



Wednesday, 26 October 2011 20:27

# Meet the candidates: Who's who in Waynesville's race

Written by [Caitlin Bowling](#)

[Like](#) Be the first of your friends to like this. [Tweet](#) 3

## Waynesville mayor: Pick one

### Mayor Gavin Brown, 64, attorney. Mayor for four years, town alderman for eight

Every morning Mayor Gavin Brown dons his town of Waynesville pin on his suit lapel before heading out the door to his law office. If he forgets, his wife never fails to remind him.

Brown makes a habit of strolling Main Street almost every day. He sticks his head in businesses to say "hello." If he sees tourists taking pictures, he offers to step behind the camera so the whole family can be in the photo. If he sees men loitering on benches while their wives shop, he stops and hands out his mayor's business card.

"I say 'I have a few minutes, I'm the mayor, what do you want to know?'" Brown said. In exchange, he queries them on where they're from and why they chose to visit Waynesville.

"It's fun for me to do that," Brown said. "I am nondiscriminatory ... I talk to anybody."

Those who know him wouldn't doubt it. He even carries a list of all the downtown eateries to offer tourists wondering where they should eat.

Earlier this summer he noticed an elderly lady on Main Street who was feeling faint. He helped her inside the nearest business, LN Davis Insurance agency. He asked the employees to get her some water and offered to call her a medic.

"I really feel that my job is to be the head cheerleader for the people of Waynesville," Brown said.

Brown's four years of mayor have been devoid of controversy, scandal or dissent, giving him a clear leg up against his challenger.

Low voter turnout is a fear among the incumbents, however. If voters happy with the direction of the town feel the current leaders are a shoe-in and stay home on Election Day, a minority of voters with an ax to grind could swing the race.

### Hugh Phillips, 50, co-manager at Bi-Lo grocery

Hugh Phillips ran unsuccessfully for mayor four years ago, but undeterred, he is back for another bid. Phillips said that people might not have taken him seriously last time. After all, he jumped right into politics for the first time in the mayor's ring, rather than wading in as a town board candidate first. But there's a reason, he said.

"If I ran for alderman and got elected, I don't know if I could get along with the rest of the people on there. I think we would have butting heads," Phillips said.

Of course, even as mayor, Phillips would still have to sit shoulder to shoulder with the other board members in meetings, and his vote doesn't count any more than their votes on the issues. But he thinks he would get to control discussion more, he said.

"I said if I was going to do this, I was determined to make a difference, so that's why I am running for mayor and not alderman," Phillips said.

Phillips said he has been to one or two town board meetings, and none since signing up to run for election.

As a manager of Bi-Lo, customers are constantly bending Phillip's ear, and not just about what aisle the bread

SEARCH CONTENT

NEWS BRIEFS  
[News in brief](#)

SPECIAL COVERAGE  
[WNC Public Opinion Poll](#)  
[Election Coverage](#)  
[Swain County DSS](#)  
[Senate redistricting](#)  
[Growth at Harrah's Cherokee Casino](#)  
[Folk moot 2012](#)  
[Lake Junaluska at a crossroads](#)

Social Security Disability & Civil Litigation  
TALK TO THE ATTORNEY FROM THE START!  
**Scott Taylor, PLLC**  
Attorney at Law