



**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:	Sammy Slade
Age/Race/Gender (with preferred pronouns):	45/Caucasian/male (He/Him/His)
Occupation/Title/Retired:	Carpenter
Position sought:	Carrboro Alderman

Headshot Photograph  
(published with your  
questionnaire responses):



### **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 have had numerous local civic and organizational affiliations ranging from my work as a community organizer in NC Warn, to grassroots leader as founder of the Carrboro Greenspace and Carrboro Community Garden coalition, to my nearly ten years of service on the Board of Alderman.

As a Board of Alderman member my priorities have been equity and climate change, and bringing a grassroots anti-racist and environmental justice lens to all of our work. My experiences are rooted locally and have produced tangible results spanning a spectrum that includes the economic, the community, social justice, and the environment.

Some of the insights I have gained from working for many years in the Carrboro/Chapel Hill area is that while there are a lot of good intentions and beliefs in progressive values, there is a gap between wanting to be progressive and truly addressing the systemic ways in which racism, poverty/inequality and environmental degradation are achieved and can be dismantled. When I served on the Rogers Rd. Task Force, I was one of the most outspoken and forceful proponents for finding the funds to support the Rogers Road community's decades long struggle to get reparations for having the landfill. In the process I was consistently struck by how unaware white people were of their privilege, and of the historical and ongoing oppression faced by this community. For example, white members would

try to do the prudent thing in how they imagined their constituents would expect them to be fiscally responsible, without recognizing that what they were using as a measure of fiscal responsibility lacked an accounting of the environmental racism that the Rogers Rd. Community had endured for far too long with far too many broken promises. Moreover, beyond the injustice of having had to endure the landfill in their back yards, there is a deeper reality of a very long legacy of racist history with deep roots dating back to the time of slavery. One of the issues facing our community is insufficient awareness of the ways institutional and systemic racism operate, and that it takes work to see and understand this when you have been a beneficiary of the white privilege and the white supremacist culture that is dominant. That being said, because people in our area want to do the right thing, and want to be progressive, we have a lot of potential. Personally, having attended the Racial Equity Institute Training Phases I and II, and having had the privilege to work with and learn from colleagues, and peers in my community organizing experience, and on the Board of Alderman, I am hoping we can lessen this gap.

Similarly when it comes to addressing issues related to the environment and issues of poverty, homelessness and inequality, our town suffers from a gap between its desires to be progressive, and being caught in the models of capitalist success and green economics. This can look like tensions between economic development and excluding or isolating poor and homeless people as was the case with the IFC a few years back, or promoting structured parking rather than employ more out of the box approaches like focusing on access through public transport and many alternatives to building a parking deck. I believe that we need to name this gap and work to educate people to understand the larger systems—economic, cultural and political—that maintain them.

Finally and despite the critiques I mention above, I know Carrboro to be a place that its citizens love and where they want justice, and want to build a more livable future. My goal as a Board Of Alderman member is to make us see that we at the local level of governance can make a difference. When the state and federal government are not supportive the burden is upon the town and the county to make up the difference. As municipal elected officials we must be vocal in holding our county, state and federal representatives accountable.

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

I am running for re-election to the Carrboro Board of Alderman because I believe that Carrboro – the people of Carrboro – have the capacity to act with the speed, boldness, justice and creativity that the climate emergency that we find ourselves in is calling for. I would like to continue serving on the board to facilitate Carrboro's action, to inspire and to be inspired by those who I would represent, not being afraid to challenge some of the “political pragmatism,” “business as usual” and habitual ways of doing things to help move the overton window to where we can then take the necessary climate emergency action that is called for by the science and morality.

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.*

The last time I did the Racial Equity Training (REI) was in 2014 when I did phases one and two. Yes, I will commit to doing the training again. The most impactful aspect of the experience for me was when white culture was contrasted with relational culture. While not a point of the trainers, and certainly not more important than the ongoing pain of people of color, I came to realize that whiteness “white culture” is an oppressor of the oppressor.

I have applied racial equity frameworks a lot in my work. Instances include my work on the Rogers Road taskforce (as described above); I supported efforts to make the town undergo training with the Government Alliance on Race Equity (GARE); and also supported racial equity coaching on the Food Policy Council and also in the Family Success Alliance, both of which I am a part.

### **Housing Affordability and Local Taxation**

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

I am proud to have served on the affordable housing task force which developed the Affordable Housing Goals and Strategies document. I support all the strategies in that document (can be found here: <https://townofcarrboro.org/1019/Affordable-Housing-Plan-Goals-and-Strate> ). Some major actions taken since the creation of the document that I have also supported include:

- a. a dedicated staff person to implement the goals and strategies,
- b. creation of the Affordable Housing Committee to guide the implementation of the strategy and goals
- c. and most recently 1.5 cent increase in taxes phased in over three years to generate the sustained revenue necessary for supporting affordable housing.

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?*

Strategies that have been identified in the town’s affordable housing goals and strategies document or community climate mitigation plan that must be prioritized to address both housing affordability and climate mitigation are:

- a. Finding ways to reduce the money spent on energy by low income people through facilitation of energy efficiency and renewable energy to low income housing units.
- b. Reducing the cost burden of transportation through:

- a. determining whether modifications to parking requirements could materially affect homeownership prices, development opportunities, and density. Unbundled parking for condominiums and townhouses should be included in this analysis.
- b. increasing walkability and biking
- c. continuously improving public transit access.
- d. Assure that planning locally and regionally for future transit priorities and policies reflect affordable housing goals
- e. Fully evaluate and reduce housing density restrictions to slow the climb of housing prices and diversify housing stock, particularly in high transit areas.

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

First I want to say that I truly understand that not everyone is able to be engaged with local government because they are working hard to pay the bills as it is, often working more than one job to do so! I do believe that we should consider a stipend for people under a low income threshold so that they can participate on advisory boards. The board could also have some meetings at the public housing site in Carrboro.

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?*

Some measures that can help make it possible for seniors to age in place include:

- Grants for retrofits to allow changes in mobility
- Examine and consider reducing restrictions on accessory dwelling units.

The town could support more affordable assisted living options by incentivizing the creation of amenities that are recognized by the Low Income Housing Tax Credit System, in proximity of targeted areas in town for affordable housing development. If the area is downzoned then the town can upzone it in exchange for the developer providing an affordable assisted-living option.

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

A longstanding goal of the town is to increase our commercial property tax base to alleviate the burden of ad valorem taxes on residents. The problem is that commercial tends to keep pace with residential growth so we have not achieved this goal very well.

I believe that through our comprehensive planning process that we have recently begun there is an opportunity to expand the areas where commercial development can happen. Transit corridors are prime candidates. In these corridors we can facilitate ‘missing middle’ mixed use development by making the development process for these smaller scale buildings streamlined and more within the reach of regular non-deep pocketed citizens. Also we can allow for income generating commercial uses in residential areas like those we have recently approved for the Rogers Rd. Neighborhood.

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

If the project to replace a mobile home park requires a rezoning then in exchange for the rezoning the town can negotiate with the developer to provide sufficient funds so that the town can then buy a property where the mobile home can be moved or tiny houses could be built.

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

I am not very familiar with the details of the Rosemary Street Vision. I will say that given its proximity to the historic Northside district, I am concerned that the development will both continue to raise property costs, pushing people out and not include sufficient black owned businesses. Given the history of the neighborhood and the larger context of continuing wealth disparities, I believe that any vision must create actual initiatives to help current residents remain, as well as give priority to locally and minority owned businesses. (The Jackson Center's community landbank is an interesting and exciting example of how these priorities can be maintained.)

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?*

The Jackson Center has been at the forefront on working against gentrification and creating novel initiatives like their landbank and the Good Neighbor Initiative. Continuing to support their work is imperative. The other opportunity on the horizon is that in the process for the town's comprehensive plan we be intentional about using a community first model as we did recently with the Rogers Rd. Community to make sure these communities are directing many of our development visions and plans. Lastly, we must implement the town's Affordable Housing Strategies and goals that have to do with supporting existing affordable housing:

- Grants for critical home repairs, energy efficiency, upfits to accommodate changing mobility, etc. +opportunities to decrease utility payments.
- Examine and consider reducing restrictions on accessory dwelling units. This strategy has the potential to support homeownership affordability by enabling homeowners to generate income to support their homeownership costs.

### **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?*

Keeping our fare-free bus system is obviously very important in making transit affordable. As for making the system function better we need to invest more into the system to expand routes and increase frequency. To do that we need to be more intentional about aligning our values with the resources we expend on transportation in general. Expenditures for upkeep of car infrastructure must be minimized and transit, walkable and bikeable infrastructure maximized. I believe that if we are intentional and clear about that goal and we are promoting more use of the public transportation system generally, then it is possible to hold harmless our locally owned businesses and build the demand necessary to warrant expanding frequency and routes.

Our EZ-rider system is excellent public transportation for senior citizens and the disabled who cannot use our fixed route bus system.

Personally, I use public transportation whenever I need to and can. As a carpenter with tools and often jobs that are out of the way, I don't use it as often as people who have a regular job (or school) that they need to commute to. Since having my daughter three years ago I have found myself catching the bus for pleasure often as she loves it; even at times when I don't have to because we are on bike. Some ways in which my use of the bus system has informed my perspective on the present system:

- I have been impressed by how full the bus can be at peak times when students are in town. That experience makes it clear that increasing frequency must be kept in pace with the demand.
- It sometimes happens and will likely happen more often in the near future that there is not enough room on the bus bike rack. We need to install, going forward, only three bike bus racks.

*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?*

The fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens requires the involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Below are a few areas where these definition touches down locally:

The Orange County landfill, where disposal of our household waste once happened, was a classic example of environmental racism. The landfill was sited in the backyard of a historically black community without their consent. It took many years and a lot of effort on the part of the Rogers Rd. Community to finally have the landfill closed to household trash. Aside from demanding the closure of the landfill the historic Rogers Rd. Community had some other demands: 1) extension of sewer and 2) a community center. I am proud to have served on the Rogers Rd. Community Task Force which eventually recommended that the various jurisdictions provide the necessary funding to realize those demands.

Some climate change environmental justice components include:

- In mitigating climate change we must assure that marginalized communities will be prioritized in receiving climate action benefits. For example, while all homes must be weatherized, marginalized community's homes should be first.
- We need to prepare for adaptation to climate change so that marginalized communities are safeguarded first.
- New sustainable infrastructure or greenway projects must involve people of color in the process towards their development.
- Climate justice, while not technically environmental justice has to do with how our climate mitigation goals are set, whether they reflect the climate debt we owe most of the rest of the world or not.

### **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?*

Our police department does good work in outreach to the community. The main area where the biggest impact can happen is in decreasing racial and ethnic disparities in law enforcement. To increase diversity we can set the expectation and make the request to the town manager.

*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?*

Yes I do support citizen review of police department, furthermore, I have asked that staff follow up with more information on how we could set such a review board up, to be presented the next time the police department does their presentation.

There is enormous power granted to the police. Impacts of policing choices should be accountable both individually and institutionally. The board of Alderman needs citizen support to do this accountability.

I am for citizen review of the UNC police department, the Campus Safety Commission is a good start, I only wish that the commission also included some of the most active students in recent campus protests.

*16. [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?*

Disparities in traffic stops and people who get searched is a nation-wide issue that Carrboro is clearly not immune too, as both the Baumgartner study (2014) and the follow up study by Dr. Deborah Weisel (2015) of NCCU commissioned by the Carrboro Police department also confirmed.

The town's response after those studies was to train all Carrboro police officers in 'Fair and Impartial' policing. Police administrators also attended the Racial Equity Workshop by Organizing Against Racism. Furthermore, traffic enforcement priorities were shifted towards moving violations, such as speeding, driving while impaired, and stop sign/light violations, which are major safety and quality of life concerns in Carrboro, instead of enforcing minor violations such as expired registration and turn signal violations. In response to a February 14<sup>th</sup> 2017 report by the Carrboro police department Dr. Baumgartner pointed out that contrary to the positive tone of the presentation, while there was an improvement from previous years, there was still a 90% increased likelihood people of color would be searched after a traffic stop compared to whites. On April 13<sup>th</sup> 2017 the Orange County Bias Free Policing Coalition also sent a letter to the chief, mayor and Board of Alderman with detailed essential and critical feedback with responses and recommendations for the town to address continued disparate impact of policing practices in Carrboro on people of color.

My expectation expressed via email is that the next presentation by the police department would incorporate recommendations in the letter by Orange Bias Free Policing and also respond to many of the concerns and requests by the Board of Alderman in reaction to the February 2017 report by the Carrboro police department.

### **Business and Labor**

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

The town currently only has 'carrots' to promote a living wage amongst private employers. We can provide monetary support to the Orange County Living Wage organization. Also, the town itself is modeling how to be a living wage employer as it is a certified living wage provider both for our full time and part time employees.

*18. 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?*

Systemic and institutional racism is real. People of color have been historically dispossessed and by consequence do not have the privileges and resources to start and relocate a business.

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

We need to allocate government loans and grants in an affirmative action manner for example by reducing the collateral that is required for loans if you are a person of color. More generally we need to make sure that economic development dollars that the county spends proportionally go to the towns relative to their populations, this is currently not the case as most of the dollars are going to the economic development districts located along I-40 to attract large out of county corporations.

## **Demography and Engagement**

20. In what ways can local governance better promote student engagement?

Students can be engaged by promoting their participation on advisory boards or by enlisting their help with projects that we are pursuing. We are fortunate to have students from Gillings School of Public Health, Department of City and Regional Planning, Institute for the Environment, School of Media and Journalism, School of Government, Daily Tarheel regularly participate this way. We could augment their participation by enlisting our communications director to have advertisements on the interior of buses like Chapel Hill does and fliers posted in departments describing the various ways they can participate. Climate Change Action is an area where we need all manner of participation; there is growth in awareness and passion for this issue in younger generations that we need to plug in with.

- *What are you doing to engage the student community in your campaign?*

My campaign is ultimately about climate change. I am working to organize high school and UNC students to join the global climate change strike that is happening on Friday Sept. 20.

- *What should be the role of local elected officials in engaging with student-lead, anti-racist organizing on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus?*

We need to be supportive with public statements and by assuring that our Carrboro police force is not engaged on the protection of racist statues; or the protection of racists over the protection of regular outraged people.

21. *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?*

We can have promotional materials developed by our communication director to be delivered in the form most preferred/used by the non-native English speaking population.

- *How can our town do a better job of welcoming immigrants to our community without creating tensions with other underserved communities?*

Provisions of resources and services must be equitable with both immigrants to our community and other underserved communities.

22. *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?*

The effort is being led by the county. The town has appointed Barbara Foushee to be our representative to the counties' census committee. The state has yet to allocate funds to support the Census in NC. If this doesn't happen the town must work with the other jurisdictions to find a way to fund the count.

### **Matters of State-Level Jurisdiction**

23. *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.)?*

Annually we have a legislative breakfast with our state and federal representatives. Before that breakfast the board of Alderman had a work session when we identify the issues that we would like to address with our representatives. Outcomes have not been very encouraging since both state and federal governments have been extremely backwards as they have been controlled through undemocratic means by Republicans. Without state and federal support we are left with 'carrots' to achieve our goals. 2020 will be critical in flipping the US Senate, the Presidency, and -now after gerrymandering maps are to be redrawn,- the state.