

# The Chapin Star

*The Capital of Lake Murray*



## 2024 Candidate Forum

### LOCAL ELECTIONS FORUM CAUSES SPARKS



It is once again that time. 2024 marks a huge election year both nationally and locally. The Greater Chapin Chamber of Commerce hosted a local candidate forum at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church to give the local incumbents and their challengers an opportunity to express their stances on hot-button topics, their accomplishments and what they will do to represent their communities.

These candidates included those for the positions of Lexington County Sheriff, South Carolina State House District 85, and Lexington County Council District 6. While the structure of the forum left little room for dramatics or outbursts, that didn't stop the participants from having some speaking their minds very directly and unapologetically.

**SHERIFF'S RACE ON PG. 3**

## Town Spotlight

### IT'S OFFICER WILLIAMS!

Andrew Williams has been a pillar to the Chapin Police Department for around 2 years. Originally from Florence, Alabama, Drew now lives in Chapin with his family and serves as a very dutiful officer. At a recent Chamber ribbon cutting in the town, Drew and Chief Griffin were on standby for assistance as an elderly man collapsed from the heat. Chief radioed in for EMS to expediate their response time and Drew worked diligently to clear the way and maintain crowd composure in the intense situation. He's one of the best!



# Upcoming Events!

## OFF THE DOCK RETURNS!



Our summer block party has returned in 2024! Last year we debuted our brand new summer event, the Off the Dock Block Party to moderate success. This year, it's going to be even bigger and better with more vendors, food, and fun.

The festival will be from 5pm-8pm on Friday, June 21st on the 100 block of Clark St. in downtown Chapin. This year will feature a musical performance from Curt London and the Blue Shades for the duration of the festivities and brought to you by Your Health. The Dogs on the Run and Karen's Kitchen Food Trucks will also be there, as well as Booze Pops and Pelicans Snow Cones. We also have an impressive lineup of vendors you'll have to see to believe, sponsored by Baked By Alexandra (who will also be there with fresh baked cookies!)

If your calendars have not yet been marked, go ahead and put down Off the Dock for June 21st from 5pm-8pm. With live music, food, drinks, and an atmosphere like no other, it's the place to be on a summer Friday night.

**Off the Dock**  
Block Party!

JUNE 21, 2024  
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
CLARK STREET, CHAPIN

[RSVP HERE!](#)

## Town Council 5.21.24

### A MONTH OF BIG WEEKS!

Last month's Town Council meeting saw many proclamations grace our town professionals. The month of May alone saw the celebration of National Police Week, National Public Works Week, Food Allergy Awareness Week, and Municipal Clerks Week! Seeing as how most of those weeks revolve around a large amount of our staff, Mayor Koon felt it appropriate to take the time at Town Council to proclaim the weeks in Chapin and let the staff know how much he appreciates their work for the town every day.

[TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES](#)



# Lexington County Sheriff

## JAY KOON VS. BILLY WARREN



The first candidates to speak were Lexington County Sheriff Jay Koon and primary challenger Billy Warren. Koon has served as Lexington County Sheriff for over nine years and spoke to the accomplishments he's managed over his time in the position. "We're coming off of a record year of hiring, up 48%. Retention is up 52% on keeping people. Crime stats are looking good. Certainly, I'm proud where we are and what our men and women have done to get us here nine years in to it." Koon said in his opening statement.

The crime stats were later clarified by the Sheriff to be property crimes, larceny, and assault and battery down 11%, burglary down 22%, motor vehicle theft down 17%, and robbery down 24%.

Warren was critical largely of the staffing of the Lexington County Sheriff's office, noting calls he is getting of a lack of deputies responding. "The morality of that Sheriff's department right now is concretely as low as it can possibly go, so what do we do to fix it? We get positive leadership in," Warren stated. Warren also stated that he had nothing specifically bad to say about the Sheriff, but that the department needed fixing. Sheriff Koon went on to speak on the personal relationships he's formed with local officials and his department's "chick-fil-a" style approach to public service. Warren continued to speak to the importance of staffing and his plan to instill proactivity into the department.

To close, Warren focused on his experience in law enforcement and once again noted his plan to increase the staff of the sheriff's department while Sheriff Koon spoke to the culture he's helped craft within the community and the strength of his relationships with state and local entities.

## Have a story for us?

**IF YOU HAVE A STORY THAT YOU FEEL WOULD BENEFIT YOUR FELLOW CHAPINITE TO KNOW, PLEASE SUBMIT IT TO US FOR NEWSLETTER CONSIDERATION. WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM OUR COMMUNITY!**

**[LET'S CHAT!](#)**

[@townofchapin](#) | [communications@chapin.com](mailto:communications@chapin.com)

**[CHAPINSC.COM](http://CHAPINSC.COM)**

# SC House District 85

## JAY KILMARTIN VS. DEAN WIDENER

The state house race began with incumbent Rep. Jay Kilmartin stating that he initially ran for office to do something about the corruption in the state house while his challenger, Dean Widener, remarked on his military record and his belief that he could make an impact on the people of the district in a positive way. When asked about constituent service, Kilmartin spoke to individual instances of connecting the right people to the right office while Widener spoke to his inspiration by Chip Huggins



and his desire to be accessible at all times to the people of his district.

When the topic of Lexington County Council overlooking the Chapin area was brought up, Widener spoke to his desire for Town Council and County Council to work together and grow responsibly. On the same subject, Kilmartin spoke to his plan to work with his connections in SCDOT to work on developing the infrastructure in the county.

The topics of abortion, medical marijuana, and the 2nd amendment were brought up. Kilmartin spoke to his work on the new constitutional carry law, his desire for medical marijuana to be federally legalized but recreationally prohibited, and his pro-life stance. Widener spoke to his work to defend the 2nd amendment while expressing his frustrations with the complexities of the new constitutional carry law and his desire for everyone to have proper firearm training for the safety of first responders and citizens. He also spoke to his favor towards medical marijuana legalization provided by medical professionals and that he is pro-life, though he doesn't believe women should receive too extreme of legal action for having one performed. Kilmartin rebuked saying he also doesn't believe that women should receive capital punishment for having an abortion and that the media is making up stances about his house bills. Widener encouraged everyone to check the verbiage and voting records on the bills for themselves while expressing his frustrations and opposition with attack mailers endorsed by his opponent asking "is this guy on the up-and-up? Or is this politics as usual?"

Both opponents traded comments about the other's campaign managers sending out false information about them and Kilmartin then also encouraged people to watch the voting records and the "theatre" that occurs in the State House.

To end their part of the forum, Kilmartin noted that he refused to sign the Republican loyalty pledge and that he stands by the votes that he's made as well as saying "I won't sit down if I see another republican doing something unethical." Widener ended his speech by saying he was going to reunite and divided Republican party and saying "You don't get the hornets nest out of the house by burning the house down." and "If you're not coming up with good, viable solutions, you're part of the problem."

# Lexington County Council District 6

CHARLENE WESSINGER VS. JASON RESNICK



For the County Council race, incumbent Rep. Wessinger spoke first to her initial involvement in community groups which inspired her to get involved in politics and the previous district representative pushing her to take her place on county council. She also spoke to her family's history with the area and while she may have "run away" for a little while that she is now back home. Challenger Jason Resnick spoke to his moving to Lexington County to work for the Emergency Medical Services 21 years ago, his concrete business (JJ Rez, LLC) opened in the Chapin area, and that he is running for County Council because he found many people were unhappy with the direction of Lexington County and his desire to give back to the people of District 6. When asked about protecting the interest of small businesses in the county, Resnick remarked that the increased cost of living in the area made it difficult for small businesses to retain staff in the area, a sentiment shared by the owner of the recently closed Zesto in Chapin who cited this as a reason they had to close saying "I was also so very lucky to have some of the most wonderful employees! Unfortunately, there just wasn't enough of them." Wessinger, when asked the same question, said that the municipal business license fees that allow for more affordable utility rates and dedicated local law enforcement are to blame for closures and that the unincorporated county does not have that fee.

When asked what they would do to work together with the Town of Chapin and support our comprehensive plan, Wessinger said that she would like to see the Town and County come together instead of "arguing and fighting constantly" and that the road maintenance agreement that she worked to dissolve at County Council months ago needs to be "refreshed". Resnick spoke to his relationships with Town of Chapin administration and how he wants to bring everyone to the table to on local issues. He also cited that when the road maintenance agreement was decided upon without negotiation with the municipalities and claims that "...now that election has come up, the council member that had come up with the road maintenance idea is stuttering, bumbling, and backtracking on how and what they should do," referring to Wessinger. Wessinger's rebuttal included that a new road maintenance agreement had since been proposed (it was not signed by all but one municipality due to advice from legal council) and that they did re-enact the old road maintenance agreement but only for the larger municipalities. She also stated that the unincorporated areas of the county "like our zoning" and she clarified that, under the new proposal, any property brought in to the municipalities would still have to abide by County zoning requirements.

# Lexington County Council District 6

## CHARLENE WESSINGER VS. JASON RESNICK

### PART 2

When asked about the current state of emergency service in the district, Wessinger claimed that the services have improved in the district since she's taken the council position, citing specifically the pay increases for fire, police, and EMS and a private ambulance service that services all of the county. She also acknowledged that the council has recognized that there are still issues and that they still have "a long way to go". Resnick when asked the same question, cited his experience in EMS and acknowledged the salary raises that the county council has given. Resnick then said that the time statistics that Wessinger said had fallen were "cherry-picked" to reflect positively and that though the council claims to have made efforts to increase the staff, EMS and fire services are still understaffed and unable to work properly due to that. When asked about the infrastructure issues specifically in Chapin, Resnick stressed that the people he's spoken with want to see impact fees on developers and that the large developers need to invest back into their community. He also spoke to how far behind we are in terms of infrastructure in relationship to the growth in the town, the state-owned roads, and the surrounding areas. Wessinger agreed that the road infrastructure is a large issue and that many of the roads are SCDOT owned. She also said that she is working with the Council of Governments to find a solution to the road congestion but did not have an improvement plan yet.

When the question of development came up, Resnick once again cited developers paying for their share of development and that the residents have made it clear that they are very hesitant for any new development that would come in. "I certainly would want to do what residents want, because you are serving their interests and I think every project would have to be carefully vetted to make sure that the residents want it." Resnick said. He went on to stress the importance of public servants and teachers living in the area and that working together to find that path to that is the goal. Wessinger when asked the same question said that the county did not have the infrastructure for multi-family developments at the moment and stated that the state law is restrictive to counties enacting impact fees on new developments, though municipalities have an easier time doing so.

When asked about Brighton Park, Wessinger sarcastically said "I love that we inherited such a debacle." She then said that her council predecessors were part of the Brighton Park decision and that she was not. Wessinger also explained that the road and fountain area are not constructed to be commercial-friendly and that while there is interest in the space, the county fees were extending the process and finished by saying "it is a mess and I absolutely hate that deal." Resnick agreed that it was a mess and reminded the crowd that it was a mess since Wessinger was sworn into office and has been unable to do anything about it. Resnick then explained his plan to bring relevant parties to the table and not "kick the can down the road for another 4 years, or 8 years, or 12 years." "God knows how much money has been wrapped up in that park...pointing fingers about who needs to do something first, you're still not getting anything accomplished." Resnick said.

To close, Wessinger claims have fulfilled her campaign promises and that she has convinced the council to be more sustainable (in spite of the 7000 housing permits that the county has accepted for development in the un-incorporated county, *per The Post and Courier*) and blaming previous councils for the current state of the county. Resnick's closing involved building communications between the county, town, and residents, and noted his endorsements from Mayor Al Koon and other Lexington County Council members.