

Letter to the Editor

October 18, 2023

I'd like to thank Becky Johnson and The Mountaineer for hosting the Haywood County Candidate Forum. While I was unable to attend in person, I watched it live on The Mountaineer's Facebook page. I don't live in the Waynesville town limits so I'm unable to vote for the mayor and town council, but I do own property there and shop, bank, and eat in Waynesville every week. I've been very concerned over the past several years by the uncontrolled building approvals (without the corresponding infrastructure improvements) as well as the decline in the town's appearance. The vagrancy, trash, and needle litter have our beautiful small town looking more and more like Asheville every day.

I would urge anyone who hasn't watched the forum to do so PRIOR to voting. The Waynesville portion of the forum starts just after the 3:00:00 point and begins with the mayoral candidates and ends with the council member candidates. I was stunned by the behavior of Mayor Gary Caldwell, who literally **SHOVED** candidate Joey Reece and told him to stop picking on him! That an elected official felt he had to resort to violence is just unconscionable and voters definitely need to think twice before voting for Mr. Caldwell to return as mayor. Political discussions are often difficult and aren't always settled. There are so many nuances to some issues that at times no one is "right" or "wrong". Regardless, laying hands on someone you don't agree with is NEVER the answer and it is a shame our mayor never learned that growing up.

Team Waynesville (Joey Reece for Mayor and Stephanie Sutton, Peggy Hannah, and Tre Franklin for Town Council) offers an alternative to the current slate of folks who are pushing Agenda 2030, Climate Change, and other leftist ideas that are going to destroy our small town. Growth may be inevitable....but it certainly needs to be careful and controlled!!! Vote Team Waynesville for a strong, principled alternative!!!!

Janet Presson