



BIZVOTES QUESTIONNAIRE



INFORMING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ENCOURAGING
POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.

2011 Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce Board of Supervisors Candidate Questionnaire Chairman Position

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

***Scott York (R)**

yorkforloudoun.com
PO Box 651134
Potomac Falls, VA 20165
(703) 444-5858

The most significant challenge Loudoun County faces is fiscal. As we come out of this recession we must position the County to make sure we are able to fund essential services, especially transportation, education and public safety, while also reducing the burden of residential property taxes and the overall County debt. This will require even more innovative thinking and effective partnerships with citizen and business groups, as well as federal and state government. It will require a unified Board with strong leadership to get this done.

Tom Bellanca (D)

tom4loudoun.ngphost.com
40494 Glen Meadow Pl
Aldie, VA 20105
(703) 855-8674

Public school growth and the rapidly growing Loudoun County Public Schools population is the largest issue facing Loudoun county over the next ten years. The issue will continue to put major pressure on property taxes due to the requirement of building more schools and staffing requirements of those schools.

2. How do you propose to address this challenge?

***Scott York (R)**

The Board must do more work with existing and prospective Loudoun employers to cultivate significant new economic investment in the County that brings not only more jobs but also more tax revenue. This will lessen the burden on residential property taxes and enable us to lower the rate more. Continuing my close collaboration with Gov. McDonnell's Administration is critical to secure local transportation funding and avoid new taxes and fees. We must also have a County School Board that is committed to systemic change in its fiscal management and planning, and better oversight of the LCPS.

Tom Bellanca (D)

I will form a commission of public officials, business community and County residents to form a plan in the first year. Once this plan is put together, I will implement it over the next three years. Tis plan will be to address the school acquisition and construction process for the next ten years.



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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.

***Scott York (R)**

There are a number of opportunities, including a complete review of County zoning and permitting processes to shorten and streamline them such that are more "customer friendly." I have already called for creating a commission at the start of the next Board term to address these and related issues of government efficiency and accountability. Among other things, we must also implement the Route 28 Comprehensive Plan changes in the Zoning Ordinance.

Tom Bellanca (D)

My main focus outside of the school construction process will be to find ways to decrease the commercial vacancy rates from the average 15 plus percentage we've been plagued with for the past ten years. Lowering the vacancy rates will require tenant retention programs, marketing for new tenants to be attracted to the County and a method by which we can reignite new commercial construction and growth. Lowering the vacancies will increase values of all buildings in the County thereby reducing the burden of high property taxes on residential homes. I support having an EDA.

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?

***Scott York (R)**

We should continue to seek out unique opportunities as we did with the Redskins and Visit Loudoun campaign to promote our local wine industry, as well as to support tourism and hospitality generally. A growing commercial tax base itself will be helpful too, as this means more overnight stays by business men and women visiting local businesses. We should also work with the REDC toward more regional promotion of the products produced in our rural economy.

Tom Bellanca (D)

First, we must capture a larger percentage of the tourism traffic coming through Dulles Airport. This means finding ways to divert tourism from the airport and local hotels to such locations as Dulles Town Center, Leesburg Outlets, Loudoun Baseball, etc. Second, we must come up with a unified marketing program that markets all Loudoun has to offer under one strategic program. Thirdly, we must better use the resources we currently have to advance the County tourism industry. This includes the use of Redskins NFL team and Nationals MLAB team to advance the interests of the County.



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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?

***Scott York (R)**

First, we ought to be more open and informed conversation on these topics, where the merits of all ideas are freely debated. With this in mind we should conduct more effective cost-benefit assessments of funding streams, such as the impact of higher tolls on the Dulles Toll Road as a result of the Loudoun to Tysons rail line, and the equity of this fee proposal for Virginians (especially Loudoun commuters). We should also review key elements of the County's Transportation Plan a make sure we are preserving the appropriate transportation corridors and providing for multi-modal transportation connections.

Tom Bellanca (D)

I don't accept that we will not be able to count on these governments to meet our needs. I will continue to demand that they fill their responsibilities as required. We cannot let our national and state officials off the hook. Increasing pressure on these levels of government will in turn get better results. Doing nothing will reinforce the poor performance we are currently experiencing on both levels. We can continue to pressure them while at the same time coming up with new and innovative approaches to advance our own local needs. We do not need to continue current policies of pushing transportation costs onto localities by such means as special tax districts, increased local property taxes, etc.



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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?

***Scott York (R)**

I agree with the premise of growing Loudoun's commercial tax base by expanding economic development. I believe that a desirable ratio includes about a 35% commercial tax base, and that achieving this will take many years. It's also time for Loudoun to reconsider converting to an Economic Development Authority as a primary asset to ensure long term, sustainable growth in the commercial tax base. This was considered in the early 1990's under a newly elected Republican-majority Board when authorizing legislation was proposed, and was supported by many in the Chamber.

Tom Bellanca (D)

Under the previous Board ending in 2008, the commercial tax base ratio was approximately 14.5% commercial to 85.5% residential. The current Board increased this ratio to 19%/81%. Historically, over the past twenty years it has fluctuated between 14% and 19%. Fairfax County currently maintains about a 24.5%/75.5% ratio. A realistic expectation is that we can move toward 24% over the next four years. I will do this by supporting an Economic Development Authority serving Loudoun County not by increasing taxes on existing businesses. The Fairfax EDA jokingly refers to how over the past 15 years, Loudoun has taxed our business into Fairfax.



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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.

***Scott York (R)**

This is less a County issue than a federal and state one, and I strongly believe our nation must set a clear and achievable goal of reducing our reliance of foreign sources of energy. This means a greater commitment to traditional American energy resources as we continue to develop alternative/green technologies that are sustainable and affordable, and that contribute to domestic jobs. While Loudoun County has an energy plan, I did not vote for in the end because we rushed this through the public process and ignored the concerns of the business community. I will ask the next Board to revisit this plan and conduct a more serious review of it with the Chamber and other stakeholders at the table, something the current Board majority discouraged last time

Tom Bellanca (D)

I support the establishment of a County-wide energy plan that includes elements of energy generation, transmission and conservation. This plan must also include maintaining the character and quality of life of our communities which equates to no larger generation facilities which would adversely affect our communities. Our plan must include conservation measures and advocacy for both commercial and residential properties throughout the County including government facilities. I also advocate a movement in the direction of integrated photo voltaic building design where it can be proven to be cost efficient. I don't expect that we should implement costly technologies that would be damaging to business.



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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"?

***Scott York (R)**

I successfully led the fight against the over-reaching poorly conceived CBPO, along with my Board colleagues Eugene Delgaudio and Lori Waters. We will now be dealing with the agreement between EPA and Virginia that could cost tens of millions of dollars, and should bring together the various parties of interest to have a meaningful discussion on how best to deal with these potential regulations. We must not repeat the fiasco of local community meetings that were rushed last time to appease the demagoguery of certain individuals and groups and their political agenda.

Tom Bellanca (D)

I believe we need to comply with the State and Federal mandates when they are finalized. We also need to consider the future costs on tax payers if we don't do anything with regard to these issues. Fairfax County is now having to pay hundreds of millions of dollars to repair streams that are damaged from doing nothing. Additionally, we don't want to jeopardize our EPA stream water management permits by doing nothing. It is my understanding that this permit is required for any residential development in Loudoun County and losing our permit would bring all development to an abrupt halt. All of these things being said, an even greater problem that Loudoun is facing which they are not planning appropriately for is the "availability" of a water support. Almost every year, Loudoun county faces droughts and constraints on its water supply and must come up with a long term plan on sourcing clean, drinkable water.



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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?

***Scott York (R)**

Our job growth could be outstanding in the decade to come, and we have many of those tools and policies already in place to cultivate and support it. I will continue to support mixed use development in the appropriate corridors such as Route 28 to help provide workforce housing. I will also support amendment of the zoning ordinance to reflect the changes made in the plan for that corridor. I am working to help make rail to Loudoun a reality, which is an essential long term transportation alternative to meet the needs of employers and employees alike whose businesses or commutes take them to the Toll Road corridor.

Tom Bellanca (D)

We need to have a balanced approach to growth. This means having excellent schools, solid economic development policies, and an adequate transportation network. There is a continuing need to moderate residential growth due to the restricted control authority local government has over such residential growth. This will also help grown the commercial tax base and increase values of the existing base thereby reducing the burden on existing homeowners average tax bill. If there is not continued moderate of residential, it will have numerous damaging consequences on our County for many years to come. Make no mistake, I am not talking about "slow growth". I'm talking about moderate growth that is sustainable over the next twenty years. When average property valuations are increasing at 20-100% per year as they did in teh period from 2001-2005, it is not sustainable and unrealistic. This allowed Supervisors to vote for average property tax bill increases from 15% up to 20% in single years when average historical rates of value have increased by only 7%.



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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?

***Scott York (R)**

I remain supportive of affordable housing as a concept, and programs that have provided some benefit over the years, but at this time am not prepared to offer new programs that would add new costs to taxpayers or to development generally.

Tom Bellanca (D)

This is a difficult challenge to address. In order to get the tax revenues we need for a rapidly growing county and school system we need increased in property values. In my observation, while well intended, policies to create affordable and work force housing are more damaging than effective. The real estate market is cyclical just like any other market environment. Government intervention in this market tends to push the real estate market to extremes. The best policy for making homes affordable is to effectively teach students how to make good decisions regarding housing, including managing finances, purchasing homes when values are reduced, renting when that provides more value than owning, etc. Additionally, this can be assisted by changing code requirements for some high density residential properties.



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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?

***Scott York (R)**

This is not just a "business community" issue and should not be characterized this way. Infrastructure funding is a larger issue with implications for everyone in the County, as well as everyone thinking about moving here. The LCPS is the best example of where systemic change is needed in how we plan, site, build and fund capital projects to meet the needs of our growing population. Simply put, we need a systemic change in how the County does business and I am prepared to offer suggestions and develop a compelling consensus on the next Board. Higher taxes and fees is not a direction I intend to go, and I want to see the Chamber and other stakeholders at the table discussing this with the Board with an open mind.

Tom Bellanca (D)

I don't agree with the above statement. Recent moves to reduce bonus density applications have lessened the burden on the developers of proffers due to the fact that proffers have not been needed with by right development. Now, the BOS is purchasing school sites rather than them being proffered which has further placed the burden on both residential and commercial property taxes but not to the degree that bonus densities did. The decline in property values in general has brought the county to a standstill with regard to budget issues. This is more determined by the market cycle and lack of preparation for a down cycle when the economy was doing well has left the County in a pretty severe situation. We need to establish a firm foothold in both the residential and commercial property values and return to sustainable growth rates.



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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.

***Scott York (R)**

I want to see Loudoun's K-12 public school system become one of the best in America, and that we also strengthen opportunities for educational choice, to include private schools, charter and magnet schools and home schooling. I would also like to see an academy for advanced technology initiated as soon as possible as part of our Capital Improvement Program.

Tom Bellanca (D)

Our education system needs a complete overhaul. Our current system doesn't encourage or challenge the students to have the will and desire to learn. This is damaging the entire nations economy. I support a variety of innovative and technological approaches to education including study at home, early college entrance, work/study programs or any programs that will return the priority to enjoying the process of learning over teaching. In other words, we need to teach children to love to learn and reinforce this desire. The rapidly changing global environment requires that all people young and old develop a sense of never ending improvement and constant learning. The focus should not be "education" as that emphasizes teaching. The focus needs to be in self directed learning because this enables constant learning and improvement in all aspects of life.

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.

***Scott York (R)**

While affordable health care is a major national issue, the Board of Supervisors does not play any direct role. I will continue to support a robust, competitive health care system in Loudoun County, and I am pleased with the direction we are now heading and its benefit to our citizens and businesses alike.

Tom Bellanca (D)



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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?

***Scott York (R)**

The Chamber has become an increasingly important stakeholder and driver of public policy issues. This was exemplified by our collective efforts to overturn Gov. Kaine's last budget that would have kept millions of school dollars from coming to Northern Virginia. Some on the Board have not worked especially well with the Chamber and other business groups and this must change. We can and will do better on such issues as the sign ordinance, transportation improvements, zoning and permitting processes, etc., and I consider it to be a healthy thing for the Board to have a regular dialogue with the Chamber other business groups.

Tom Bellanca (D)

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

***Scott York (R)**

My response below regarding leadership, experience and accomplishment applies here too. I have served as County Board Chairman for 12 years, and previously served as Sterling District Supervisor and on the County Planning Commission. I have chaired the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, founded and chaired the Virginia High Growth Coalition, and currently serve as Secretary of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. I also serve as the Board's representative to the NOVA Regional Commission and on the Board of VACO, and have constructive relationships with other regional leaders.

Tom Bellanca (D)

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

***Scott York (R)**

I offer demonstrated leadership, experience and accomplishment on County, state and regional matters, as well as informed and credible ideas to advance our County and make it an even better place to live and do business. I also am well prepared to lead what I believe will be a mostly new, more unified, and business friendly Board of Supervisors beginning in 2012.

Tom Bellanca (D)



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

***Scott York (R)**

Visit www.Leadership20011.org, or call the York campaign at 571.934.6144.

Tom Bellanca (D)

tom4loudoun.ngphost.com

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 Elections. Thank you.