

## Clawson's group on the offensive

Written by

Monday, 10 September 2007 21:14

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The self proclaimed “progressive candidates” pulled out the big guns at last night’s Boone Candidate forum at Appalachian State University.

Last night was a battle between the incumbent group and newly formed political action committee Citizens for Change. In fact, incumbent Mayor Loretta Clawson brought some names not on the ballot into the fray when discussing whether or not ASU students should take part in local elections.

Lynne Mason, Ethan Dodson &quot;The leader of this PAC, David Blust, has said that students should not be able to vote in local elections, look it up. Beware of these people who say they are Citizens for Change,&quot; she said.

Clawson said the Citizens for Change is made up of “rich people” who think they can buy votes through ad campaigns, referencing local developer Phil Templeton and On the Right Side’s Jim Hastings.



(Photo: Lynne Mason, Ethan Dodson)

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Lone Citizens for Change-endorsed town council incumbent Dempsey Wilcox fired back, however, saying the only ones running are the ones at the table- not David Blust.

With battle lines clearly drawn, incumbent councilman Bunk Spann had an easy way for citizens to remember the names of the "progressive candidates."

He sang S-C-M-A to the tune of the Village People's YMCA. That stands for Spann, Clawson, Lynne Mason and Liz Aycock.



Citizens for Change endorsed candidates include Tim Wilson for Mayor and Wilcox, Ethan Dodson and Stephen Phillips for town council.

Lone unendorsed candidate Jeremy Blocker said his lack of affiliation is a benefit. He does not have to adhere to anyone's special interests, he says. In fact, Blocker was initially the only candidate to come right out and say he's for liquor by the drink. Other candidates said they would consider it- if a petition showed the majority of Boone in favor of the measure. When asked directly, Dodson said personally, he's for liquor by the drink in Boone.

Candidates also discussed an issue of particular relevance- the town's relationship with ASU. Wilcox said the town's relationship with ASU was the worst it's been in his twelve years of office. "Progressive" candidates disagreed.

Even though the Education Building's proposed location has not been officially brought before the Council, it was a topic of discussion.

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While several Citizens for Change endorsed candidates and Blocker said the town could explore the possibility of the downtown location, Dodson, an ASU grad student, was the only candidate to give his full approval to the proposal.

&quot;I fully support the College of Education building, I'm an employee in there right now, the situation is dire, we need one in the very near future,&quot; he said.

Another hot topic was development- specifically student housing.

Incumbent candidates said the water issue is prohibiting growth. Until a new water source is found, growth must be limited, Council candidate Liz Aycock said. Dodson questioned why hotels have popped up and apartment complexes have been denied permits. Mason said the apartment complexes have had proposed locations outside of the town.IMG\_0913 (Small).jpg



And why don't we have a Target?

According to Mason, ordinances should not prohibit such stores. In fact, stores the size of Lowes Hardware are allowed under current regulations. Clawson said it's just another issue blown out of proportion by the Citizens for Change.

The next forum is Thursday night at the Watauga County Courthouse.

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