

Appendix D

2010 Biennial Survey Focus Group Transcript Session 2

Moderator: All of you live within the Town?

- Yes.

Moderator: Excellent. Okay. Now what I'd like you to do is go around the table here and tell us your first name, how long you've lived in Cary and maybe where you came from before you moved to Cary. And we'll start with David.

- Okay. David. I've lived in Cary since 1979 and I'm still in the same house, unheard of with the same wife. I'm sorry. And I moved here from Gainesville, Florida.
- I'm Ann. I've lived in Cary since 1978. And I came here from – we came here from Elon College, North Carolina.
- I'm Cindy. I've lived here since '84 or '85 – '85 and in the same house after a brief period of a rental and the same husband. And we moved here from West Palm Beach, Florida via Nebraska – Nebraska, then Florida and then here.
- I'm Doug. I came essentially from Charleston, West Virginia and Carmel, Indiana. My wife had a job in Indiana for three years, and I commuted from Charleston to Indiana for three years. And then when she came here, she said I had to come. So I retired and came. So we've been here about three years now.

Moderator: Three years. Okay. Very good.

- I'm Jeanette. I moved in '98 – 1998. I've been in the same house. And we moved from Michigan and Indianapolis, Indiana. That's really our home – Midwestern.
- My name is Drew. This is my wife's and I – first house. We've been in this one for – since 2008. I've been in North Carolina since 2000. And prior to that, I moved here from Littleton, Colorado.
- Hi. I'm Jeanine. And my husband and I moved here in 1999. So we've been here 11 years. We lived in an apartment and now we live in the same house. We're still married.

Moderator: Where'd you move from?

- Oh, Clinton, South Carolina.

Moderator: Okay. So all of you live in houses it sounds like?

- Yes.

Moderator: Very good. Let's get started. Let's first talk about growth. Growth in Cary showed up again in this year's survey as a concern for the respondents even though the population and the tax base growth rates have gone way down compared to the recent past, which is probably due to the recession. How much do you think concerns over growth rates in Cary may be impacted if the Town were to educate citizens a little bit more on what the actual growth rate is? Do you think that would make a difference?

- It always helps to know what the growth rate – if you said like the growth rate from when we moved here when Cary was just a tiny little town to see the boom from '80s – the early '80s to the '90s. And now looking at it 20 years later, what percentage are we growing? Because we were in the midst – all of us who have been here forever – of the big boom, where Cary went from this little sleepy little bedroom town to big.

Moderator: What do you think?

- And I think a point of relativity would be helpful, because I remember the time that they would hear on the radio or read or on the news of the average number of families that are moving to Cary per day. And it was such a big unbelievable inertia of people coming to this area. And I think if people had a point of reference and relativity of then to now of the amount of people that are living here, it would maybe give us a different perspective.

Moderator: Okay. Anybody else? Do you know what the growth rate is now?

- No.

Moderator: About four percent. That's what it is right now. Okay. So actually since you didn't know, it might not be such a bad thing.

- Well, you have to consider the infrastructure for that growth, too. Because I mean at one point in time they said they were going to try to expand into Chatham County. Now if I were out there, I wouldn't know what resources I was going to get from Cary, and I'd be highly perturbed to know I'm paying Cary taxes for no benefits whatsoever.

Moderator: Okay. Let me ask you another question on this. What do you think about growth that concerns individuals? Is it things like the byproducts of growth, whether it's traffic or waiting in line and stuff? I mean what is the concern that you have?

- Well, for me like I just said, it would be the – it would be the resources that the new populous are going to get from the Town of Cary. Are they going to get fire? Are they going to get police protection? I mean you can go out now to the airport – and you drive out to the airport, and all of a sudden you're in the Town of Cary. And you go another mile and you're in Morrisville. You don't know where Cary is and where Morrisville is. You get in an accident out there. They call the police and they say oh no you're in Morrisville today. And then the Morrisville cop comes and says oh no you're in Cary by two-tenths of a mile. And then you got to wait. So it's ridiculous how we're expanding. And so it's like a spider web almost.
- I would agree with David as well. There's no defined lines. I live right on the Chatham County/Cary line there. It's more like fingers that come out and you can as you're driving along the road, you can go through two or three different counties. Durham's right over there as well. So I'm thinking if they're going to buy it, buy in sections at a time so it's more defined.

Moderator: Okay. Any other issues about growth that bother you?

- My major concern is our water supply, especially with Durham looking at building right on Jordon Lake. And I know we can't do anything about it, because we don't live in Durham County. But that concerns me. Jordon Lake is our water supply. We cannot risk losing our water supply. We've had some major droughts, and that lake has gone down tremendously. And if we keep adding the number of people on our water supply, when does it come to the point where we won't have enough water to survive?

Moderator: So you're telling me sort of infrastructure items is what you're mostly hitting me with, right?

- Mm hmm.

Moderator: Okay. Let me ask you another question. Now there's growth in Cary. There's growth in Wake County. And there's growth in the Triangle. What concerns you the most?

- One of the things that kind of concerns me – well, really concerns me is I think the portrait of Cary has changed drastically in 12 years. Earlier when we moved back in the late '90s, there – it was a place that attracted a lot of real young people that were just married, starting families. And thus I saw schools popping up everywhere. But as soon as the school was built and developed it became maxed and they had to add trailers, which was amazing for me to see coming from the Midwest. Since then, I've seen a shift in the population where there is – I don't know if you want to call it the Baby Boomers or an elderly population that's transitioning to this area. And I have some concerns for that population as well

as the younger population. And what are we doing to provide resources for them?

- I guess a lot of seniors want to be with their children.
- That's exactly right. I'm a physical therapist. And so I cannot tell you the number of families that the breadwinners are in their 40s, but they're having one of their parents live with them. And the big concern of adult daycare – where do we send our parents when we need some reprieve? We're having a hard time figuring out where our parents are going to retire to. They want to be close to us.
- I think there's a lot of like apartments and stuff being built.
- Exactly.
- I don't see anything else I guess other than the apartments.
- Other than the apartments. Right.
- For housing.

Moderator: Okay. So we're talking about some issues. Do you think the Town does a good job providing activities or things for these retirees as you call them?

- They do. They have Cary Parks and Rec.
- Cary Parks and Rec has some great activities. But that's for – how can I say this – for the more capable – more independent and capable. I wonder if they started to have signs of dementia or needed a little bit more assistance, not enough to necessarily go into a nursing home, etc. It's kind of like what do you do with a child who's not really in school, ready for preschool, but you don't want to put him in a daycare full time type of thing? It's there – it's the in-between.

Moderator: Well, back to this – of the growth, you don't really distinguish the growth in Cary, the Triangle or Wake. It's just growth in general is what you're telling me, that you're not concerned with a particular area or part?

- Well, I would just be concerned with the growth within the area, like I guess Wake County and...
- Cary.
- ...Cary, yeah.
- Can you answer questions?

Moderator: The best I can.

- Okay. Can you tell me why we have to have so many like Walgreen's, CVS, Eckerd's and Harris Teeter's? What – is there like a rule or a law that says on every corner, there has to be like a couple?

Moderator: Well, what you're – now that's another thing to bring up to the growth that's being done that's a concern for you that's something that needs to be.

- Yeah. That's just retail. They get to build wherever they want to build.

Moderator: You tell them something and they'll hear from you from this report.

- And those are the entities that make money – drugstores, grocery stores. The other little shops and stuff right now with the economy – that's pretty much stagnated. In fact a lot of the little shops have closed.

Moderator: Well, let me ask you another question along that line. In the past – think about this. Can you think in the past year or two years with the Town government, think about things they've done for growth just in the past two years. What comes to mind, positive or negative? The things the Town government has done for growth, to manage growth.

- The road system is a lot better.
- You say it's better.
- I do. I think the roads – they've widened the roads. They've made – I mean, yeah, we've had to put up with construction. But my goodness, they've made huge strides in trying to get access and egress into certain areas a lot more congenial than they've been in the past. I think they've done a good job in that area.

Moderator: Do you agree everybody?

- Well, to that note, with the population with as busy as it is, I've noticed the roads a lot worse off. They are definitely they need to tend to them more.

Moderator: You mean the condition of the roads?

- The condition of the roads.
- Green Level to Durham is a pretty bad road.
- Yes.

Moderator: We'll get to those areas in a minute.

- That's one of the things I brought up, too, is that on Maynard Road – you go out Maynard Road like away from the mall like you're going to North Harrison, it's like driving through a minefield.

Moderator: Okay. We'll get to those issues is just a minute. Anything else you think they've done?

- Yeah. They seem to be still sticking with stop signs and stoplights instead of going with roundabouts, which is pretty much documented it moves traffic smoothly.

Moderator: Now you like the roundabouts better?

- Yeah. It was completely new to us when I went out to Indiana. I mean we were in Carmel, and they're even taking the stop signs and the stoplights out and expanding. Of course, everything's on grid out there anyways. But I was over at Tryon Road and Cary Parkway, and there's not a lot of traffic. And you got about four or five lanes each way. And you sit there and the green lights come here and the green lights come here and the green lights come here. And Cary Orthopedic Center is across the street and I'm telling you, you could get out and walk over there by the time you get through the light. And then there's like four cars here, four cars here, four cars here. And there's like eight lanes there at the intersection. And I'm going like, well, if they had a stupid roundabout, once you figure them out, you're there. There is a learning curve with those.
- Yeah. They kind of – they confuse me, those roundabouts.

Moderator: Okay. Let me ask you this then. Anything that you – and you've mentioned some of these. Anything else the Town could do better to manage growth that they're not presently doing?

- That would be a good one, a post office.
- Yeah. I would like to see another post office.

Moderator: Okay.

- Yeah. The post office would be nice. The way that the post office is awful.
- It is unbelievable. I'm like how can they have the same post office and less personnel working and have how much more has our growth been? I'm like okay. That just didn't make sense to me.

Moderator: Okay. What else? It seems to be you're saying this Town's doing a pretty good job do you think with growth. Is that what you're trying to tell me?

- And I like the way that we now have a community police officer...
- Yes.
- ...that you have that is in your area that knows your area.
- I like that new concept.
- We do?
- Yes.
- In three or four sections.
- Well, we have a neighborhood watch in our neighborhood. And so we were informed per our neighborhood watch that we have a community officer now. I haven't met him, but he is charge of like our area.
- You have a captain and then a police officer below him.
- Yeah.
- And so there's like four per area, and I think there's three areas, but there may be four. But you have a head person and then three people that you have the direct phone numbers for each of them.
- Huh. See I didn't even know that. If I were to get in trouble, I'd call up the old chief of police and tell him to bring his gun.
- One of the things that gripes me, and I mentioned it is that it used to be when we first moved into Cary when you were doing new construction from the main road you had to have a buffer, something so everybody doesn't see what's going on back there. And now they're stripping everything like a corner on Maynard and Old Apex, they're putting in luxury apartments.
- Yeah. They totally stripped that.
- Is that what that is?
- They totally destroyed that.
- All these beautiful trees and they totally stripped that.

- The same thing as on Old Apex Road, they're building a Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall. Well, they totally stripped that. And the only thing that's protecting us from seeing that is the railroad tracks and a few trees. But I mean the area, the footage – there was supposed to be a buffer there where the Muslim Mosque, which is on...
- Chatham.
- ...Chatham by the railroad tracks, I mean at least they've got the buffer so you don't see all the construction going on there. And I thought at one point in time Cary had an ordinance or the Town Council was saying, okay, you need to have these buffers here before you strip that.
- I did, too. They used to.
- Yeah.
- Because I remember when they built – when they added on to Cary Towne Center, they had to have all that buffer system put in before they could go on.
- That's what makes this area so attractive.
- Is having – is having the buffers.
- Is having – I mean that's the thing I applauded when I came down here from the Midwest is, wow, they kept a lot of these mature trees. It was very – I mean it was really well thought out how they designed things. They just didn't go in and bulldoze everything down. And I think that's what we're seeing now.
- Yeah. That's exactly what it is.
- Everything's flattened out and they're getting it up quick.
- That's exactly what we're seeing, which is – I think it's a contradiction from what way back when, when some of us first moved here as to what they're doing, and it's actually causing an eyesore. It's I don't like looking at it.

Moderator: Okay. Very good. Anything else?

- One other thing. The way they did it in Colorado and they've done it a little bit here, but when they award their contracts for road construction, it would be lovely if they did them at night instead of during the days. I know they did it on the 40 they do them at night, which helps out a lot. But they tie up the traffic quite a bit during the days. And when they're only two-lane roads to begin with, it makes it tough. Night's definitely a better time to do it.

Moderator: Okay. One other question on this. What would be the ideal growth situation for Cary in your mind?

- I think slow, steady growth is good. It helps our community to have – but we also have a lot of houses on the market right now. Those need to be – before we build a bunch of new retail and housing and things like that, we need to boost up the market, the houses that are already out there that are for sale.
- I don't know if it was Lang. Who was it? They had that growth cessation period, where – and correct me if I'm wrong – where it was like we were moving so quickly and so fast that we couldn't – our infrastructure couldn't keep up and they had this growth cessation, where they said stop. We're not going to do anything for awhile until we get caught up and we kind of see where we are. I loved that, because it gave us a time to see where we are. And I know there's this big delay between when you make plans and you plan to build something and it's actually executed. And a lot's happened with the recession. It just seems like you said, we have all these apartments, condos, townhouses going up, these houses for sale, a lot of retail centers that are empty, vacant. And then they keep building more. So I'm like shouldn't we just kind of stop and see where we are to get some controlled approach really to identify where are our needs?
- I think what bothers me is I guess along with that is not just businesses but houses – I mean I know they have their reasons for it, but they clear-cut all the land for the houses. I mean I just wish they would leave trees out there.

Moderator: Okay. So what I'm hearing maybe is a little bit more controlled slow growth, but infrastructure items considered and it seems like environmental aspects is important to all of you.

- Mm hmm.

Moderator: Okay. Well, let's talk traffic. What are the problem – are the problem spots that you see for traffic inside Cary or outside Cary? And if you could, could you name those spots and when you see them as a concern?

- Well, the one I mentioned going and coming to work was Maynard Road. I mean and that's just strictly because of the lack of attention that – and it's probably not Cary's problem. It's probably DOT.

Moderator: You're talking about potholes?

- Yeah. Potholes and stuff like that. Yeah.

Moderator: Okay. What else? Where else?

- Down in my neck of the woods at the 55 and 540 area there.

Moderator: Is this inside Cary?

- It is. It doesn't seem like they are – that the lights are timed very well going towards Apex from the Durham location. So come 5 p.m. it's stacked up there.
- I was just going to say that. That's where I see the biggest problem. I don't know if it's really necessarily the Town of Cary, but where the Town of Cary bridges into Apex, so you've got these – a lot of lanes on 55. And then once you get into Apex, it bottlenecks down into only two lanes, and it is – around 5 p.m. it is stacked unbelievable.
- For miles.

Moderator: Okay. Where else?

- Well, you have High House and Cary Parkway. It's just gets a little longer every time or every month I guess.
- High House and Davis Drive. That's another long light.

Moderator: So most of these are inside of Town?

- Mm hmm.

Moderator: Let me ask you another question. You mentioned a few of these already. But how can Cary improve this? Better synchronization of lights you thought?

- I think that would help in that situation there.

Moderator: Okay. Where else or what else? The roundabouts like you said.

- Well, there's not enough room unfortunately at Cary Parkway and High House without taking out about four or five businesses.
- I don't think they'd appreciate that. They did have, what, the one proposal for you turned right, right, right and kept turning right and you ended up left or something. And I don't think it went over too well. But it really doesn't bother me. Very rarely do I go at that hour. Occasionally I get stuck running the young kids.

Moderator: But you did mention some areas you would like to see roundabouts.

- Yeah. Yeah. I think especially in the neighborhoods. One, it does two things. It keeps traffic moving, but it also slows down traffic so you don't have – how do they call them down here – humps I guess in about half the subdivisions.

- Oh, speed humps.
- Yeah. The roundabouts accomplish about the same thing.

Moderator: Any others? What else? Some of the things like new roads, wide roads, mass transit, those type areas, bike lanes? Any of those? Or do you think they're doing a good job as it is now?

- I think there's probably a shortage of bike lanes.
- Yeah, generally.
- You'll have a bike lane for awhile and there's a lot of riders that come out through Preston.
- A lot.
- I think they're pretty non-existent down in my area over there. The bike lane is literally about this wide.
- Yeah. Bike lanes would be nice, because they really slow traffic down.
- Yeah. Evans Road, there's always one or two bikers on Evans Road. Even though you have a four-lane – or maybe it's five-lane – I don't know with the turn lane. But everybody's always got to swing out to avoid the bikes. And even the little mopeds are the little...
- Vespas.
- ...Vespas. Vespas. They get on there and everything comes to a screaming halt.
- Yes.

Moderator: Anything else? Any other ways you think they could improve the traffic issues? You've given some really good ideas.

- Well, I think the different places where you have the – your right lane where you can make that right-hand turn and you've got your own lane, somehow or another we need to put a blinking thing on the sign so people can see that, because they'll stop. And you're sitting there going, hello, it's a flowing through lane. Oh, because you know the one on...
- By Aviation.

- Yeah.
- Evans and Aviation.
- Yes. Evans and Aviation.
- Yeah.
- And then the one as you're pulling off the Beltline onto Cary Parkway.
- Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.
- There's a flow-through lane.
- Right.
- But that one – that's short.
- That is short.
- They need an acceleration ramp on there.
- Yeah.
- It's too short.
- Yeah.
- Because I'll occasionally come down there and that acceleration ramp, if you don't gun it you're going to get nailed by the person who's coming straight through and not paying attention on Cary Parkway.

Moderator: Which place was that? The road's too short.

- Cary Parkway and...
- The Beltline.
- The Beltline.
- ...the Beltline.

Moderator: Good. Well, let's get to street maintenance. You mentioned that earlier. Let's go ahead and talk about that. That's the potholes, repaving and stuff like that. Let's get started with that. Who do you think is responsible for the streets and fixing the potholes in Cary?

- It depends on which road, because some of them are DOT and some of them are Cary.

Moderator: Very good. It does depend on what the road is. Now I'm going to mention some of these. And Cary just wants to find out what the citizen knowledge of these are. Now let me throw out a few streets. And either they could be state roads. They could be Cary roads. Or they could possibly be private roads, and the people that live on them have to maintain them. Let's start out first with Kildaire Farm Road. How many people – raise your hand – thinks it's a State road? [1 hand raised] Okay. How about it's a Cary road? [6 hands raised] The rest of you did. Kildaire Farm is a State road, which means it has to be maintained by the State, and your tax dollars that go to the state.

- Look at you.
- Thank you very much.
- Good job, Doug.

Moderator: The next one is Maynard Road. How many people think that's a State road? [1 hand raised] Okay. How about a Cary road? [6 hands raised] The rest of you feel it's Cary. That's a State road. It has to be maintained by the State.

- I cheated. It was in the paper. Yeah. They're actually going to pay part of it. Thank you.

Moderator: I got a couple more. Let's try these out. How about Cary Parkway? How many people think that's a State road? [1 hand raised] Alright. How about a Cary road? [6 hands raised] The rest of you do. You're both right. Part of it is Cary, the northern part. The rest of it is State. So Cary maintains that. The last one – how about Academy Street? State? [0 hands raised] How about Cary? [7 hands raised]

- Yeah.

Moderator: Exactly. It's Cary. So Cary has to maintain that one. We're not only talking about potholes and everything. There's an equity issue here. Let me try to explain. Should Cary citizens pay twice to have a State road maintained? What that means is if it's a State road, Cary could go in and repair it, but that's not what Cary is doing now. What they do now if there's an issue with a state road, they contact the State. They can say repair it. What's your thought on that? Should Cary repair the road?

- No. Go ahead.

- I think if Cary could repair the road and be reimbursed for the cost since the State was going to pay it anyway.

Moderator: Okay. What else?

- That's exactly – that's an excellent idea.

Moderator: If not reimbursed, what would you say?

- No.
- No.
- Fix the road that needs to be done by the State. But it wouldn't be reimbursed. It would just be we'll do this one. You do this one. This one was ours and that one's yours.

Moderator: So you're saying no double.

- Yeah. No double. We don't want to pay taxes twice. We don't want to pay for something twice.
- Or maybe if it's on an emergency basis. There were a couple holes on Maynard that if you didn't remember they were there you'd have to go get your car aligned. Yeah. They were deep.
- I think, yeah, it depends on how critical. If it would create danger or something like that, then I think...

Moderator: Emergency type thing.

- Emergency types of things that the Town should step in.

Moderator: Otherwise if you're not reimbursed?

- Otherwise – that's right.

Moderator: That's very good.

- Doesn't DOT have a policy that if there is a pothole and it's reported, they fix it within 72 hours or something like that?

Moderator: I don't know the answer to that. I couldn't tell you.

- I thought there was a pothole – like a dangerous pothole policy with DOT.

Moderator: In the last focus group they also mentioned that they have noticed that on the website you can go and see if it's a Cary road versus a State road if you want to know and make a complaint. Well, let's move on to revenue and spending money. And let me just explain a couple – there's a little bit of a preface here before we get going with that. Now we've heard some conflicting ideas in the survey this year and we'd like to get your thoughts on it. Many people want the Town to keep taxes and fees low and slow down growth. But at the same time they answered they would like to see more spent on roads and move forward on some of the projects that the Town has. Now you can imagine the revenues the Town gets from consumer spending – and that would be sales tax, wine tax and beer tax – that's gone down, way down, because consumers aren't spending as much due to economic activity.

- They haven't met my wife.
- She's keeping up her part of it.

Moderator: On the backside of this, the Town hasn't raised taxes in over 20 years. And growth is also way down. Now the revenue from the sales taxes and the growth has been a big part of the money Cary uses to provide you with new and better things. So you can see the quandary they're in sort of. Now keep in mind that the Town itself has learned to live within its means and still has not raised taxes. As a matter of fact, the Town has cut back on many of its operations and cancelled or delayed indefinitely many projects that were on the horizon like downtown, which you guys had mentioned earlier. Now we'd like to get your ideas how to deal with this conflict of citizens wanting the Town to slow growth further, not raise taxes but still pay for improvements. What are your thoughts?

- I think that's a big question.

Moderator: It is.

- It's a tough question.

Moderator: What do you think, Drew?

- I don't think it's going to be an easy answer. I mean that's – like I said that is a very big question. And I think if we could answer it in this group, you'd have the job.
- I think it's a matter of we all live on budgets. And if you don't live on a budget, I'd like to know how you do it. So Cary needs to be the same way. The fact that we haven't had taxes raised on us for 20 years is wonderful. And we've been able to maintain that. So the thing to look at is where are we wasting money? And I can name one right off the top of my head. The lights that flash yellow. That was a waste of money. The signs – the information signs – a waste of money. Let's look at where we're wasting money. Because too often we are wasting money

instead of saying, okay, that would be cool to have a sign that tells you such and such. But is it reasonable in our economy at this time to do that? And the lights that flash yellow, because somebody isn't smart enough to know that you don't turn on a left-hand turn in front of traffic, that was silly. That was a waste of money. Everybody knows. Or those of us that drive a lot know not to do that. So let's not spend money that we don't have, like all the rest of us who live on budgets. So we need to live on a budget. And because somebody comes in, a salesman comes in and says, I have this new concept and I want you to try it. Say no. Because we don't need that.

Moderator: Do you think Cary is doing a good job living on the budget in the past two years?

- Yeah. We've wasted some money.

Moderator: We'll get to the waste here in a minute. But overall?

- Overall. Overall.
- Yeah. They have not taken up taxes and still provide us with what we need. Yes. They've done a good job.
- They've done a great job.

Moderator: Would you as a group – your tax rate. How do you feel about your tax rate when you compare it to other areas?

- It's good.

Moderator: You think it's good?

- Compared, yeah.
- Comparatively, absolutely.

Moderator: Do all of you agree?

- Yes.

Moderator: Okay. Compared to where you lived before?

- Mm hmm.
- Actually it's higher from where I lived before. But it's still very reasonable compared to New Jersey or New York.

- Yeah. It's a lot higher from where we lived in Florida. Or who lived in Florida?
- I did.
- Because we didn't have taxes in Florida.
- That's true.
- So it's a lot higher.
- It is a lot higher. But we've lived here for the last 25 years so we're used to it.
- Yeah.

Moderator: Are there certain types of projects or activities that you think should have a higher priority over others? For example, do you think that Cary should focus more on maintenance and upkeep of what we have now, of what the Town has now, and focus less on the new things? Or should there be a balance between the new and maintaining what you have now? Or what? What do you think?

- Well, you always have to maintain what you have. I mean that's your first priority.
- Absolutely.
- And then as you – after you maintain it, if you have extra then you expand.
- I think if you do a little bit here and a little bit here and a little bit here, none of that stuff is going to be quality. So if you focus on what you already have and make it good, make it solid you're not going back and adding money to fix up those things that you did. The way I want to say it I can't say, but you just can't – put the money into the places that we already have and that are working now.
- Yeah.
- I like the analogy Cindy used. And if we could take the Town and minimize it to the scale of a home, you have to be able to maintain your home, right, before you can put an addition on. As opposed to putting six additions on simultaneously, you've got to prioritize and say, okay, have I been able to maintain fairly well my home that I have so that I can put on this addition to keep it viable? So I loved your analogy.

Moderator: So the first part of what you're saying is to maintain what you have now before you look to anything new?

- Mm hmm.

Moderator: Just a question. Suppose we were to say some of the things – the new things have a priority. Is there anything that you can come to mind that you would put as a priority of something new that the Town could get or you'd like to see them have?

- I would think we probably need to decide on more police locations and probably EMS locations.

Moderator: Police and EMS. Okay. What else?

- I'm not sure what they've got out in your area.
- We have one a block away from us, so it's nice.
- Oh, okay. So that sounds good.
- Yeah. It's new.

Moderator: Okay. What else? Anything else?

- I mean parks are always good, expand the recreational facilities in the community. That's a big draw.
- We have great parks in the Cary area.

Moderator: Okay.

- We have had – I think that's always been a priority of Cary.
- Yeah.
- Is to have good parks and greenways and things like that.
- I love the greenways. I love the greenways.
- Yeah.
- I think they've done a wonderful job.
- It's excellent.
- Of keeping natural areas and having the greenways and having the parks. You couldn't find a better community I don't think that has parks like we do.
- I think that's the reason a lot of people move here is for the parks and the activities that they have.

- You're right.
- Mm hmm.
- Yeah.
- I brought my new daughter to the Easter Egg Hunt that they had over at Bond Park, and I mean the turnout there, it was amazing.
- That was hilarious.
- But it was great.
- Yeah.
- And the things that Cary offers through Cary Parks and Rec is wonderful. I mean that whole book is just huge with all the activities you can be involved in.
- And how well thought out all the greenways intertwine, so you can go from one place to get all the way to the Tobacco Trail and back. I mean it's just – it's been really well thought out.
- Mm hmm.

Moderator: So parks, greenways, really good.

- Yes.
- I'll tell you one new thing that they did that I was glad to see – it's trivial, but I'm really glad. I think this was a Cary thing, but I'm really glad we got the big, brown recycle bins.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- I'm sure it was a huge cost to Cary.
- I love those.
- I recycle so much I have two.

Moderator: We'll stay with this just a couple more minutes. Do you agree the Town or disagree the Town is spending the taxpayers' money wisely or appropriately? And if not or is there anything that sticks out in your mind you think that maybe they shouldn't have spent? One of you said the signs. Anything else? Well, first, do you think they're spending the money wisely now at least in the past few years?

- Overall, yes.
- Overall, yes.

Moderator: Everybody agree?

- Mm hmm.

Moderator: Okay. Now anything they shouldn't – maybe that you didn't care for or was inappropriate besides the signs?

- And the lights.

Moderator: And the lights. Okay. What else? It's good you're having to think.

- Mm hmm.
- I think they need to rotate the people that do the snow removal to the Midwest or someplace. They need to learn how to drive one. I know they don't get to do it very often. But clearing two lanes and leaving it on the berm doesn't do anything. It just melts and then you got 15 days of school that you miss on two inches on snow, because, well, it melted and it came back over the road so we can't get to school again. So maybe just some on-the-job training in snow removal.
- Yeah. Send them to Colorado or Nebraska for a few days to learn how to do it.

Moderator: Anything else that maybe they inappropriately spent money? Ann, can you think of anything?

- No. Nothing comes to mind right now.

Moderator: Good. That's good when you have to think about it for a minute. Well, let's move onto communications then. Now the Town is very interested in having the citizens participate in the governing process. They want to create, implement and make good decisions on the programs, projects and policies and even the laws. They want these decisions to reflect what you want, what you need and of course the values and the culture of the community. They want you to be happy with what's going on. Now let's start by defining involvement. When you think of being involved in Town government, what comes to mind?

- Boring meetings.

Moderator: Okay. Okay. You're talking about Council meetings?

- Yeah.
- Channel 11.
- That's exactly what I was going to say. Channel 11.

Moderator: Okay. What's wrong with Channel 11?

- It's boring.

Moderator: Well, how could they improve that do you think?

- Stand up and do some dances.
- Well, they've got information going this way and this way and that way.
- They need to just pick a topic and stick to it.
- It's a little stimulus overload for me.
- Yeah.

Moderator: Do all of you watch Channel 11?

- I think if you need the news like by the minute, that's the place to go to, because they have it on the ones.
- Yeah.
- But overall I think if you get the Cary news, you can be updated. I'm on the – what is it – they email me. I'm on the list of emails.

Moderator: On the email list.

- I get the emails of what's going on. And Channel 11, we're pretty informed on what's going on around the area. And I know there's all the – not focus groups – but what are they called? The – you can be on the boards. They have these – I don't know if they're called boards. I'm not sure what they're called. But you can get on these...
- Advisory panels.
- ...advisory panels. That's what they are.

Moderator: So that's another form of involvement.

- Yeah.
- Mm hmm.

Moderator: What else? Can you think of any others?

- I love the little pamphlets that you get in with your water bill. I love that. I love that thing. I don't know why.

Moderator: What's your primary source of information about the Town?

- Cary Newspaper.
- Cary News.

Moderator: All of you say it's Cary News.

- Mm hmm.

Moderator: Okay. Alright. Now generally speaking, how interested are you in Town government? In other words being involved in Town government? Very interested? Somewhat? What would you say, David?

- How interested I am in Town government?

Moderator: In being involved.

- Being involved. Probably not at all.

Moderator: Okay. Fair enough. Ann?

- I'm just – I'm interested to know what's going on. I don't know that I want to start attending meetings or anything.

Moderator: Okay. Informed but not necessarily involved?

- Yeah.

Moderator: Okay.

- I like to stay informed, and I would like to be more involved if it – because I've lived here and I think I'm vested in Cary. My life is here.

Moderator: Okay.

- I like being informed but as to more than what today is probably not.

Moderator: Okay. Jeanette?

- I think I would answer somewhat.

Moderator: Somewhat.

- Somewhat for me. I mean I'm really focused with my community in Stonewater, and with that we have a lot of police officers come out and talk to the community people. The fire department does as well. I think that part of the government, we're excited to hear from them, and we're excited to hear what's going on around us and such.

Moderator: That's involvement.

- Yeah. Very much so.

Moderator: Jeanine?

- I like doing these focus groups, because usually I'm not interested. But I don't know if there's anything on the Town of Cary you could put comments in or something like that to do suggestions or something. So I guess a suggestion box online or something like that.
- That's a good idea.

Moderator: Okay. Maybe it depends somewhat on the issue to a degree, right, for your involvement?

- Mm hmm.

Moderator: Is there anything that would motivate you to get more involved besides just if the issue is important? What else?

- I think if we – this is an outside issue. But if Cary decided to break from Wake County and have their own school system, I would be very involved in that.

Moderator: Okay.

- I would like to see that. Maybe have a Cary-Apex School System instead of Wake County wide, break up the school system. I think it's gotten so big.
- Or Cary-Apex-Morrisville.
- Yeah. It's so bureaucratic right now. There's more people working at Wake County Central School System than there is in the schools.

- That's right.

Moderator: All of you – well, not all of you. Some of you have kids in school now?

- I don't have kids in school. My kids all graduated.

Moderator: Okay. You do?

- Yes.

Moderator: Okay. Okay. Any other things that would make you want to become more involved? Schools came up as a big issue in the previous group big time.

- I think it's been kind of joked about in the Cary News about combining Cary and Morrisville. And as we stated previously, you really don't have a clue where you are sometimes. In fact you're driving along and it says welcome to Cary and oh I didn't know I left. And really the amount of services that the Town of Cary, especially because of the police and the firemen travel on the same routes and the EMTs. There's really not a need for both. I mean I don't think there is.
- A funny story about that. I was driving on Tryon Road. And a coyote ran in front of me in the middle of the day. And for a coyote to be out at that time of day is unusual. So I called the Town of Cary and I said there's a coyote over here. And he said, well, what side of the street are you on? And so I had to call Raleigh – Raleigh Animal Control, because Cary said that he crossed the street and he's on their side.
- Well, it's the same thing. If you go across Lake Crabtree going out toward the airport, part of it's Cary, part of it's Morrisville, and part of it's nobody's land. So if you have a wreck out there, Morrisville – unless somebody's hurt, Morrisville won't take the report, Cary won't take the report. You got to wait for the Highway Patrol to get out there.
- Oh, my goodness.
- Yeah. It's terrible.
- That is.
- I guess for me to get involved, it would depend on what the issues are and for me to feel that something I was saying was going to make a difference.

Moderator: Okay. Do all of you feel that way?

- Yes.

Moderator: Well, you've had contact with the Town before. You felt like action was taken?

- No.

Moderator: What was the issue?

- We, our home that we live in is in Westpark. And the Town of Cary approved and had the area above us that we were told that never was going to be developed – daycares and big housing and it created a huge water runoff problem. And so we spent two years talking with different individuals in the Town of Cary with pictures and videos. And as it escalated, their answer was just sue the daycare. And the daycare said the Town of Cary is the one that designed this. You sue the Town of Cary. And so nobody would take responsibility. And when we finally got to the highest person, they came out to our home, and his answer was I would've never bought this lot. Well, you know what? We didn't have the problem for the first eight years we lived in the house. So it was just – and it's a common problem with a lot of people that have been in an area that's well-established and now there's new growth around it and the impervious surfaces are being changed and the whole infrastructure of where things are draining and the water runoff, etc. So it would've been nice that they would have learned from that and maybe taken into some consideration how their continuing to move forward instead of saying it's not my problem. It's your problem. And it's cost us a lot of money and a lot of time. And I don't want to sue my neighbor. I'm not that type of person. So that is really frustrating. It was a fairly negative interaction.

Moderator: Okay.

- We had a similar issue where we are. We backed up to a bunch of woods, and nobody lived back there for 20-some years. And then they built a housing – and then they changed that school to Laurel Park on Laura Duncan. And then they built that other place over there. And everybody's water – and then all of their water was draining into the creek that sits there. And I take all these pictures as the creek is overflowing, flooding my yard and then going across the street down to the thing where it's going back in. And I call Cary, and they came – the guys came out the next day and figured out what was going on, and we haven't had a problem since. So they responded very nicely for that, but it was probably an easier fix than what you were talking about. But I said you can't be letting me get flooded. I can't be getting flooded every time there's a four-inch rain just because you guys built over there. So they fixed it so far. I mean we haven't had a hurricane since.

Moderator: Let me ask you another question, too. Outside of the survey and the focus groups, have any of you had some level of involvement with Town issues in the past two years? You have? Anybody else? Okay. What was the issue?

- Homeowner's association. I had one neighbor that was creating problems. And that was pretty well – well, there's really not a whole lot they can do. There's a line there. But one thing they can do when they're dealing with homeowner's associations especially if they give kind of an opinion to the homeowner's association. But then like if the person is going to adversely affect it – well, they're going to sue the city and the city is like oh – they just won't say yes or no. They just need to say yes and either agree with the homeowner's association or tell them they're wrong. You tend to get stuck in limbo.

Moderator: Did you benefit from the interaction at all with the Town?

- In the issue with the problem they were actually – at that time there really wasn't anything they could do. But that was – we understood that. It was actually between neighbors. But they had – or one of the neighbors had complained to the homeowner's association. But then an event occurred and the person was creating a problem. And I think one of the officers had a talk with him and really for knock on wood we haven't had any problems in probably a year. But it was nothing they could do initially. It was really nothing the homeowner's association could do either. It was strictly between neighbors.

Moderator: Very good. Go ahead.

- We set up a neighborhood watch the last two years ago. And that worked really well to just get our neighbors together and police officers that helped us do that were very helpful. And that helped our neighborhood a lot to set up a neighborhood watch.

Moderator: What neighborhood are you in?

- Killarney Woods.

Moderator: Okay.

- I talked to the Town of Cary in regards to business and signage. That's something that I still don't quite understand. But apparently – and that's one of the things I love about Cary is how clean and continuous everything looks and nicely defined and there's not a lot of signs. But apparently for retail areas, they can only have so many numbers of words on signs out front. So if you're in a business that there's 12 or 20 different businesses, if you're not one of the first ones to get your name on the sign out front, it's not good.
- I don't know if this is pertinent, but I met the Chief of police at Lazy Daze. And she was one of the nicest people. You would never have known that she was the chief of police as nice of an individual as she was – is.

Moderator: So your involvement has gone you'd say pretty good so far when you can interact with the Town. Really quickly now – we asked your major information source, right? Did you say Cary News the major one for all of you?

- Mm hmm.

Moderator: Now very quickly how many of you that read print media – do all of you read print media? Okay. How many of you do it online?

- The majority is online for me.

Moderator: For you the majority. How about for the rest of you?

- Well, I get my information online through the Cary – Cary emails me and says news of Cary for the weekend or this or that or whatever.

Moderator: Okay. How about the newspaper?

- I read that as well.

Moderator: Do you go online with that, too?

- I do like during the week and stuff like that. But on weekends it's pretty much – I get the newspaper Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- While he's at work.
- Right.

Moderator: Well, that finishes up the major questions I had. Now in closing, anything else? Any other issues you want to bring up or anything you would like to share or tell the Town?

- I would like to see some sort of way where we could get tree mulch for the residents. When we had one of the hurricanes that came through, which one was it where they brought that huge machine that was mulching everything up? You could just take and you could get as much mulch as you want. It was some sort of a grinder. I guess the Town rented it.
- Was that Fran?
- Was that Fran? And it was fantastic.

Moderator: Okay.

- I know that's expending money, which I'm probably against.

Moderator: What else?

- Mine's mostly a pro I'd have to say, and it goes back to the police and fire department. I've been – I hang out in Raleigh a lot, and they're standoffish for certain reasons, and they deal with a lot of crime and such. But I'd have to say the Cary police and fire department are some of the most approachable people I've even met.

Moderator: Excellent. What else?

- I think we need to – as a long-time resident, I want to see Cary stay Cary. I don't want it to become Raleigh. And I don't want it to become Morrisville, Durham or any other place. I want Cary to stay Cary. I want us to stay defined as Cary and not – and I don't know if Cary can influence Durham. But I think somehow or another, Cary government needs to be fighting for our water system, our water rights for Jordan Lake. And I don't know if we have any jurisdiction over that or if we can get them to say you can't build on Jordan Lake, because it's going to ruin our water. Because we have to protect our water system. I'm very adamant that we have got to protect our water. We lose our water, we lose everything. I mean we'd lose the Town.

Moderator: Good point.

- So we have to protect our water. I love the alternate day watering.
- I love that.
- Even though I need mine to be the other days. I wish there was a way I could say – because I have Sunday, Wednesday and Fridays. I need Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday. I wish there was a way I could say can I please change? I'll do alternate days. I just need it to be the other days.

Moderator: Okay. Anything else?

- I would just like to commend the Town for keeping this Cary such an esthetic, beautiful Town. I think we take a lot for granted – all the flowers and how groomed everything is, and there's no garbage and debris. And it's like a little utopia. And then you drive away and you go, wow, we live in a really beautiful area. I think we take it for granted. But they do – they do a fantastic job as far as groundskeeping.
- Yeah. I love going down Cary Parkway with all the trees.
- The flowers and everything are just incredible.

- Yeah.

Moderator: Anything else?

- A couple of – awhile back there was a lot of stuff in the paper about a sewage treatment plant that Cary wanted – was it sewage treatment they wanted to put in New Hill? Is that what I'm remembering? They wanted to do something in New Hill. And I felt like that wasn't right for them to go put it in their backyard. And I don't know whatever happened about that if it just got – you know – does anybody remember about that?
- I think it was tabled. I'm not sure.
- Okay.
- I think New Hill people were fighting it so much.
- Right. Right.
- I think it's a Cary-Apex water treatment plant that they were trying to put in.
- Okay.
- I mean I know we need water treatment, but I didn't think it was right that they would go out there and want to put it in their town.

Moderator: Okay. That's good.

- Is the Town – the big term going green – putting cisterns in and things like that. Is that something that they're looking at futuristically for this whole water?

Moderator: If it's something you're very concerned about, you just need to get in there and report.

- Okay.

Moderator: Anything else?

- Yeah. Now that you mention it.
- Dimensions on garages. They're narrow here.
- They are.
- They are.

- Yeah. I mean it's a – especially for those who have children or who have children and haven't bought their house yet. I mean they are – you put two cars in there and you can barely open the doors.
- I'm just lucky to be able to fit my car in. My garage is packed. It's my husband's shop. But I think – we built an addition on our house in the past two years. And the Town planning department and permit people and inspectors and everybody were wonderful to work with.

Moderator: Good.

- We had one inspector that was – we called him the pain in the rear, because he was – but he wanted it done right. And the contractor had to come back and do it right. And though it delayed us by a few days, he wanted it done right. And I thought that was nice to be able to say I didn't depend on a contractor that was shady. I could depend on my Cary inspector people to make sure it was done right, and I thought that was good.

Moderator: Great. Excellent. We'd like to thank all of you for coming and taking time to do this, and that concludes the session. Thank you.