



BIZVOTES QUESTIONNAIRE



INFORMING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ENCOURAGING
POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

2011 Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce Board of Supervisors Candidate Questionnaire Algonkian District

1. What is the biggest issue/challenge you believe Loudoun faces in the upcoming term? Please use list format.

Suzanne Volpe (R)

www.suzannevolpe.com
20547 Quarterpath Trace Circle
Sterling, VA 20165
(703) 406-6147

My campaign is focusing on reforming government, lowering the tax burden, improving transportation, attracting employers, updating public safety and empowering parents, who are the primary educators of their children. But within the set of issues facing the Loudoun County Board, the most important is the county's anti-business image, which has caused the loss of commercial tax revenue, local jobs and an increased burden on the residential taxpayer.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

www.denise4algonkian.com
PO Box 651301
Sterling, VA 20165-1301
(703) 450-4260

Growing jobs and the business base. This challenge will only get harder as Federal jobs get cut-back during the Congressional budget battles in the coming months. Until recently, I thought the funding for Rail to Dulles was resolved, but now there seems to be a question about whether the project will go forward into Loudoun. This should be a number one priority if we want to bring more jobs to Loudoun.

2. How do you propose to address this challenge?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

If elected, I will work to reconfigure the Department of Economic Development (DED) so that it becomes a world class, professional investment promotion agency. The DED must become a full-service sales team and partner with our landowners and businesses to attract employers to the county. For potential "big fish", a county staff member should be assigned to them much in the same way you have a patient advocate, when you are at the hospital, to guide you through the process.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

By not adding to the problem with cut-backs in education, personnel, or other county functions. People move to Loudoun County because of the quality schools, and maintaining this reputation has primary importance. This is not a good time to add excessive residential development; a proper balance is needed. Loudoun must be more than a bedroom community but rather a place where people can find quality jobs so they don't have to commute for long hours. The lack of a good transportation system is what gives them pause when deciding to move their residence or business.



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3. Please detail the specific opportunities or regulatory measures that, if elected, you will work to see implemented to support the private sector's efforts to create jobs and make commercial investment in Loudoun County.

Suzanne Volpe (R)

The County must streamline the process for starting and/or expanding businesses. Many potential business owners select other counties as our regulatory processes are seen as too cumbersome. As one example, our various zoning categories are too complex; I will work with the Board, county staff and the private sector to clarify the categories, so a prospective business owner will know what uses are allowable on his property.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

Processes such as zoning and permit, as well as ordinances (such as signage) should be reviewed to see where they may be improved, made easier or applied in a smarter manner. The business property tax rate and depreciation schedule could be reviewed to make purchasing new capability less risky in the current business environment; some situations, such as startups, may carry more risk than others and be handled differently

4. What is your vision for supporting and growing the tourism industry in Loudoun County, and what changes do you feel are necessary to improve the infrastructure in the County to better support the success and growth of tourism and related economic development that can come with it?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

Promoting tourism should be an integral part of our promotion agency. Tourism generates revenue, while aiding our hospitality sector. Having a strong leisure and business travel market will assist in the promotion of the County to potential employers, which is an added benefit.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

It has been suggested that Leesburg should be a gateway for the Journey Through Hallowed Ground. When dealing with developers, proffer negotiations must be paramount to preserve such sites and characteristics. The preservation of archeological and Civil War sites, as well as historic structures and old cemeteries, must also include preserving the character of small towns and villages in Loudoun County. Proper enforcement of sign ordinances is required. People like to come to Loudoun to buy unique, fresh food. Permit requirements limiting temporary farm stands to 45 days should be reviewed.



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5. It is clear that Northern Virginia will not be able to count on the state or federal government to fully meet its transportation needs. As a rapidly growing jurisdiction, Loudoun County has unique challenges in the area of transportation. What actions do you believe Loudoun County should take at the local level to ensure citizens and businesses have an efficient multimodal transportation system?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

The Board of Supervisors must look strategically at the missing links within our existing road infrastructure and allocate resources to completing them. Overall, the Board of Supervisors must look across the region and collaborate with our neighbors to ensure the development of a solid transportation network, which will be functional in the future. We must also look outside the box for assistance. As an example, Delegate May has proposed a “revenue-sharing” bill many years ago. This bill was supported by multiple local county governments as well as multiple local chambers. The Board of Supervisors must endeavor to be creative in developing methods of supporting and funding our infrastructure needs.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

We need to bring in employers to Loudoun, not just retail development. The commuter bus options beyond the 7-to-7 time- frame may be possible. New developments (and options in older communities) could be required to include bike/pedestrian connections for commuters. Greater use of traffic circles could be implemented, as well as methods for reducing accident-prone left-hand turns. With limited resources, keeping the public fully informed of each project, including costs and benefits, may improve taxpayer support.



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6. It is the Chamber's view that the County's commercial tax base should be grown through expanded economic development, not through increasing taxes on existing businesses. Balancing the commercial tax base with the residential tax base is essential to the continued growth of Loudoun County and the stabilization of its tax base. In your view, what is the optimal ratio of commercial to residential tax base in order to achieve a balanced fiscal structure in the County and how would you propose to achieve this goal

Suzanne Volpe (R)

Our current commercial tax base is approximately 18% of county revenues (not including funds from the state). Ideally, Loudoun County should want to achieve 30%, which would alleviate the need for increasing pressure on commercial and residential taxpayers.

To expand our commercial tax base, the County must change its image. We must partner with the Chamber, the EDC and the LCVA. The Board of Supervisors should reinstitute the Board's Economic Development Committee. Our DED should have an individual staff member partner with businesses and landowners to serve as an extension of their sales team to promote the County to prospective businesses.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

During the four year tenure of the current BOS, the average yearly increase in the amount I pay in property tax on my home has been relatively low when compared to levels during the previous four year cycle of the earlier BOS. So, first, we should strive to maintain a reasonably stable level of residential tax income to the County. This is a measure of success. A return to out-of-control residential development will make the ratio worse and our taxes higher. In other communities, the ratio appears to vary from 20% commercial / 80% residential to 30% / 70%. Setting this goal is not clear-cut; growth management policies require review, consultation and collaboration with other jurisdictions.



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7. Reliable, affordable energy is required to support the needs of Loudoun's businesses and to sustain our community's high quality of life. Please discuss/explain what specific initiatives you would propose or support to develop a long-term, County-wide energy plan which emphasizes energy generation, transmission and conservation.

Suzanne Volpe (R)

The recent approval of the Green Partners project is an example of the Board of Supervisors promoting an energy plan. Ultimately, the Board along with the DED should promote the County to companies within the energy sector as these businesses lend themselves to long-term "residents" within the county. This is not only good for the environment, but good for the balance sheet.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

Energy-efficient technology in all county buildings and the promotion of building practices is already required in Loudoun County. The proffer system already credits incentives in developers' plans. For conservation, reviews and improvements to these plans should be possible. Additional large towers for transmission lines cutting across the countryside should be reviewed for ways to limit impact or find other approaches. Local power generation, such as by natural-gas units, would be viewed with concern due to environmental and safety issues.



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8. Loudoun has a diversity of land uses from urban and transit-oriented nodes, to suburban communities and rural uses in the west. Various proposed environmental regulations, such as the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process, have been extensively discussed and debated in recent months and will impact these uses in different ways. What is your position on these proposals and what would you do to make these or any other proposed environmental regulation or strategy “Loudoun-appropriate”?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

I want it known that I publicly spoke against the CPBO and continue to not support its adoption. It is important to be sensitive to protecting the environment, but not at the detriment of our individual property rights. Any proposed environmental regulation must be based on scientific facts, have clearly defined outcomes and demonstrate its benefit. The Board of Supervisors must have a balanced approach to any implementation of regulations and their potential impact on the citizens.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

Healthy streams, reduced runoff, livestock control, reduced sediment and fertilizer runoff are goals that can save us money. Trump cuts down 500 trees at his golf course, the added silt and runoff into the Potomac goes into the water processing facility where Loudoun pays for its water, so the price goes up because additional filtering is required. Tourists will go somewhere else if all they see are stressed, smelly streams. If you like seafood from the Bay, then you can be out of luck, and pay more to import it from South America. You can only nudge people in the right direction, we need ways to demonstrate how goals of these Acts and Process can be in their best interest.

9. Virginia and especially Northern Virginia is predicted to attract both significant numbers of jobs and residents over the next 20 years. What tools and policies would you seek to implement in the County to address both the benefits and challenges of this anticipated growth?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

The Metro Washington Council of Governments reviews the projected growth for the entire region on a regular basis. There is an “allocation” of number of housing units each jurisdiction is projected to absorb. The Board must conduct a comprehensive review of our housing “picture” as well as our projected infrastructure. This will, in turn, aid in the development of policies to properly plan for projected growth.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

Traffic can limit to numbers of jobs and residents over that time horizon. Currently about half the residents of Leesburg go out-of-county when working; these numbers are likely similar in other higher-density parts of the county. Policies to encourage working from home, or other community centers will likely be developed. County policies including zoning would help facilitate such trends.



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10. Affordable housing isn't only housing for low-income, homeless or unemployed – it's housing for vital workers in our community whose work is essential to a strong and vibrant business community in Loudoun County. What programs do you propose to develop affordable and/or workforce housing in the County?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

There are several initiatives, which would assist in workforce housing needs. As there are approximately 2,000 foreclosures on the books right now, the County should assist in the purchase of these units by our teachers, firefighters, paramedics, etc. The Board should work with the Housing Advisory Board to establish a dedicated housing trust fund. The Board should also develop policies similar to the ADU Ordinance regarding Workforce Housing.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

In the past, the Federal Government has sponsored programs such as a master neighborhood stabilization plan to refurbish houses that are affordable to first time homeowners. With the current Congressional budget battles, the future of such assistance is uncertain. Otherwise the possibility exists of tax incentives, employer assistance, and business incentives that could lead the addition of more affordable dwelling units for sale or rent. Such incentives should be encouraged, because when these employees take their paychecks to their homes in West Virginia or other Virginia counties, the economy in Loudoun is impacted.



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11. In recent years, Loudoun County has allocated much of the cost and responsibility for providing school sites, parks and recreational opportunities to the development community through the imposition of proffered obligations and capital facilities fees, which are among the highest in the country, in connection with rezoning applications. The Chamber is opposed to any tax policies or capital facilities fee increases that will inflate the cost of housing to the point of creating a disincentive for businesses to locate in Loudoun County. How do you propose to ensure that there are adequate schools, parks and recreational opportunities for current and future residents without unduly burdening the business community?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

The Board must create policies that allow for a proper balance between residential service needs and the ability for our taxpayers to pay for those services. Prospective employers will not locate to a county, if their employees cannot afford to live in the county. The Board's best path is to increase the commercial tax base, which will lessen the tax burden on existing taxpayers, while providing additional tax revenue for future infrastructure costs.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

When school bonds are being debated, I hear complaints about why the developers are not paying for the infrastructure needed to sustain the community they are establishing. These costs will either be included in the price of the houses, everyone's property tax or both. How much should the residents of the county subsidize developers to erect new houses? If the new residents don't have the schools, parks, recreational facilities, police, fire, libraries, etc., then they won't move to those new houses. Jobs, other than construction and strip malls, are needed to supply part of the taxes for this infrastructure. The county should seek ways to provide coordination between developers and business community that can supply such jobs. If the new residents just drive to another county to work then all we have is a bedroom community.



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12. Please briefly describe what traditional and innovative policies or initiatives you support to ensure Loudoun's children have access to a K-12 system that will allow them to achieve competitive levels of proficiency in science, technology, mathematics, engineering and the arts, and how you would fund these policies or initiatives.

Suzanne Volpe (R)

If elected, I would meet with my counterpart on the School Board on a regular basis and encourage the development of policies that emphasize science and technology. The Academy of Science has had an excellent impact in Loudoun County, however it can only serve a small portion of the student population. I would encourage similar programs developed and alternative options, such as Magnet and/or Charter schools, to further enhance science and technology curriculum.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

We should start with full-day kindergarten. A child of this age can only handle a limited amount of instruction in a day, but the additional amount of early instruction can improve future proficiency. Since businesses are future employers for these children, they have an interest in maintaining good public schools and seeking additional ways or programs to encourage their development. The County, including the School Board, should continue to look for ways to facilitate and expand such programs.



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13. Small business access to affordable health care continues to be a top priority of the Loudoun County Chamber. Please describe what specific policies/initiatives you would support to help address the significant changes facing businesses related to implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Please also share any other ideas that may be implemented from a policy standpoint that may help businesses to reduce their healthcare costs and improve the health of their workers.

Suzanne Volpe (R)

As the Affordable Healthcare Act (AHA) is a federal mandate, the local Board of Supervisors does not have direct authority over this issue. The Commonwealth of Virginia is trying to figure out how to implement the policies in this legislation. I would work with our Loudoun delegation in Richmond to offer support for methods to implement the AHA. Personally, I support initiatives, such as allowing multiple small businesses to pool their employees and companies being allowed to purchase health insurance across state lines, which would give companies cost-effective alternatives for healthcare.

Ultimately, the AHA will be harmful to businesses, if they have to implement AHA, which will hurt our efforts to grow the business tax base. Many companies will make the decision to eliminate health insurance and pay the \$2,000 fine. The effect will be damaging to the employees.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

The Affordable Care Act was intended to allow everyone to have health care and to reduce health care costs. If it is allowed to be implemented, then it might achieve this goal. Unanticipated circumstances may occur that require adjustments. The implementation process should be closely monitored to see where local government can provide assistance or adjust regulations or policies. The current approach to health care is not economically sustainable, and if workers are to be covered in the future, then no other approach has been seriously proposed.



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14. The Loudoun County Chamber and the County's business community has made effective contributions to several important public policy issues in Loudoun in recent years, such as the processes created to revise the County's sign regulations and on the adopted Route 28 Comprehensive Plan Amendment. How would you assess the County's efforts to engage the Loudoun business community on important public policy issues and how would you improve or otherwise change those efforts?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

As a Supervisor, I will have an open door policy and meet with any member of the community. I will strive to have as much input as possible. Regarding the business community, it is always beneficial when the County encourages the business community to be involved in policy discussions concerning business-related issues. In recent years, the business community has been shut out multiple times, including the recent CBPO discussions. The business community needs to be a principal stakeholder in all business-related discussions and I would always support their inclusion. Additionally, our efforts to attract new employers to the County cannot be accomplished without an engaged business community and I will advocate for a true partnership with the business community to increase our commercial tax base.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

Growth and development in the eastern part of the county is established. If a big company wants to put their name on the top of their 20 story building, then they should be allowed to display their brand. These can be desirable and effective contributions to public policy. If they want to put that same 20 story building, with sign, in downtown Waterford, for example, then that policy doesn't deserve support.

15. Please briefly describe what best qualifies you to hold the office for which you are running.

Suzanne Volpe (R)

My extensive community service best qualifies me for the Board. I currently serve on the Loudoun County Library Board of Trustees and have previously served on the Loudoun County Planning Commission and the Loudoun County Commission on Aging. My other service in the community is outlined on my website. Through my professional career and my volunteerism, I have gained knowledge in multiple areas of governance, including budgets, management, personnel, education, business development, sales, planning and marketing.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

I believe in fact-based solutions to problems; not ideology-driven solutions.



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16. What is the chief factor that differentiates you from your opponent(s) (if you have one)?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

I believe my commitment to the community differentiates me from my opponent. I have devoted hundreds of hours volunteering for various organizations, donating to charitable organizations, organizing fundraisers and always answering the call when there is a need has prepared me for the level of commitment necessary to serve on the Board of Supervisors. To serve, you must have a heart for service and I do.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

My opponent has said "Sprawl is the American Dream." I believe uncontrolled growth without a matching business tax base will not support the quality of life the residents of Loudoun County have come to expect.

17. Do you have a web site where more information about you is available? What is that web site address?

Suzanne Volpe (R)

Yes, my website address is www.suzannevolpe.com.

Denise Moore Pierce (D)

www.denise4algonkian.com, with link to my Facebook page.

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please contact Tony Howard at 571-209-9020. This questionnaire has been sent to the list of candidates provided by the Board of Election. Thank you.