



CITIZENS FOR RODNEY JORDAN

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Dear Ward 3 Leaders and Friends:

My name is Rodney Jordan, and I am asking for the honor of your vote and support on Tuesday, May 6th to serve on Norfolk City Council. I offer to you experienced and innovative servant leadership with a belief that the success of our neighborhoods and our city rests with us, working together -- house by house, block by block -- supported by a city government that enhances your hard work and dedication.

Let me begin by saying, thank you for being a part of the “**Net Energy Plus.**” The Net Energy Plus are those people in a place (neighborhood) who generate more energy or wealth than they consume. The Net Energy Plus vote, organize clean-ups, plant flowers in their yards, watch the children at the bus stop, organize dog parks, know and look out for their neighbors, serve actively in their civic leagues and more.

As a civically engaged member of our community, you understand that the residents and neighborhoods of Ward 3 find ourselves at a critical decision making point. Many important initiatives currently underway require energy, leadership and proven experience to keep them advancing. Other ideas and efforts are emerging and deserve and require city council leadership willing to work with you and along side you to nurture and to grow them into realized accomplishments. Here is a small sampling of the opportunities before us, and how I am experienced and prepared to work with you to support their growth and development.

Growing the Popsicle Index throughout Ward 3

The Popsicle Index is the percentage of adults in a place who feel a child may leave his or her home, walk or ride their bike to the corner store, and return home safely. As we speak to our neighbors, we know far too many of our neighborhoods have a low Popsicle Index. In many cases the Popsicle Index is low because our community fabric has frayed. We simply do not know and do not work to know our neighbors. We're often at a loss of how we set standards for our blocks. In other cases, our community stores are sites that detract from our communities. They provide places where groups hang out, too often demonstrating unfriendly neighborhood behaviors. These corners of concern can be deterrents for residents looking for a great neighborhood to make their home.

Over the past few years, I have worked to improve the relationship between our neighborhoods and the police -- a relationship where residents take ownership of and provide leadership toward safer communities. Working with you to raise the Popsicle Index in our Ward 3 neighborhoods, my philosophy will mirror what my late uncle, Judge Joseph Jordan, former Norfolk Councilman wrote, “...it is timely that we help rethink the generally accepted belief that solving the problem of crime is essentially a police problem and responsibility. Not so! Solving the problem of crime is

a citizens' problem and responsibility, and the police are a professional service that aids us in this endeavor. ...Our police should not be outsiders from whom we keep our distance for fear of offending them. Our police should be our first and most important liaison with governmental services—stationed within our neighborhoods, in existing churches or other neighborhood buildings, as ambassadors of good will (ombudsmen) who know each and every family in the neighborhood and who happen to make an arrest when there is a violation of law. When we create an inseparable, amicable relationship between our police and our citizens, the solving of crime will flow as smoothly and as certainly as the ripple of a gentle mountain stream.”

Broad Creek Renaissance -- The Next Phase

The growing, in-demand community we see today with mixed-income housing and a rising Kroc Center spurring neighborhood friendly commercial development did not occur overnight; Broad Creek represents a decade-plus worth of labor and love. Former Vice Mayor Burfoot deserves all the accolades he has received and more for his leadership of and tenacity to the Broad Creek model. It was and is my honor to have been a thought leader to the Renaissance -- designing approaches to increase homeownership and economic diversity, advocating for a housing mix that would support economic development, and protecting the interests of existing and new Broad Creek families alike.

An October 2005 *Virginian-Pilot* article noted “Burfoot and Rodney Jordan, vice chairman of the housing authority’s board of commissioners, have taken an at times controversial lead in Broad Creek. They have pushed the housing authority to include middle- and upper-income housing, something rarely a part of HOPE VI projects.”

Today, the north side of Broad Creek awaits new housing, a new school, and new economic opportunities. In addition, the historic neighborhoods of Broad Creek must be woven into the expanding success with new infrastructure, focused community policing, and support for housing upgrades and rehab. I bring to you over a decade’s worth of work to this project and experience from around the country with other healthy neighborhood developments.

The Fairmount Park Neighborhood Plan & Lafayette Boulevard Economic Corridor

The Fairmount Park residents, neighborhoods, and businesses supported by the leadership of the Fairmount Park Civic League have nearly a decade or more of neighbor-to-neighbor collaboration, communication, coordination, and good old-fashioned hard work invested in the revitalization of their nine neighborhoods. Their leadership in the areas of code enforcement, crime prevention, community education, and neighborhood pride is a model for Neighbors Building Neighborhoods. I fully support the vision and work of the Fairmount neighborhoods.

In my own experience here in Norfolk, I worked and helped to bring about new sidewalks, trees, aesthetic improvement programs, business recruitment, zoning improvements, street festivals and more within a neighborhood commercial corridor like Lafayette Boulevard. In addition, I led community initiatives that placed residents in the leadership position of neighborhood revitalization with city departments and staffs as “healthy partners.” The healthy neighborhoods philosophy and principles heralded within the Neighbors Building Neighborhoods strategy are directly tied to my community leadership and willingness to challenge the status quo. As your Ward 3 Councilman, I am prepared to champion the Fairmount Park neighborhoods’ initiatives and Lafayette Boulevard Economic Corridor efforts. Your support of my candidacy will result in renewed momentum and a councilmember ready to work with you on day one.

Education & Preparing Our Youth for Success

Ward 3 holds the keys to Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) reaching its goal of being “the cornerstone of a proudly diverse community.” Likewise the success of NPS hinges upon the success of our Ward 3 neighborhoods. I mentioned earlier the new Broad Creek School currently set to begin construction in 2015/2016. There are three schools in Ward 3 directly impacted by Dr. King’s Transformation Initiative -- Lindenwood, Jacox, and Lafayette-Winona. Two additional schools Sherwood Forest and Richard Bowling are receiving focused attention from the Virginia Department of Education. And, Ward 3 is home to two of the most in-demand education programs in Norfolk -- Norview High School’s Engineering program and the International Studies Program at Rosemont, and is home to many other great schools. In addition to my service and experience as Norfolk GAINS Steering Committee member, Norfolk School Board Member and Co-Chair for the Virginia School Boards Association Task Force on Schools in Challenged Environments, I have over 20 years of volunteer service to and experience in public education, workforce development, and youth initiatives. I am proud of my service which includes bringing summer employment and 21st century work skills to hundreds of Norfolk youth, preparing young people as “Digital Connectors” -- equipping them with laptops while providing digital literacy training to citizens of all ages, granting opportunities for dozens of young people to develop in STEM (science, technology, energy, and math) and creating a school preparing youth and adults with telecommunications skills for employment in the digital age.

Together we will embrace the digital age, creating a new standard for communities and schools working together to grow the number of strong families who call Ward 3 home and serve as the backbone of academic success for Norfolk Public Schools.

The Five Points Better Block

The Five Points business district is a critical economic, cultural, and historical community focal point for several of our neighborhoods. But as with other historic neighborhood commercial corridors, our memories of yesterday do not always align with our market forces and consumer habits today. As a result of the City’s relationship with Team Better Block, we have an important opportunity at Five Points to test the types of businesses and community activities that may flourish at Five Points. Better Block also gives us a chance to consider city ordinances, zoning, and other policies that may need modification to support those businesses and activities.

On Saturday, March 23rd, I shared with an initial group of Five Points stakeholders my personal experiences with Better Block as a leader and participant from the 35th Street Better Block. I know from experience that a successful project will require collaboration amongst property owners, business owners, and residents with support from city departments and officials. I have already pledged my support to the effort in Five Points as a neighbor. Given the opportunity to serve as your Council member, I am also ready, willing, and able to provide support and guidance in making the Five Points Better Block the best one yet.

Again, the above only represent a sampling of the opportunities before us.

I began this letter by thanking you for being members of the Net Energy Plus. Let me conclude with a few more thoughts regarding the important role you play.

It is part of our human condition to be social people and we naturally form communities. In any community group approximately 80% of the people are "Net Energy Neutral." This is not a negative thing. None of us can do all things all the time. Many Net Energy Plus people take turns being Net Energy Neutral when a variety of circumstances cause us to reduce our output. Net Energy Neutral members can provide the consensus and support for Net Energy Plus members so we may collectively accomplish the goals of the community.

Approximately 10% of the people in a place are "Net Energy Minus" -- they consume. They consume shared resources, through misdirection or even simple misunderstanding, and positive energies, through pessimism. Sometimes the intentions of the Net Energy Minus are benign, but the consequences can be detrimental with long-term effects.

I believe the deterioration of any community culture results when the Net Energy Minus people are in charge. It increases the efforts required of the Net Energy Plus and gives the wrong direction to the Net Energy Neutral. The key to breakthroughs in our communities -- and in our city -- is to reverse this order of things and reclaim our productivity. Promote the Net Energy Plus into leadership. At the very least support and salute them for their hard work. Allow our citizens to direct their positive actions and behavior into their communities, as we work together to temper and stop the Net Energy Minus factors from becoming barriers to success.

Again, I ask for your vote on May 6th, and I ask for your support of my candidacy to serve you and your neighbors. Please visit www.VoteJordan.us and sign up to keep Ward 3 moving forward. I welcome your ideas, your suggestions, and your critique. Let us practice today what we can do together over the next four years.

Let us organize, work together, and change Norfolk for the better!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodney Jordan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rodney Jordan