in place to maintain oversight of our seniors and ensure that their health needs are being met. This includes in-home monitors, automated prescription dispensers, and communication devices throughout the home that enable seniors to live independently yet with immediate access to urgent care. This also includes setting up small, comprehensive care centers that allow seniors to get their medication and frequent screening services all from one central location. This helps to centralize their care and minimizes the transportation issue to multiple sites.

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

As I have advocated in a recent article about the importance of a diverse business community (<https://www.carborosteve.com/news/the-importance-of-a-diverse-business-community-in-carboro>) I believe a diverse base is critical to the success of our town. If we become homogeneous we are at greater risk of failure and not fulfilling our goal of becoming a vibrant and inclusive community. Diversifying our tax base is as much about economic diversity as it is about ensuring that we provide opportunity for all. This includes putting in incentives for women and minority owned businesses and working with our town economic advisors to help incubate these new endeavors. By providing economic opportunity in Carrboro we will in turn encourage this diverse set of business owners to live in town as they become an integral part of the community. Our town is in a great position to grow and we must make sure that as we grow that everyone has a chance to participate in that growth and that businesses and housing are made accessible at all income levels.

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

There is no simple solution when it comes to discussing “possible” displacement and I wouldn’t want to speculate. However, a society is based upon how it treats its most vulnerable members and Carrboro should be sure that the viewpoints and needs of the residents are considered in all scenarios. Should such a scenario become necessary it should not be done without input from the residents directly, the entity looking to cause the displacement, and a clear cut plan for implementation should such a move become a reality. The key here is open communication and assurance that should a drastic measure be necessitated that there is acceptance from all parties.

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

My position with the Rosemary Street Vision starts and ends with the will of the residents. As the vision was being discussed there was significant input from the residents of the neighborhood. Their concerns ranged from not having the area become too heavily populated with student housing and maintaining recreational spaces in the neighborhood, to providing traffic calming measures and ensuring an ongoing and vibrant community. I share these ideals as not only forward thinking for the community but for our town at large. These residents must be assured that as our town grows that their interests are protected and that they have advocates in leadership that want to preserve their community. This includes a partnership with the university and programs like the Good Neighbor Initiative to help communicate their needs and set an expectation for the neighborhood, ensuring that a limited number of cars are allowed to park at each residence, and that the zoning regulations that were agreed upon are enforced.

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?

Carrboro is a town whose population will continue to grow because of its quality of life and welcoming community. Ensuring that this growth does not come at the expense of its current communities is especially important if we are going to maintain the values and integrity that make us who we are today. With population growth and zoning regulations comes density, which in turn causes prices and property values to rise which, many in our lower income and disadvantaged neighborhoods, provides the opportunity for outside speculators to take advantage. The town should adopt carve-outs for these neighborhoods that include access to services, financial support, and other consultative efforts to let the residents know the options that they have available to them.

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?

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

We must ensure that our public transportation is accessible to more neighborhoods and that we coordinate this with neighboring communities. Putting in more point-to-point routes to downtown Chapel Hill, Durham, and RTP will help to give residents greater options to not get in their cars. Downtown Carrboro is a very walkable city but we need to provide access from other areas where more economically disadvantaged residents live. Adequately providing frequent public transit from these areas will help to give residents easy access to their work as well as options when they shop. My own experience with public transportation for work purposes has been limited. As it stands now it would take me over two hours each way to get to my work in RTP. I have used public transportation in town (as well as biking and walking) and have found for short distances in town it is effective. However to open broader opportunities to our residents throughout the Triangle-area, it is critical that we work with other municipalities to help provide the routes that will benefit a broader population.

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?

One of the great things about Carrboro, North Carolina is that its environmentally conscientious and its residents are receptive to new ideas about how they can be better stewards of the environment and their community. Carrboro’s recent growth has not been smooth, and it has often come on the backs of those more economically disadvantaged residents. The burden imposed on those residents includes inadequate access to healthy food, inadequate transportation, and increased housing in flood-prone areas. For example, in the Rodgers Road neighborhood of Carrboro great strides were made to connect the neighborhood with sidewalks but the need is still great not only there but in other economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. As I have done throughout my career, my goal as a leader in the community will be to ensure that all of our residents have a voice in the development of their town and that economic inequalities do not become environmental inequalities. This has to be done with the understanding that policies that impact one area positively may actually have a negative impact on others. We see this frequently when looking at options to reduce our carbon footprint that there are differing opinions on the best options to move forward. The same care must be taken when

implementing greenway and other public works projects to ensure that we are not encroaching or negatively disrupting communities of color.

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?

This is more than just a local issue but actually a national crisis. As we discover members of different police forces throughout the country are members of alt-right and white nationalist organizations it's clear that there is work to be done to ensure that the people who are entrusted with our safety are concerned about all of the citizens.

There are lots of models being used in our town to try and create more transparency and connection between the police force and the residents. National Night Out and Coffee with a Cop are two ways that the police force is putting themselves out in the community. However more prescribed and educational efforts need to be made as well so that the police force is aware of the individual needs and concerns of our residents. The philosophy of community policing is to know the neighborhood, the neighborhood leaders, and most importantly the culture. Educational efforts are a two-way dialogue to not only inform the police of the needs of the community but for the police to make the community aware of their efforts to provide safety.

I suggest active measures to diversify public safety. Active outreach to community organizations goes a long way but it's not enough to just post a job. It takes an active community outreach to make it happen. I would like to study how we recruit candidates and what works in other similar communities. This also means sensitivity to reaching out to those who are having domestic issues, psychological issues, or are otherwise at risk. This is a special responsibility and we need to do all we can to make sure our force represents our population.

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?

As with any public department the operations, decisions, and outcomes of their work must be available for review by the public. Yes, I believe in citizen review from this department as well as other departments. Police departments must be available to answer for their actions whether their efforts result in a positive or negative effect. One of the most important ways that we can grow and learn as a community is to understand these actions and remedy any transgressions so that they do not become systemic SOPs. This will also help to create an open dialogue between the police and the residents on how the force is doing its work and what measures can be taken to ensure that their enforcement is aligned with the values of our community.

Public safety is a serious issue on our campuses—our patrol officers should be encouraged to share resources and training opportunities when they come up. I am not aware of any restrictions on citizen review of UNC police but would welcome a discussion on how our departments can work together to perform more efficiently. This is a historic period where we would serve ourselves well to collaborate and examine public safety issues and policies.

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?

- What is your assessment of the current relationship between the two entities?

- 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?
- 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 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?

Following the Baumgartner study I think a lot of municipalities, including Carrboro, became acutely aware of the systemic race-based issues that they had faced. A number of proposals to mitigate this came from an internal investigation into our police force. From that effort a number of policy recommendations were made including, identifying existing policies that result in disproportionate policing and change those policies to mitigate the impact of race, adopt written policies explicitly prohibiting racial profiling, and conduct periodic review of law enforcement officers' stop, search and arrest data. These institutional-wide ideas along with some other which include mandating racial equity training for all officers, adopting measures to increase public confidence in official police response to police misconduct allegations, and increasing civilian involvement in police decision-making are all steps in the right direction. However the one thing that I didn't see was a plan for oversight of this effort and updates to the progress that is made.

Business and Labor

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

While our town certainly cannot mandate a living wage (although I would support it) we can promote other efforts to encourage the businesses in our town to maintain a living wage. The first thing we would do is identify exactly what constitutes a living wage for our area. Orange County is one of the areas with the highest cost of living within the state of North Carolina. Next we would communicate to employers the importance of paying a living wage. Not only for the benefit of our community, but also for the health of their business. Third we would look to promote those businesses in town that provide a living wage to their employers. Just as I support a "Local First" initiative where we support local businesses in contracting for work we would look at the wages that a contractor pays their employees as a determinant of whether the town would choose to use them. And finally we celebrate and promote those businesses that support a living wage which helps to increase the number of qualified candidates who apply to work for the company and helps to drive consumers to them.

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?

In my conversations a few years ago on this topic I spoke with a number of African-Americans who stated that they felt that the City of Durham was far more welcoming to their business ventures than Chapel Hill/Carrboro. I was working with an incubator in Durham (the American Underground/NC IDEA) and the overwhelming perception was that they could draw from a more diverse talent base in Durham. In addition they wanted to establish businesses in areas where they

felt like there would be more people who shared their same viewpoints and thought that Durham was more closely aligned with that.

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

I don't know of government programs that have systemic bias towards entrepreneurs but I do know that when I have participated in entrepreneurial programs that the demographic of those programs is predominantly young, white, and male. These programs are often underwritten by venture or seed firms who are looking to work with early-stage companies and I think they do not work hard enough to include a broad range of diverse talent.

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?
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I think that it is incumbent upon our local officials to spend time every year with the students in our school to talk with them about the work that they do and their role in the government. Creating greater civic engagement is incredibly important if we want to develop the next generation of leaders. This can be done through presentations in the schools at age appropriate levels but should be done annually. On a personal level I have actually created and hired paid positions for college students in my campaign. I am also working to engage some politically active high school students to participate in the work as well to give them exposure to local politics and help them better understand the issues we are facing in our town. I think that our town is in a unique position to take a stand and to support anti-racists groups on campus and in our town. With the recent issue on campus around the Confederate statue it is a great opportunity for our town to make our will known. There are proactive measures we can take in support of these activities and I would suggest we take advantage of every one.

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 to a better job of welcoming immigrants to our community without creating tensions with other underserved communities?

All of us are familiar with the challenges of our immigrant population, whether it is immigrants from Mexico or from Myanmar. Our religious institutions, community groups and town governments have an obligation to reach out and offer a sincere welcome to our newest citizens. Community information fairs are one model. Reaching out through churches, synagogues, mosques are another. Our community dinner is a great model of outreach. Sharing customs, sharing language build toward a larger understanding. Having an advisory board to help represent and promote our newest citizens would go a long way towards helping to put in place policies that address these issues. Carrboro, to me, is a welcoming environment and we can do more. Our civic leaders should make every effort to make it a warm and friendly environment.

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?

There is a lot of concern about whether the Federal government is ready for a full and accurate census. There is also significant consternation on the part of our immigrant community that this is being used as a tool to single them out and identify citizenship. It is critical to the functioning of Carrboro to get a full and fair accounting of all of our citizens. To ready ourselves continues to address the communication issue that we face. Informing citizens about the census process, what it means, and why it is important to participate is a central tenant to helping Carrboro be counted. Carrboro should work with community leaders, especially in marginalized areas, to help them speak to the residents so they can clearly understand the purpose of the census and how their participation will impact the services and support they receive from our government.

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 have both the right and the obligation to get involved with the critical issues impacting our community. Living wage, immigration and reproductive rights are three important examples. These issues impact every citizen and we should not sit idly by. I believe in more open conversations about the issues facing Carrboro. Whether it's a town hall, an open meeting about a local concern, or participating in a march for justice, local government officials should join hands with citizens and take those issues to every level of government impacted. Carrboro has a long history of citizen involvement. I strongly support more communications, more open meetings and more transparency. We have certain obligations as public officials concerning municipal budgets.