

“Watch the Money”

-Chris Smithson, Southern Pines native, resident, and Councilmember

In the 2007 mayoral campaign in which I made an unsuccessful run for the office, I chose, as usual, to refrain from soliciting campaign donations and to keep my campaign budget below \$3,000. I did receive a few unsolicited donations from Southern Pines residents but my campaign, as planned, was largely self-funded.

If there is one thing about the race that would have been notable regardless of who won, it was the significant amount of money my opponent spent on his campaign. Even more interesting were the thousands of dollars that came in from developers, realtors, and people who do not even live in Southern Pines.

To many, the 2007 mayoral and council campaigns were framed as some kind of battle between development and anti-development factions. I think that characterization is either wrong or oversimplified but that's how many saw it. Unfortunately, we may see something similar again this year.

I have certainly heard and heard about a lot of talk coming from “business interests” who plan on putting up candidates and a lot of money to “correct” some of the supposedly anti-business biases of the Council. I don't think there is (or was) an “anti-business” member on the Council- most of us actually run our own businesses- but if people only get their information from gossip or our lone local newspaper without searching out the facts for themselves, it is not surprising many saw things that way.

So, before things officially get started with this year's campaigns, I remind those of you willing to decide for yourselves using all available information; **Watch the Money** and seek out the facts.

*Agree or disagree with what you just read? Want to provide feedback?
Please do so. e-mail: Chris@ChrisSmithson.com*