

Center for
Real Estate



HAMPTON ROADS REALTORS® ASSOCIATION

2010 Local Government Candidate Questionnaire

Please return to bstork@hrra.com by 5:00pm on March 26th, 2010

Candidate Name: Scott Matheson

Current/Most Recent Occupation: Financial Advisor & Certified Financial Planner®

Position Desired: City Council – At Large City: Chesapeake

Incumbent (Yes/No): No If Yes, Year Elected: N/A

Other Publicly Elected Positions Held: N/A

Campaign Name: Scott Matheson for City Council

Campaign Address: 725 Watch Island Reach, Chesapeake, VA 23320

Email Address: scott@scott-matheson.com Phone #: 757.548.3296

Website: www.Scott-Matheson.com on FaceBook at Matheson4Council

Please feel free to attach additional comments or materials if adequate space is not provided for your answer. Interviews will be scheduled for selected candidates after we receive and review your completed questionnaire. Interviews will take place between April 5th and April 8th at HRRRA Headquarters in Chesapeake.

Background

1. Approximately how long have you been a homeowner in this locality? 16 years.
2. Do you now or have you ever owned rental property? No
3. Please list any key endorsements you have received.
 - a. Mayor Alan Krasnoff
 - b. Undersheriff Jim O’Sullivan
 - c. Maureen McDonnell
4. Please list any REALTORS® who provided you support and/or are actively working on your campaign.
 - a. Richard West (Councilman)

5. **Incumbents:** What achievements are you most proud of during your time on City Council?
N/A

6. **Non-incumbents:** What attributes and/or experience do you have that qualify you for this office?

My professional experience as a financial advisor and Certified Financial Planner® has prepared me well for the challenging job ahead for our City Council. I understand the importance of fiscal accountability and how to reprioritize financial objectives when needed.

7. If you are elected, what will be your top three (3) priorities and why?

I believe that in this uniquely difficult economy, the top priorities of government must be to maintain fiscal restraint while working to create jobs and find new sources of revenue generation rather than increase the tax burden on our citizens.

Infrastructure

8. What would you consider to be your locality's top public infrastructure needs?

While public infrastructure is important, during these challenging economic times, our focus should be on economic development. With over 18 million square feet in developed commercial real estate and another 6 million square feet in retail space, we can easily bring more businesses to Chesapeake without putting additional burden on our public infrastructure systems.

9. How do you plan to overcome the current budget shortages affecting your locality? Where would you cut spending? What fees or taxes would you suggest increasing?

In this difficult economic environment, we must continue to focus on economic development—attracting families and businesses will expand the tax base.

When you consider the fact that Virginia is ranked #6 in the nation for tax burden on our citizens (only Maryland, California, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut are higher), I would hesitate to create any additional burden (i.e. taxes and fees) for our citizens—especially for our families and senior citizens.

I believe there are innovative ways to fund critical programs. We've seen several successful examples of innovative revenue generation in our City. Consider the private-public partnership formula used by the Sheriff's department to fund programs for the citizens. The Senior Support Services program and the Children Today, Leaders Tomorrow mentoring program are two great examples of how we are funding programs without taxpayer money.

10. How will you work with elected officials in Virginia to solve transportation problems and alleviate traffic congestion in Hampton Roads? How would you propose funding those solutions? Please be specific.

Though there are certainly transportation concerns in the region, Chesapeake as a whole has it better than most of our neighbor cities. In fact, the average commute time for our citizens is 24 minutes. Transportation will need to be addressed when the economic environment improves, but I would not put this at the top of the priority list at this time. Funding for education, public safety is more important for attracting commerce to the City.

11. Would you support the eventual extension of light rail to your locality? Why or why not?

I would consider supporting light rail for Chesapeake provided the routes include the military bases. However, I feel it's premature for our City to invest in light rail at this time considering the current economic environment.

12. How would you assist the Clerk of the Court to ensure the Clerk's office maintains a consistent level of service during the current budget shortfall?

While it is certainly critical that our deed recordations are kept up-to-date, given the current real estate environment, the problem seems to be under control. When, the market recovers and deed recording picks up, I would promote the use of Encore Employees (retired employees), and the use of loaner employees from other departments (i.e. Treasurer's dept.). Our Clerk of the Court has also been very successful at securing grants to fund new technology which has made the department more efficient.

Economic Development

13. What is your locality's biggest economic development challenge?

Chesapeake has a great deal to offer: excellent public safety and education systems, central location, an educated workforce, and excellent quality of living. And, when combined with our neighboring partners, the region is rich in potential economic and quality of life enhancing opportunities.

Our challenge, like most of our regional partners, is inspiring companies to relocate here. We must continue to work to identify potential corporate candidates and be competitive in our proposals.

We can also do more to foster small-business development. 95% of our local economy is supported by small-business.

14. What are the top three job producing industries in your locality and what do you plan on doing to help stimulate further job growth for those industries?

The top three job producing industries at this time are: educational services, healthcare/social assistance and the retail trade. *(Source: Chesapeake Economic Development)*

I would promote the use of incentives such as tax abatements to encourage growth and expansion (i.e. if a business adds 25 new jobs, they will qualify for tax credits.)

15. What efforts would you support to encourage retiring military personnel to remain in Hampton Roads after completing their service?

I would provide incentives for businesses who offer retraining programs for retiring and transitioning military personnel. And, I would promote the use of private-public partnerships to fund programs for retired citizens and senior services.

Housing

16. With the assessed value of homes dropping all across Hampton Roads, would you support raising the tax rate in your locality to offset the loss in tax revenue? Why or why not?

When you consider the fact that Virginia is ranked #6 in the nation for tax burden on our citizens (only Maryland, California, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut are higher), I would hesitate to create any additional burden (i.e. taxes and fees) for our citizens—especially for our families and senior citizens. Raising taxes would *not* stimulate economic growth.

17. When a home is sold, the seller must pay a Grantor's Tax which is based on the sales price or assessed value of the home, whichever is greater. Would you support basing the tax only on the actual sales price of a home? Why or why not?

I need to study this issue a bit more, but my initial inclination would be to base it on the actual sales price.

18. How would you define affordable housing?

In our city, the median income is \$32,192 and the median age is 35.8. Using those statistics, a working family of two earns roughly \$64,000/year. Using 30% debt/income ratio, an average family can afford roughly \$275,000. I would define that as our "affordable housing" benchmark.

19. What, if anything, would you do to expand the availability of affordable housing in your locality?

One idea for expanding affordable housing is the use of short term real estate tax credits for buyers when meeting certain parameters. There are areas of our City where student population is only 50% of capacity. For example, according to our Planning & Development

Department, Deep Creek Middle is at 49% capacity. Why not offer families with middle-school-aged children a tax credit when purchasing an existing home in the Deep Creek Middle school zone? This would promote affordable housing options, encourage “renewal” in areas of the City without having to expand infrastructure and help manage overcrowded school environments at the same time.

20. What additional information would you like us to keep in mind when making our endorsement decision?

Thank you for this opportunity. I would like to share with you the reasons “why I’m running.”

I am running to help make Chesapeake a great city in which to live, work, play, raise a family, experience nature and visit.

I am running because my experience as a financial advisor and a Certified Financial Planner® gives me a deep understanding of the need for fiscal accountability.

I am running because my experience as an athlete taught me to not stand by and wait for someone else to make the play.

I am running because my father, a naval aviator, taught me the importance of service.

I am running because I see education and public safety as two of our greatest assets, and these assets should be protected and fostered.

I am running because I believe there are innovative solutions for closing the multi-million dollar financial gap in education without sacrificing our standards of education excellence.

I am running because history shows that whenever America has been challenged, the innovative spirit and will of the people have prevailed—not just surviving, but thriving in the face of adversity. I have faith in the citizens of Chesapeake. I believe that when we face tough times, we should look to our people, rather than to bureaucratic systems, for solutions.

Please feel free to attach any additional comments or materials.

Please return all documents by **March 26th** to Barrett Stork at bstork@hrra.com. A hard copy can also be faxed to (757) 473-9897 or mailed to 638 Independence Parkway, Chesapeake, VA 23320. Thank you.