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CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Katie Kenlan

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Candidate Biographical Information

Name: Katie Kenlan

Current Home Address: 1076 Rock Rest Rd. Pittsboro NC 27312

Home telephone and/or Work Telephone: (919) 619-7517

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E-mail: KatieKenlan@gmail.com

Cell phone: (919) 619-7517

Date/place of birth: Chatham County 01/29/1985

Current occupation: Outdoor Educational Program Director and Teacher, Carolina Creek Club

Campaign website: KatieKenlan.com

Family (names & ages, as of Election Day, of immediate family members): Elaine Chiosso, mother (age 70), Joseph Kenlan, father (age 73), Teresa Kenlan, sibling (age 32). I also have an uncle (Tom Kenlan) and aunt (Patty Kenlan) who live in Chatham County.

Party affiliation: Democrat

Current and previous elected offices held or sought & terms of service: Hadley Precinct Vice Chair (previous)

Campaign manager (if applicable): I have a campaign management team

Campaign treasurer (if applicable): Jan Misenheimer

Now that you're seeking office...in 100 words or fewer.

Why are you seeking this office?: I grew up in Chatham County and have witnessed firsthand the rapid growth taking place here. I want to make sure development is done thoughtfully, so we don't sacrifice the beauty of the natural world that makes Chatham so special. Let's fund and support our schools and community college, to be sure all students have the education they deserve. We need to address the issues of climate change to protect our children and grandchildren and understand and prepare for the impacts ahead.

What is your understanding of the responsibilities of the office you seek, and in 100 words or less, why do you believe you're qualified to fill that role?: When you vote for a commissioner, you vote for someone who shares your values and who will place the interests of our community first. As commissioner, I'll face important issues including budget spending requests, new developments and working for equity and fairness for all our county residents. I own a small business, have lived overseas, worked with non-profits and sustainable farms and been a lead outdoor learning teacher for children for many years (and am fluent in Spanish). I have a strong relationship with people throughout Chatham and will take seriously the decisions to be made for our future.

Give us three goals that are specific, measurable and attainable you would have if elected:

1. Pass the Unified Development Ordinance that supports protecting the rural character of the county and creates better subdivision regulations to serve our citizens.
2. Appoint leaders to the Planning Board and other advisory boards that have the expertise and best interest of our county in mind for infrastructure, wastewater and smart growth. I will also work to strengthen the Affordable Housing and Climate Change Advisory Committees.
3. I will work with citizens and county staff to increase land conservation, protect important watershed corridors, and increase and ensure connectivity of parks and trails.

What are the biggest challenges in Chatham right now and how would you address them?:

The biggest challenges of Chatham are:

1. Dealing with the impacts of rapidly increasing growth while protecting the forests and rural character and lands that makes Chatham County so special. I believe our county citizen advisory committees can provide strong insights to help us find solutions.
2. A stronger county role in working to stop the pollution degrading our rivers and streams, including the industrial “forever” chemicals in the Haw River (contaminating the water supply of Pittsboro) coming from upriver counties. Ensure adequate and safe drinking water for all residents of the county, and wastewater systems that do not create new sources of pollution.
3. We must tackle the issue of access to health care and affordable housing, and living wages in our county, to ensure that essential workers, young people and senior citizens can live safely and thrive.

Parts of Chatham County’s future development plans are closely tied to the comprehensive development plan. What do you see as the next steps working toward Chatham’s future and the role of the comp plan?: We are now in the fifth year of Chatham’s Comprehensive Plan and I’m excited to support and commit to fulfilling the ten main visions and goals of the Plan, which include preserving rural character, agriculture, and natural resources; promoting more compact and walkable communities; creating a more diverse tax base; providing more recreation and open space across the county; improve infrastructure and high speed internet, planning now for climate change resilience, and seeking better access to quality education and health services.

What is your view of the expansion of rural broadband and how do you see the county’s role?: It is critical that Chatham County expand broadband so that all of our residents have access to faster and reliable internet service. This is important for our workers, students, emergency communications, and much more. To achieve broadband expansion will involve partnerships with both private companies and with state government to make this a high priority,

What’s your overall view of the role of county government? Is it fulfilling its mission at present? If not, what needs to change?: I believe the role of county government is to ensure the protection of its people and environment, supporting quality education and opportunities for employment with good wages, and encouraging a community that is diverse, inclusive, and values fairness and civic responsibility. As a Commissioner I will commit to work towards these goals with our current Board and staff.

What differentiates you from your opponent which makes you the better candidate to represent your party?: I know and value this county, east and west, and believe I’m the best candidate to bring us together. Being bi-lingual, with wide and varied life experiences, gives me skills and knowledge to work with people of diverse backgrounds and increase opportunities and equity, especially for youth. My energy and commitment will serve our county well, and I have the endorsement of many Chatham leaders who believe I’m the right person for the job. I understand the critical issues of water quality, wastewater, smart growth, climate impacts, education and rural life, and will work to find the best solutions.

Biographical Facts

Political/government hero: Margaret Pollard and Barbara Beye Lorie

Favorite book: Ecology of a Cracker Childhood by Janisse Ray

Book most recently read: The American Chestnut Tree by Susan Freinkel

Favorite film: King Richard (2021) and The King's Speech (2010)

Hobbies: Spanish, accordion, drawing, gardening, hiking and dog training

Church/civic involvement: Volunteer as a foster Parent with C.A.R.E. (Chatham Animal Rescue Education), Volunteer with the Haw River Assembly

Personal motto or one-line philosophy: Make the Covert Overt

Strongest childhood ambition: President of The United States

Most significant life goal you've accomplished: Designed and personally built a two-story studio out of local sourced materials and natural materials from the building site

Goal you haven't accomplished yet: Getting PhD in child psychology; running a bilingual English-Spanish forest kindergarten and pre-k.