

# Charlotte council candidate has criminal record

By FRANK TAYLOR  
AND CAROLYN STEEVES

CHARLOTTE — A City Council candidate who has talked about cleaning up corruption and fighting crime has his own history of run-ins with the law, **The Mecklenburg Times** learned this week.

Through a comparison of candidate and voter records with records from the Mecklenburg County Clerk of Courts and the state Department of Corrections, **The Times** found that A. Chris Bakis served two years probation in the 1990s on a conviction of assault with a deadly weapon, a misdemeanor. Bakis' court records are filed under his full name, Angelo Chris Bakis.

While that was his only conviction in the Department of Correction records, Mecklenburg County court records he faced a number of other criminal charges during the 1990s, including assault on a law enforcement officer, resisting an officer, damage to personal property, driving while impaired and possession of a machine gun.

Asked about his record by **The Times** on Wednesday, Bakis, now 46, said, "I have this colorful past, but don't you think it's ironic that I'm the only one who wants to clean up City Council?"

The conviction in Department of Corrections' records appears to stem from a July 1992 incident, which Bakis described for **The Times**. While working at a gas station where the owner asked employees to carry a weapon, he fired

SEE RECORD PAGE 3

## Record

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a gun at a vehicle fleeing without paying for gas.

"Like a stupid moron," he said

this week, describing his actions then. This also resulted in the machine gun charge, although he said the gun was actually a nonmilitary Ruger Mini-14, which resembles a higher firepower weapon.

"I let my testosterone outweigh my gray matter," he said. Bakis said he sought counseling afterward.

Bakis received a suspended jail sentence and was given two years probation, plus 100 hours of community service. During the probation, he was directed to stay away from weapons and not be convicted of any other offenses.

He successfully completed his probation in September 1994.

He readily admitted to mistakes in several of the incidents, but maintains that he was the victim of police brutality in an unrelated February 1991 incident that apparently resulted in several of the other charges.

On the advice of his attorney, Bakis said he accepted a plea deal to admit to a charge of misdemeanor assault on a law officer and have other counts he was facing at the time dropped. This resulted in the assignment of community service.

Bakis offers a complicated account of what he claims was a severe beating from police. Apparently he made an obscene gesture when another motorist would not allow him to pass. He was unaware, he says, that the driver was an off-duty park police officer. After both stopped in the road and argued, Bakis claims other police arrived and physically restrained him, then began kicking him for a prolonged period.

Bakis claims the officer later reported that Bakis waved a gun, but the City Council candidate insists

that this never occurred and his weapon was legally holstered the entire time.

Although Bakis insists he was badly beaten, blacking out at one point as the prolonged attack continued, he admits he never sought outside medical attention.

Bakis blames his own poor judgment for the unrelated drunk driving charge he faced in 1998. He bowed to pressure from a friend to drive, even though he had been doing shots earlier that night. He hit a tree, Bakis said.

However, the candidate said this was not typical behavior for him and he does not make drinking and driving a habit.

Under North Carolina law, convicted felons must have their rights restored before they can vote or seek public office. Since the convictions on Bakis' record are misdemeanors, he is not barred from seeking office.

**The Times** has conducted similar inquiries into the records of other candidates competing in Tuesday's municipal primaries and found no others who matched records in the North Carolina Department of Corrections offender database.

Ironically, Bakis may be the candidate who has most closely identified himself with concerns about crime. He has spoken out several times in recent years about his concern with criminal activity in his East Charlotte area.

At a number of public hearings on light rail, he has voiced strong support for such mass transit systems because he believes they would revitalize the East Charlotte economy and reduce crime, according to Charlotte Area Transit System records. 