

Clemson Candidate Questionnaire – Catherine Watt for Mayor

1. Why are you running?

Clemson deserves a change in perspective. I've spent my career serving universities and living in college towns. I believe in serving the residents, not developers. I believe in building a strategic plan with residents that aligns with our budget and addresses long-standing needs. I want Clemson to live up to the ideals we hold dear so the city can serve families for generations.

2. What have you personally done to improve the lives of Clemson residents? Be specific.

That's a tough question because sometimes you never know what hits home for people. I fully endorsed and worked on efforts to pass our hate crimes law, as well as efforts to protect pets from heat and cold. I know that through our collaboration with Trees Upstate and other organizations we provided residents with free trees. I personally worked to update very outdated and mis-sized water and sewer pipes for residents in my Dellwood neighborhood.

3. If you were on council when the HUB was voted on, how would you have voted?

- Opposed

4. What did you personally do to support or oppose the HUB? Be specific.

As of today (August 29th), I've once again asked to receive ALL the Council and staff emails related to core, including any that were sent after the vote. My past three requests have been completely ignored, violating State law.

During the fight, I lobbied for another solution, including asking Andy Blondeau and Robert Halfacre why we couldn't settle with Keowee Trail and buy the land for the city. I researched how much the land was worth and if we could afford it. I met with architects who shared what was wrong, spatially, with the proposal. I pushed the acting attorney, Jim Logan, about why other lawyers thought we should fight the lawsuit, and he only wanted to settle. Prior to that, I advocated for changes in the design, including lowering it to 5 or 6 stories, making it approximately 50% non-student housing, and adding significantly

more commercial space. From the very beginning, I pushed as hard as I could to protect uptown from overwhelming student housing and create something for ALL residents.

5. If elected, what would you do to support the creation of additional affordable workforce housing in Clemson?

To do this, the city will have to have some skin in the game. We own some land, and I've advocated for four years that we explore creating two or three pocket neighborhoods. I've advocated for four years that we should create a Housing Authority that specifically manages our housing portfolio. We should also pursue buying either more land or watching if/when an older complex comes up for sale. We should learn from other communities (and countries) what works best. We can apply for more grants, of course, but we must diversify housing options and that requires innovation. It's going to take something innovative to put a dent in this problem.

6. If elected, what would you do (be specific) to get Clemson University to house a greater portion of their students on campus?

Well, we start by saying "no" to developers because all we've done is say "yes," allowing the University to continue on its path. Second, my experience as a higher ed expert means I know that there isn't the population for Clemson to continue growing, and I would work with them to see where they think the students will come from. Third, I would work very hard to build collaborations where the City and University come together to establish priorities.

7. If elected, what actions would you take to limit the growth of student housing in the city if negotiations with the university are not successful? Be specific.

I would work with attorneys and City staff to set clear boundaries of what we can legally do and not do. We cannot stop anyone from building "by right," but we can stop allowing planned use developments. We can also ensure that "provides community benefit" is more than simple tax revenue. Benefits to the City need to benefit residents.

8. Do you plan to accept campaign contributions from apartment or home developers?

- No

9. Please provide your name, phone number and candidate website (if available)

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