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1. What can elected officials do to preserve open spaces including forests? Are new ordinances or legislation needed? What should be the priority?

Healthy trees absorb and store carbon dioxide and release pure oxygen into the atmosphere and in the process filter out pollutants, thus greatly improving air quality. Forests protect aquifers and watersheds, thereby improving the quality of the water that we drink. Yet Sussex is the only jurisdiction in Delaware and neighboring Maryland counties without a unified plan to support forests.

Actions that elected officials can take:

Designate certain forestlands as "carbon reserves." The goal would be to protect mature forests for their carbon benefit, and allow these forests to become the old growth forests of tomorrow.

Increase buffer requirements to 150 feet next to all wetlands.

Require developers to replace all trees (one for one) destroyed in the process of building a project. The developer will be responsible to ensure that the planted trees remain healthy for at least two years after completion of project.

2. Clean water is fundamental to community health. What specific policies or practices are critical to ensuring that all waterways are clean and healthy?

Storm water runoff is a large contributor to polluting our local waterways. Fertilizers can negatively impact waterways through nutrient pollution, which is when too many nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorus, are added to bodies of water from fertilizers used in agriculture and in lawns and gardens, as well as from manure. Some of these impacts include algae blooms causing

the depletion of oxygen in surface waters, pathogens and nitrates in drinking water, and the emission of odors and gases into the air.

To mitigate runoff issues we need to establish adequate buffers to absorb the runoff before it reaches the waterways.

We should also invest in campaigns to educate residents on how they can minimize the impact of their use of fertilizers on their lawn.

It should be required that well water quality be analyzed and the results be disclosed to home buyers upon transfer of ownership. Home purchasers will be properly informed and homeowners will have an interest in ensuring that the quality of their water meets state standards. The regulation will have the effect of having an on-going monitoring system throughout the county so residents and officials can have a large database for decision making.

3. What do you consider the most critical infrastructure problems facing Sussex County, and how do you propose to address those problems?

The infrastructure problems facing Sussex County are so inextricably linked that is hard to rank. The impact on roads, emergency vehicle access, school capacity, medical services, and our environment are all important to understand.

We can require standards to be met before a residential development can be approved. Such as traffic metrics, ratios of students to classrooms/teachers and residents to doctors/dentists/hospital rooms.

4. Do you think Sussex County has a good balance between personal rights and community rights? If so, please explain your thinking. If not, how would you work to create a better balance?

Community rights are woefully underrepresented. Any type of poll of Sussex County residents reveals that the far majority of Sussex Countians are not happy with the rate of housing growth and the

negative impacts it is having on traffic, schools and accessibility to needed medical care.

I would meet with the councilpersons to come to a shared understanding of what the issues are. Then I would make myself available to work with them to develop solutions to the issues. I would educate residents on the role of County Council and Planning and Zoning to encourage them to be more engaged and vocal about what they expect from their councilpersons.

5. Can and should the working relationship between state and local officials be improved? If so, why and how?

The working relationship between state and local officials can and should be improved. It will take the combined will and resources at all levels of government to solve our current issues and plan for a future that the majority of residents can enjoy.

A better working relationship will start with good communication whereby issues are agreed upon, solutions are respectfully discussed, and agreements can be reached to address the concerns of residents.

6. Is there anything else you wish to add?

It is clear to all residents of Sussex County that growth continues to exceed our capacity to meet demands on infrastructure, education, and health care. As a state representative I will act to address these concerns by establishing honest and respectful communication with county council to establish common goals so that we can combine our resources and energies to solve the most pressing issues. I will work to inform and educate residents about how decisions are made in our county to encourage engagement so that the desires of the majority of residents cannot be overlooked. With a clear understanding of what is important to residents, local and state officials can work together to achieve our common goals.