

**2007 Falls of the James Group  
of the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club  
Candidate Questionnaire**

Questions represent environmental and political issues important to our organization.

Responses will be used in evaluation for a possible endorsement by the Sierra Club.

**Please respond by mail or e-mail by September 15, 2007**, to show your interest in endorsement, to:

Barbara Williamson, 2710 E. Leigh Street, Richmond, VA 23223-6514

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Candidate: Joseph B. Walton Phone: 804-677-9090

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County: Powhatan District: One

1. Accountability: What are your past accomplishments or positions in protection of the environment?

I have always been an outdoors kind of person. Growing up my family camped a lot and I earned my Eagle Scout rank which help me gain an understanding and appreciation for environmental stewardship.

Two years ago I was invited to join a concerned group of individuals in Powhatan to form a grassroots civic organization called Powhatan Tomorrow. Ultimately, I was a co-chair until my decision to run for the BOS. PT's goal is to keep Powhatan unique in the Richmond area with a vigorous economy, healthy environment and diverse community.

My Vision for Powhatan is a highly regarded open-space focused central Virginia community. I believe Powhatan is very unique in its history and environment and also its proximity to business and commercial enterprise. I will do my utmost to ensure a unique, open-space focused community for the future.

2. Challenges: What do you see as the top three environmental problems facing your locality, and what would you do as a local official to solve those problems?

The top challenge is to preserve an open-space focused community in the face of further westward commercial and residential development that has not traditionally been considered open-space focused. The second is James and Appomattox River watershed stewardship along the many miles of frontage and tributary frontage. Third is a general water quality awareness within the county as the vast majority of the county is well/septic.

As a local representative I will work to preserve the open-space focused community by implementing a Comp Plan, zoning and ordinances that ensure sufficient options to landowners to encourage the type of development that will be both sustainable and environmentally friendly but also good for our economy. For example, the recent enabling legislation regarding transfer of development rights (TDR) is something that I will look forward to reviewing and implementing.

I will also work closely with the Monacan Soil and Water Conservation District Directors (MSWCDD) and organizations such as the Sierra Club, DEQ, Chesapeake Bay Foundation/Act, local chapter of Dark Sky and many others whose interests are in preserving the county's environment. Those organizations offer expertise in identifying the potential issues related to stewardship and the

potential solutions. I will also encourage conservation easements. The Capital Region Land Conservancy is active in Powhatan and their efforts will be supported with political will from me as a Supervisor.

3. Lack of transportation choices traps people in their cars and pollutes the environment. What would you do for your locality's transportation plans in the future to ensure more livable, bikable, walkable communities, including regional cooperation options?

Powhatan needs a future transportation map. We do not have one that effectively shows future roads. By projecting future roads and including modern planning techniques in our corridors we have an opportunity to uniquely craft a transportation plan that includes features that will continue to keep Powhatan unique but also accessible to residents and visitors in all modes of transportation.

Transportation Oriented Development is a technique that has many emerging examples in Virginia and those examples are where Powhatan should learn about the successes and failures of implementing progressive planning policy.

There are also VDOT funds related to the six year Primary Road development for which Powhatan has not submitted priorities in the last four years. Regionally speaking Powhatan can and should be a partner to help improve the region's transportation planning. While we are not a central locality there are opportunities for involvement and certainly direct planning with our neighbors in Goochland and Chesterfield. Perhaps the most significant transportation issue and one with heavy regional planning needs is light rail. Powhatan should be at the table and a supporter of light rail planning.

4. The Sierra Club believes that public and private funds can lead to significant greenways development. What steps will you recommend to further this approach for contiguous protection of our fragile streams, open spaces, and historic places?

The recent enabling legislation for TDR seems to have been successful in other regions around the country and I believe will be helpful in preserving Powhatan's open-space focused community. I will stay open to experts in the area related to greenway development and progressive ideas to protect water, land and history. The aforementioned organizations and groups have expertise and experience and bring experiences from other localities to bear on these issues as they inform and provide solutions.

5. The Sierra Club supports urban renewal for more livable communities, and reclaiming blighted areas within cities to promote affordable housing for all citizens. There is much degradation of our inner cores, but also much that is being restored. Would you work with citizens and with groups in your district to upgrade adequate public facilities including water, gas, electricity, and transportation? How would these improvements best be addressed?

This question certainly has much application in the city and more developed localities but there are a few areas in the county that political will and public attention can be focused to help raise the standards. For instance, there are about 100 houses in the county that lack indoor plumbing. Those issues and those like them are most efficiently and best addressed by the organizations working closest to those affected (Comm. Action Agency, Health Dept, Elect. Co-op) with the Board of Supervisors providing the political will to help solve issues for folks that are sometimes forgotten.

I will also promote quality growth and development that has shown a higher degree of sustainability over the years to help prevent areas of degradation from occurring. In my area an example would be Sycamore Square and the Village of Midlothian. That community has been able to preserve its integrity and viability for many years through strict planning. There are other areas of the

US 60 corridor that have not been as successful. My goal would be to bring the good ideas to Powhatan and resist the bad ideas to keep Powhatan a community of which all citizens can be proud.

6. The Sierra Club supports prevention of stream degradation and protection of our wetlands and water resources through education, restoration and, where needed, increased local and state enforcement of Virginia's Erosion and Sediment Control laws. What is your position on this issue? What are your county's future water issues and needs?

Powhatan is currently working on E&S ordinance tightening and I believe that it is important do so to make sure we are good stewards with self-imposed best practices to protect the environment. Again, working with the MSWCDD, the Sierra Club, DEQ and even borrowing concepts and regulations from the Chesapeake Bay Act (though Powhatan is not bound by CBA) are important and will be beneficial in the long run to preserve a unique open-space focused community.

Powhatan is a partner in the Cobb's Creek reservoir in Cumberland that will be a good project for many reasons but most importantly because it is a multi-jurisdictional, collaborative and environmentally sustainable project to share James River water for many years in the future. Cobb's Creek, under the auspices of state regulation, will be a wonderful attraction and recreation facility for the region as well.

7. The Sierra Club supports "clean smokestacks" and increased air and water pollution control/monitoring to protect the health of our most endangered citizens, Virginia's children, seniors, and the infirm. Pollution in your locality can be reduced through tighter zoning restrictions and increased monitoring. How would you work with industry, the Virginia DEQ, and the general assembly to ensure standards are reached for your constituents?

My goal is to promote quality growth for Powhatan. Clean businesses are sustainable businesses and to that end I would support zoning that helps Powhatan get our development right the first time with low impact commercial development. I will continue to rely on experts in the area of environmental issues to make sure the high standards I have for our county's development are met.

8. "Smart Growth" does NOT mean NO GROWTH, or an attack on an individual's property rights. Smart growth choices involve planning growth districts for enterprise and residents that will consider: pollution that comes with industrial, residential and commercial development; built-in greenways, adequate parks and water resources; and the cost of schools, services, and transportation impacts with the expansion into previously undeveloped land. What is your experience with development of a Comprehensive Plan, what is your position on transportation choices that take into consideration land use planning, and how would you develop for "smart growth"?

In learning about planning and development over the last few years I have worked out a phrase that better explains the 'smart growth' I will seek for Powhatan. That is: I want quality growth and development to preserve an open-space focused community for Powhatan. That does not mean one size fits all for the entire county but I will work to create a diverse community through progressive planning to incorporate the goals mentioned in the question above.

I will seek Comp Plan changes (it is currently under re-write), zoning and ordinance changes that will ensure quality growth and development. A rising tide raises all boats and I believe that using progressive planning techniques is best for all stakeholders in the long term. There are many examples of reasonable but quality standards for development all around the region and country and there is no reason Powhatan cannot learn from others successes and failures.

9. The Sierra Club supports citizen involvement in transportation planning, updates to changing Comprehensive Plans, and zoning cases through frequent District meetings. Would you be willing to commit to announced Citizen Meetings in your district to obtain feedback and for shared discussions on growth topics such as

potential industry and its impacts, transportation plans under consideration, and residential zoning and its impacts to the school and city budgets?

Absolutely. I have committed to at least quarterly meetings in the district to give citizens an opportunity to understand what is going on and to tell me what they think. I believe these meetings are an important part of responsible representation and that through their informality but regularity they are more accessible and more beneficial to myself and the citizens than a large meeting room with a dais, podium, etc. As the need arises, I would consider more frequent or focused meetings depending on the current issues.

As a member of the Board of Supervisors I will support public involvement and accessibility for all citizens of the county. Where appropriate I support opportunities to garner citizen input on issues of long-term impact. Currently we are review/re-writing the Comp Plan and I believe maximum citizen input (electronic, in person, postal) is the best way to effectively formulate the Comprehensive Plan.

10. Please provide your vision for your district.

Starting with My Vision for the county: a highly regarded open-space focused community - and My Vision for the Board of Supervisors: dedicated to excellence in public service for the county and region - My Vision for my district is more specific.

My district needs objective representation and a representative focused on cooperative results and leadership for the betterment of the whole county's future. I am a professional that owns a home on a couple acre lot with the ability and desire to vote on every issue that comes before the Board. I will always seek to make my vote an effective vote by negotiating with my fellow Board members to do what is right for the county's future but also to always make progress.

**Dear Falls of the James Chapter,**

**Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions. I look forward to your endorsement of my campaign to help start a collaborative relationship that will be mutually beneficial. The Sierra Club's endorsement is important to me and I will promote it during my campaign.**

**Sincerely,**

**Joe Walton**

Thank you for your participation,  
Falls of the James Group  
Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club