

City of North Charleston MAYORAL RACE

Voters in North Charleston also go to the polls on November 7th to pick their next mayor. After 29 years, Keith Summey announced he will not run for re-election. 10 candidates have stepped forward to throw their hats in the ring including: Former Police Chief **Reggie Burgess**, FedEx Operations Manager and veteran **Russ Coletti**, Retired Summary Court Judge **Stephanie Ganaway-Pasley**, District 2 Councilwoman **Rhonda Jerome**, Defense and information technology professional **Curtis Merriweather**, Realtor and former Councilman **Todd Olds**, County Councilman **Teddie Pryor**, Businessman **John Singletary**, **Rev. Samuel Whatley**, and Take it to the Streets Nonprofit Founder **Jesse Williams**.

Each candidate was given the opportunity to respond to a question from *Carolina Tails* magazine. Coletti, Olds, Singletary and Whatley declined to respond.



Reggie Burgess



Stephanie Ganaway-Pasley



Rhonda Jerome



Curtis Merriweather



Teddie Pryor



Jesse Williams

Q The community is in dire need of stringent measures to curtail the overpopulation of dogs and cats, which is increasing, leading to more dog attacks and costs to taxpayers and donors. Will you support ordinances for incentivized spay/neuter of owned animals through a registration system, along with subsidized mandatory spay/neuter for the most overpopulated animals?

REGGIE BURGESS: As with many issues that are presented before us, as Mayor my priority is to listen to what the citizens want and then work with City Council to make sure we do what the citizens want. I will support any ordinance or initiative that is humane and supported by the community at large as they pertain to spaying or neutering our beloved pets. At the end of the day, the biggest concern is the safety of our residents, while being empathetic to the vital roles that pets play in many of our families.

STEPHANIE GANAWAY-PASLEY: As mayor, I would prioritize the safety and welfare of the community, which includes addressing the overpopulation of dogs and cats and reducing dog attacks. To address these issues, I would consider supporting ordinances for incentivized spay/neuter of owned animals through a registration system, along with subsidized mandatory spaying/neutering for the most overpopulated animals. However, I would ensure that these measures are implemented in a thoughtful, humane, and community-engaged manner. Before implementing such ordinances, I would engage with the community to raise awareness about the importance of spaying/neutering, responsible pet ownership, and the reasons behind these measures.

RHONDA JEROME: State law allows municipalities to enact ordinances and regulations for the care and control of dogs, cats, and other animals. I would entertain discussions to make sure that any ordinances that are written would protect the animals and their owners. These discussions should include members of the City of North Charleston, Charleston Animal Society, and members of the community to ensure the best possible practices.

CURTIS MERRIWEATHER: In addressing the overpopulation of dogs and cats, I support a balanced approach that respects individual freedoms while addressing the concerns raised. While we are concerned about increasing costs and safety issues related to overpopulated animals, our administration will advocate for education and voluntary incentives to promote responsible pet ownership. We believe in personal responsibility and freedom of choice, even as we work towards finding practical solutions to this problem.

TEDDIE PRYOR: Yes, I would support ordinances for incentivized spay/ neuter being paid for by the owner of the animal. Requiring all animals to be registered thru the CAS. Also I would encourage all municipalities to pay into a fair system depending on the number of animals that they bring in to help defray the cost to the county and CAS. As more animals are being left in the streets and brought to CAS it requires more resources and we all should pay our fair share and help CAS meet their budget numbers to continue the services they provide.

JESSE WILLIAMS: As Mayor of North Charleston, I am committed to addressing the overpopulation of dogs and cats. Implementing ordinances for incentivized spay/neuter programs, especially for vulnerable pet owners, is crucial. By subsidizing these procedures, we can promote responsible pet ownership, reduce dog attacks, and decrease the number of homeless animals. This initiative would be funded through the city budget, ensuring citizen safety from stray dog attacks and easing the burden on animal control resources. It's a proactive step toward a safer, more sustainable environment for our residents and their pets.

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