

DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

*Resolution*

LIGHTS OUT DURHAM 2024

- WHEREAS, birds add beauty to our lives, contribute to our wellbeing, and contribute tremendous environmental significance by providing ecosystem services such as insect control and pollination of flower and agricultural crops; and
- WHEREAS, every spring and fall, millions of migratory birds travel through and stopover in Durham, and
- WHEREAS, it is important to recognize this massive migration of birds occurs primarily at night; and
- WHEREAS, these birds must contend with a rapidly increasing but still under-recognized threat: light pollution. Light attracts and disorients these migrating birds, confusing them and making them vulnerable to collisions with building and other urban threats; and
- WHEREAS, with each passing season, light pollution continues to increase as Durham continues to grow, and more and more birds are at risk, and
- WHEREAS, Bird/glass collisions in the U.S. are estimated to cause as many as one billion bird deaths each year. These deaths are one of the factors most responsible for a 29% decline in North American bird populations since 1970, and
- WHEREAS, Important insect pollinators are negatively impacted by light pollution threatening their ability to successfully reproduce and pollinate; and
- WHEREAS, the United Nations Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services states that, “Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history – and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely....We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide....It is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global,” and
- WHEREAS, Scientific research indicates that artificial light at night has detrimental effects on human health and well-being, and
- WHEREAS, North Carolina cities including our neighbors in Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Asheville, Winston-Salem, Charlotte, Cary, and Mathews, and 40 other cities across the country have Lights Out programs, and
- WHEREAS, the Lights Out program reduces light pollution, saves energy, reduces our carbon footprint, and improves outcomes for people, pollinators and wildlife; and
- WHEREAS, Lights Out Durham is a voluntary initiative that aims to raise awareness of the issue in order to provide safe passage for migratory birds, and
- WHEREAS, Simple measures such as using downward facing lights and shielding above, the use of motion detectors, closing blinds and curtains, replacing blue light (6000 K) with “warm” light (under 3000 K) outside and turning off unnecessary lights at night will protect birds and other important pollinators.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that we the Durham County Commission do hereby support a Durham County “Lights Out” Campaign and encourage all our residents, community partners and business owners to help protect birds by turning off all non-essential lighting during the critical bird migration period which is every night March through May and September through November between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am, to help ensure safe passage for migratory birds.

This the 29<sup>th</sup> day of April 2024.

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Nida Allam, Chair

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Nimasheena Burns, Vice-Chair

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Heidi Carter, Commissioner

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Brenda Howerton, Commissioner

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Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

