



For MAYOR of HENDERSONVILLE  
*November 3, 2009*

**Common Sense is defined as beliefs or propositions that most people would consider prudent and of sound judgement!**

**TIMM STRONGLY DISAGREES WITH STATE SALES TAX INCREASE WHICH WILL FURTHER BURDEN FAMILIES AND HURT SMALL BUSINESS!**

Beverly Perdue and the State Legislature recently passed an increase that will bring the overall sales tax rate of NC residents to 8%, close to that of New York and other high tax states without many of the exemptions high tax states realize. Called a temporary solution to replenish treasury coffers short on revenues, this "movement" by the state will quickly become a huge burden to families who have no choice but to purchase needed items and small businesses who desperately need families to purchase them.

At first glance, an extra percent here and there seems rather unremarkable. But given the amount of taxes already levied to residents of the State of North Carolina, the tax burden could prove unbearable and do more harm than good. Locally, Henderson County has a per capita income of \$21,110 with a huge gap between female and male earnings: Nearly \$8,000 less for women who admit to doing 80% of the household shopping. Additionally, nearly 10% of the population is already beneath the poverty line, vastly disproportionate are those under 18 and over 65. And, currently, the state unemployment rate is 10.8%, nearly the highest in the states history.

An example of "**NO COMMON SENSE.**" In my opinion, if you lower taxes when people have less, they'll find a way to spend more. Additionally, when taxes are lowered, especially sales tax rates, residents of neighboring state's shop across borders diverting revenues to states with lower rates. Call it old fashioned competition! Tax burdens need to ease in times of economic slow down. If so, businesses might expand or increase inventory and families may risk opportunities to begin small businesses when otherwise they would not.

Our Governor seems to be taking a page from our local Epic movie theater. In the worst economic recession since the great depression, our local theater has raised ticket prices to \$9, charges \$4.50 for popcorn, \$4 for a drink, and \$3 for candy, then complains about attendance and people sneaking in an affordable candy bar and soft drink.

**Cut taxes.** Offer business incentives. **Be creative at overcoming shortfalls.** Don't pass a greater burden on to those most directly affected. It is worth noting that the highest revenues come in the form of property taxes, which saw no increase...

**MY OPPONENTS - 27 YEARS OF COMBINED COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP = NO CHANGE!**

Though I admire both my opponents and their commitment to local politics, the fact is they've had 27 years between them to decide the fate of Hendersonville, enact a future, and bring it to it's current state.

Mary Jo Padgett served on the city council for 8 years. Barbara Volk has served on the council for over 19 years. They served together on the same council for 8 years. The council-manager form of government does not discriminate between the "powers" of the Mayor and council members. Therefore, both of my opponents have already been "Mayor(s)."

What is it they can or will do in the future that they did not or could not have done in the past? Perhaps this is one of the reasons so many are in favor of term limits. I offer a fresh approach, learned and street savvy experience, and creative problem solving skills for Hendersonville and it's residents.

## **REDEVELOPMENT, OWNERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY, MANAGED GROWTH = THE (HRPA) INITIATIVE!**

My vision for a local **Redevelopment Authority** is required to facilitate a variety of programs to administer and manage the elimination of blighted areas for residential, recreational, commercial and industrial opportunities. Such an authority can trump hold-out behaviors, speculative patterns, and even collusion. In short, a community deserves **responsible ownership** for continued investment, progress, and managed growth. If elected Mayor, I'll urge council members to work with me to develop the Hendersonville Redevelopment and Project Authority. **HRPA** shall have broad powers to charge owners of these assets to do 1 of 3 things:

- Develop the property.
- Refurbish it - make it viable for commercial or residential use.
- Sell it to the citizens of Hendersonville at market value.

Once **HRPA** is commissioned and funded, I'll personally call owners like Hull-Story and inform them they have 6 months to give the city a plan for a beautiful new updated mall, or we're going to buy it, level it, and start over. How about the former 4-Seasons Theater currently owned and run into the ground by Epic Theaters to eliminate their competition? **Hendersonville needs and deserves committed community investors.** If I am Mayor, we will no longer tolerate a status of property ownership existing for the sole purpose of tax-write-offs or speculation.

**HRPA could become a history making prototype for a private community based corporation.** We'll seek to use HRPAs augmented powers to develop community projects by utilizing a financial commitment of its citizenry as guarantors. **Not by raising taxes.**

**Here's how it might work:** City and area residents shall be given an opportunity to commit increments of \$100, \$250, \$500, or \$1000. **Similar to war bonds.** Sort of like "pay to play," only I call it "**give to live.**" There is no age limit on investors, and monthly payments on commitments via direct deposit will be allowed to enable all levels of community participation.

Given our population, it's feasible a commitment guarantee of around 4million dollars might be raised. Using standard financing schedules, the 4million dollars should buy a spending potential from a local bank of about 30million dollars. **All investors shall be given a private password used to vote on projects and retrieve information on investments which will be updated quarterly!**

Perhaps City Council decides a modest convention center is needed at a cost of 30 million dollars to better the community. The council shall direct the city manager to HRPAs resources, and along with local banks, support resources, grants, trust funds, or available money for capital expenditures, shall fund projects.

**Here's an important stipulation:**

- **All projects must utilize local talent, contractors, labor, and banks. This will insure employment opportunities here in Hendersonville!**

The net return of such a project could yield 3million dollars per year. Citizen investors could receive annual dividends between \$96 and \$498. Think about that. You, the citizens of the city, owning, working, and enjoying the fruits of your labors! I say give residents a chance at direct ownership in the community they live in, and your community shall have no choice but to prosper! Investments shall follow you wherever you go for the life of the project. As citizens become used to the idea of not just being residents, but investors in community projects, they'll take the initiative to invest more into HRPAs and utilize HRPAs facilities often.

***This alone might be enough to stimulate jobs and managed growth, provide for new facilities, and attract investment.***

Here's how I remedy my belief that owners should be stewards of their land:

- Assertive enforcement of property ownership accountability ordinances including pertinent **International Property Maintenance Codes** and **HRPA** augmentations.
- Authorization to condemn, buy, and/or expropriate outdated structures and environmental liabilities. The city shall require owners of such properties to either develop them into pragmatic and habitable assets for the community, or forcibly confer them to the city at fair market rates for public use. The city shall become an aggressive developer of these properties and shall benefit the citizenry by allowing them to invest in the revitalization of these properties for a variety of uses. This way, needs, such as affordable housing, business and residential rentals, shopping venues, and new parks and libraries, would be decided, employed, and owned by the citizens of the city. The city shall by decree only use **local resources and funding** - unless absolutely unavailable locally. While this idea may ride on the coattails of domain expropriation issues, there are hundreds of hard case studies that have utilized similar techniques for success. **Bear in mind that**

**the city is not a private party!** Acquisitions will be for **public use**, that property owners will be **compensated at fair market rates**, and that owners will be given a period of time to make modifications, repairs, or refurbish such properties and liabilities prior to expropriation. **Rural lands that are undeveloped, lands retained for agricultural use, or ecologically significant or sensitive areas, shall be exempt.**

- **HRPA** would be committed to creating affordable home ownership and rental opportunities within the city, and promoting public health, safety, and convenience. A focus will be made to alleviate the impacts of market rate housing on the supply and costs of housing for low and moderate income households. Using public or acquisition land, and with the help of local investments, developers, financing assistance, and relief from regulation, housing may be made affordable to all incomes, ages, and households.
- **HRPA** could include a strategy for aggressive city infrastructure improvements utilizing aspects of redevelopment and revitalization.
- **HRPA** shall be committed to stimulating the arts by using “creative economics” through the development of artists residences, artist daytime studios, performance and community centers, amphitheatres, and artist designed gathering spaces.
- **HRPA** could commit to the development of health conscience amenities like bike trails, walking trails, and exercise stations.

***If developers will not create affordable housing opportunities, redevelop outdated properties, or devise methods for managed growth proposals, then the city can and should!***

If previously developed land sits stagnant for a period of time in vital or transitional areas because of hold-out opportunism, **then the city should acquire this land and put it to use.** Either way, if done correctly, my **HRPA** initiative **would be a win-win scenario for the city.** It's existence alone may be enough to urge passive owners to either sell, develop, or refurbish their investments. This will cause economic growth, spur investment from more committed owners, and best of all, create jobs!

Though a **County** Redevelopment and Project Authority initiative such as the one I've outlined, coordinated with separate city divisions, might be a better solution, my idea is to shore up ordinances that are not aggressive and do not exist within the scope of current planning. A well designed commission **should be aggressive.** My **HRPA** initiative could combine resources with other economic development organizations, such as the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development, which is highly experienced in permitting, real estate site assembly, financial package assistance, grant applications and local tax relief ideas for new business ventures.

The clearing of privately owned and previously developed land of outdated structures, ignored overgrowth, and environmental liabilities, while encouraging city or committed private sector development for community needs and public use opportunities, shall guide Hendersonville into becoming a place of managed, but intended growth and development. It shall create new jobs, and allow Hendersonville to become a **leader in community based capitalistic ownership.** This shall be fair and equitable for a diverse demographic and community contribution.

## **A REAL VOICE FOR SMALL BUSINESS!**

I have been a small business owner for over 15 years in varying fields. My belief is that small businesses have been and will be the backbone of the community here in Hendersonville. My vision of a city options for 2000 successful small businesses employing 5000 people rather than one or two factories employing the same number. Diversity is an asset. However, location and types of businesses in a small city can be the difference between success or disaster. So too can the general curb appeal of commercial and industrial districts.

**As Mayor,** I will utilize my already sound relationship with local businesses and merchants to identify opportunities to make small businesses more successful, and attract businesses that will increase the viability of those committed to the area. Additionally, I will endeavor to optimize strategies to partner with developing corporations and medium sized manufacturers to entice more and better skilled jobs. I pledge not to destroy fragile tourist sensitive months with unsightly construction projects. I will hold public works accountable for quality work on projects, and see to it that city management enforces provisions of the **International Property Maintenance Code** as identified by the Comprehensive Plan. Merchants and commerce represent both traditional and contemporary necessities to Hendersonville living. **The voice of those mostly affected by city decisions needs advocacy.** I will be that voice.

## MASTER PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN? PARKS? LIBRARIES? NATURE AND NURTURE!

The city council recently adopted a Comprehensive Plan for Hendersonville, in April of 2009, with strategies focused for planning to 2030. While greatly appreciative of the totality of the effort, as we all must be, I'm concerned that in the last 30 years much of the needs revealed in the Comprehensive Plan could have and should have been realized by a prudent and visionary mayor and council members. While I suggest every Hendersonville resident read the Comprehensive Plan, it is only a general outline. There is a huge need for a creative and strong leader to develop and coordinate ideas to bring aspects of the Comprehensive Plan to fruition. Important will be implementation, and making sure city management is effective and accountable.

Additionally, Downtown Historic Hendersonville needs it's own separate master plan utilizing some of the marketing information contained in last years marketing assessment, though I do not agree entirely with it's information. I plan to work towards implementing steps necessary to create such a plan during my term as mayor. Included should be property ownership accountability, strategies to identify what businesses are best suited for downtown and how to attract them, how to better service committed owners and merchants, pathway signs, cycling infrastructure, and a much broader public arts program.

Here are a couple of city based ideas:

- Hendersonville-Brevard RT (Rails and Trails). Currently there exists an unused train rail system running parallel to Hwy 64 for approximately 18 miles from Hendersonville to Brevard. I think this could be developed as a great bikeway, jogging, and exercise trail, complete with pullouts in various areas, gathering areas, picnic and shelter areas, and special use areas for children's activities and people with disabilities. Additionally, a "train" could shuttle folks back and forth from Brevard to Hendersonville for dinner trips, mystery train tours, day trips, or nostalgic or sightseeing trips, etc... This could present opportunities for businesses along the rail system. This is a prime example of a "shared resource" partnership that could be developed utilizing multi-city and county resources.
- New and better parks and recreation. Currently, there is no "city" parks and recreation service. Hendersonville is serviced by the county for it's parks and recreation needs. While this is better economically for the city, there needs to be better support from the county in identifying and budgeting for city needs and improvements. Hendersonville is greatly lacking in children's activities and public places for pets, as well as activity centers for people with disabilities. Additionally, Hendersonville parks amenities are outdated and in need of updating to meet safety standards. Generally, our parks need refurbish or repair, and the city needs more space for community centers. I would like to explore opportunities to build a new park - perhaps on the Balfour Road property and certain connecting flood plains, which would include a 15 to 20 acre fishing pond stocked year round for city residents only with elderly and handicapped accessible piers. I would seek to engage folks like Bill Dance - noted outdoor celebrity sportfishing sensation and his buddies to help with sponsorship. I'd like to include an outdoor archery and primitive arms shooting range, and an outdoor learning center that includes an amphitheater for performances, re-enactments, and the teaching of traditional handicrafts and art skills. Walking and biking trails too, of course. Another perfect opportunity for a partnership program for shared resources.

Libraries and museums say a lot about a city. They should be as significant as any courthouse or city hall, and marketed as centers for culture and learning within a city. That being said, our local libraries and museums are much to small for current needs and desperately need expansion, remodeling, and increased parking. Perhaps a second story retro-fit to our downtown library? Perhaps a new YMCA and City Public Library project?

A modest Convention Center is a must! It is a prudent part of the "common sense" approach to managed responsible growth. It will validate Hendersonville again as a destination, and could make many of the attributes of the Comprehensive Plan possible. Aside from providing a place for happenings, shows, events, performances, concerts, etc..., it will provide much needed jobs for a demographic that has slipped through the cracks locally.

I will always be a proponent for xeriscaped greenways, buffer zones, eco-conscious building techniques, and mixed use planning. Cooperative building programs between the city and start up companies using new technologies are important investment considerations.

Currently, education makes up the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest portion of revenue obligations from the county. Many of Hendersonville's city schools will need assessment in the coming years. New locations for schools will need to be identified in areas becoming more densely populated. I will encourage the implementation of strategies to make the best use of current education facilities as well as develop creative ideas for alternative education resources.

## TIME FOR A STRONG-MAYOR REFERENDUM?

The **council-manager system** is generally the system of choice for townships with smaller populations. Hendersonville adopted this form of municipal government. Council-manager municipalities contract with a general manager or city manager to oversee the city and implement strategies outlined by the city council. City managers remain in place through administration changes.

Should Hendersonville examine what it might be like to return to a strong-mayor government? There has been a strong trend for cities to move back to a traditional form of **strong-mayor government**. And not only with larger population cities, as most noted for having strong-mayor municipalities. Downtown business and community leaders argue that council manager systems, with city council members representing varying interests, and a mayor with little power other than a single council vote, **leaves no one responsible for the interests of the city as a whole**. Local critics have dubbed the system such as the one we have in Hendersonville a “weak mayor or weak council” form of government. **“We’re like a football team with no coach,”** complained a Texas city news columnist recently.

**Currently**, only half of all American municipalities with populations over 2,500 use the **city manager system**, which does represent an increase compared with 20 years ago. Yet, the last 5 years has seen a huge trend for cities to take a serious look at the value of their current council manager system - utilizing the last 40 years or more to review the progress or lack thereof of the system. Not having a strong mayor means more infighting, slow progress, budget shortfalls, quality control considerations, and even issues of collusion. “You have to pay attention to momentum, which is clearly moving in the other direction” said a recent California reporter. “Several large cities like San Diego and Dallas are deciding to **trade in their weak city council or strong manager governments for ones with strong mayors**. If they succeed, they will join a rather extensive list of large places that have gone that way in the past decade: Oakland, Cincinnati, Hartford, St. Petersburg, Richmond, Sioux Falls and Spokane, to name the most prominent ones.” The list of major cities that have moved the other way — to a city manager system — **is quite a bit shorter**.

The list of smaller townships moving towards the strong-mayor system is growing. Perhaps in the future, Hendersonville might examine the benefits of a voter referendum for a **strong-mayor municipality**. The ability to get things done quicker, have a single person charged with important city decisions, and have a greater ease of implementation, can certainly benefit the whole of the city. **The ongoing downtown traffic signal debacle** might have been avoided in Hendersonville had there been a **strong-mayor system** in place. Conflicts within the council along with city manager policies for implementation, have kept the project ongoing for nearly three years, costing much money to taxpayers, as well as heartache and confusion to locals and tourists. More important has been the significant downtime to downtown merchants in the worst recession since the great depression. **And it ain’t over yet!**

### ***Know your city manager’s authority!***

#### **Sec. 5.1. Appointment of city manager.**

The city council may appoint a city manager for an indefinite term and may fix his compensation. The manager shall be appointed solely on the basis of his executive and administrative qualification. He need not be a resident of the city or state at the time of his appointment, but shall become a resident of the city as soon after his appointment as possible. He shall not be deemed an officer of the city within the meaning of Article XIV, Section 7, or Article VI, Section 7, of the Constitution of North Carolina.

#### **Sec. 5.2. Powers and duties of manager.**

The manager shall be the chief administrator of the city. He shall be responsible to the council for administration of all municipal affairs placed in his charge by them, and shall have the following powers and duties.

- (a) He shall appoint and, when he deems it necessary for the good of the service, suspend or remove all municipal employees in accordance with such general personnel rules, regulations, policies, or ordinances as the council may adopt, except the city attorney and the city clerk.
- (b) He shall direct and supervise the administration of all departments, offices, and agencies of the city, subject to the general direction and control of the council, except as otherwise provided by law.
- © He shall attend all meetings of the council and recommend for adoption such measures as he shall deem expedient.

- (d) He shall see that all laws of the state and the ordinances, resolutions, and regulations of the council are faithfully executed within the city.
- (e) He shall prepare and submit the annual budget and capital program to the council.
- (f) He shall submit to the council and make available to the public a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the city as of the end of the fiscal year.
- (g) He shall make such other reports as the council may require concerning the operations of city departments, offices, and agencies subject to his direction and control.
- (h) He shall perform such other duties as may be required or authorized by the council, and generally promulgate the policies of the city as established by the city council. \_\_\_\_\_

Citizens and their voting power are the oversight for the mayor and city council. The city council should act as oversight for the performance of city managers. But, does it happen?

## **PUBLIC ART? PUBLIC WORKS? PARKING? HOW ABOUT PUBLIC RESTROOMS!**

“Nearly everyone should realize: **The Arts aren’t a frivolous extra**; the Arts are an economic spark plug that can lift your community out of its doldrums, attract industry and stimulate commerce.”

*Mayor Joe Riley - Charleston South Carolina*

“**Every human being is an artist**, called to participate in transforming and reshaping the conditions, thinking and structures that shape and condition our lives.”

*Joseph Beuys, Artist*

### **Public Art, Creative Economics:**

Conventional economic improvement techniques are being redefined when it comes to small and medium sized towns. Business subsidies, tax and bond incentives, and real estate development, the traditional considerations for economic strategies are bettered by an infusion of “creativity.” Nearly every strategy for economic growth and development geared towards small to medium sized cities such as Hendersonville include aspects of a strong public arts program.

Our town recently adopted a comprehensive plan which articulates this strategy. But why did it take 30 years for leadership to figure this out? Past Hendersonville leadership has all but overlooked having an organized public arts program. The city today lies a testament to this mentality; absent of murals, statuaries, sculptures, gathering spaces, meditation areas, and artist in residence quarters. There is no art museum. There is no significant space for installations, exhibits, or performances. Our library has little art reference material. Schools lack reinforced art education. The town itself lacks affordable studio space.

Hendersonville leadership has rested it’s laurels on attracting retirees to the city, believing as long as fundamental needs were provided, like water, medical services, power, and roads, residents could go to Asheville or elsewhere to get their art fixes. Well, residents have. And they’ve taken their shopping dollars with them. Art is a basic service. It feeds the soul, sparks creativity, and nurtures the imagination. It can be the difference between small town survival and failure.

The Arts and a “creative economy” can be a salvation for smaller towns in times of economic hardship. In fact I noted on my recent 7000 mile fact finding trip that took my son and I from Hendersonville, NC, to West Thumb, Montana, that every nationally registered small town we visited that was able to maintain or stay close to tourism norms, according to business owners, owed survival to a visible and strong public arts program. I took over 500 photographs to document this. And my son and I talked personally to over 100 business owners.

People, especially entrepreneur/innovators, are naturally attracted to public and community art. They represent the most viable demographic in terms of long term investment for a community. While “charm, quaintness, and ambiance” are highly subjective, a city can itself be a source of stimulation through traditional arts, should they exist. The “livability” of a place, often includes having “significant recreational and cultural opportunities.” High on the list are city centers that attract young people and enrich their imaginations, which in turn lead them to becoming skilled workers. Art is no longer an option for smaller towns, it is a do or die necessity.

As Mayor, I believe Hendersonville, NC can set itself apart from other cities that have fallen into economic ruin because they relied on conventional economic development, like real estate, industry subsidies, and hoping they fell into the sights of a large corporate expansion. This is “proactive economics” and a new direction for the city. And who better to deliver creative economics than an artist with a 30 year history in public art.

Nationally, the nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity every year—\$63.1 billion in spending by organizations and an additional \$103.1 billion in event-related spending by their audiences. In fact, 1 of every 4 persons in the United States is employed in a “creative” industry.

The \$166.2 billion in total economic activity has a significant national impact, generating the following:

- 5.7 million full-time equivalent jobs
- \$104.2 billion in household income
- \$7.9 billion in local government tax revenues
- \$9.1 billion in state government tax revenues
- \$12.6 billion in federal income tax revenue

“Livability” is the “sizzle” that Chambers of Commerce and economic development councils sell to outsiders to attract them to their “not so livable” areas. It’s a word local leaders often use in the continuing debate over growth, density and historic downtown developments. I’ll work to stimulate residents, tourists, and the economy, with a strong public arts program through creative economics and incentives. An authentic public arts initiative can only serve to promote the city’s livability, and will spur growth, civic ideologies, and a better more viable community.

**Regarding Public Works: I think an overhaul is long over due.**

Quality control and detail is one of my pet peeves. If our Public Works department is not outfitted with those who are skilled at their positions, I will advocate for their replacement. Additionally, the operations, salaries, and department work criteria will be looked at. I want the city to reflect a commitment to the level of detail seen in previous generations.

**Parking must be planned for and resolved.**

Asheville and many other towns around Hendersonville are reaping rewards from an approach of “build it - and they will come.” Hendersonville leaders for decades have followed a policy of “if we never build it - no one will ever show up and we’ll never have to worry about it.” This will change if I’m Mayor. Parking, and the best way to resolve the potential impact of attracting more people, is the “cart before the horse” that is necessary for managed growth.

**Public Restrooms.**

Amazingly enough, Hendersonville has a population of 12,000, has over 100 churches, 1800 businesses, 35 pharmacies, and not counting parks, only 1 public restroom at the visitors center. This is absolutely absurd! I will take three areas on Main street and decommission the planters, relocate the trees, and build historically accurate Gazebos with restrooms beneath them. Another option is to purchase or lease the property that was the underground mall, rebuild it into public restrooms and an information center for the city.

**Props to Local Churches.**

Hendersonville is fortunate to have many fantastic churches that shore up community services when the city cannot, would not, or has not been able to. Not only do they provide the normal range of support services, but our churches always seem to go above and beyond the scope of what is necessary to better the citizenry of our town. Most notable was the groundbreaking “Crosswalk” built by private funds from First Baptist Church. The facility is used as an after school stop for middle and high school aged kids of all backgrounds. Kids can play arcade games, hear Christian music performed live, attend mid-week services, and have an espresso at the food bar. The staff is professional and there is simply no safer place in the world for kids to “hang out.” Indeed, our churches are exceptional - and committed to serving all of Hendersonville. We’re truly blessed.