



Durham County
PAC-1 Meeting Notes
April 21, 2018
401 N. Driver Street, Durham, NC 27703

Attendees:

Wendy Jacobs, Chair; County Commissioners Heidi Carter, Brenda Howerton and Ellen Reckhow; General Manager Claudia Hager; Monica Toomer, Deputy Clerk to the Board; Macio Carlton, Senior Administrative Assistant.

All attendees introduced themselves and thanked the PAC 1 facilitators for the invitation to attend the meeting.

Chair Jacobs provided a brief overview of the County's priorities which included the following:

- Providing universal access to Pre-K to all children in the community
- Taking the lead to bring people together for a successful cradle to career pipeline
- Creating an Aging Plan for the Senior Community

Commissioner Reckhow clarified questions raised at the April 14, PAC-4 meeting which included comments made by citizens about the Senior Center relocating. She stated there were no plans to move the center. Commissioner Reckhow continued to say the only issue the County and City looked to resolve were better parking options. She also highlighted topics discussed at the Budget Retreat around the cradle to career pipeline and making social connections. Commissioner Reckhow continued to say the community was making progress on affordable housing and the County was looking at long range plans for two (2) surface lots.

Commissioner Howerton spoke about the appreciation of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) regarding traumatic experiences in children, stating it was important to ask the right questions and be able to understand our children needs. She referred to the School Bonds and mentioned that some of those funds would be used on necessary construction and renovations. Trauma ACE

Questions and Answers

1) Regarding the school bonds, were questions being asked around security and how were schools being held responsible for the safety of the children?

- Commissioner Reckhow recalled the 2016 School Bond approved by the community which addressed many safety measures. She added any school that did not have a single portal entry, cameras or entrance buzzers would be installed.

Commissioner Reckhow also stated the City ended their portion of funding for Student Resource Officers (SROs) but the County worked quickly to get those positions filled.

- Commissioner Howerton stated the bond allowed the money to be split per county and each county would be allowed to determine how those funds would be spent.
- Chair Jacobs responded there were conversations held during Town Hall meetings about schools and safety. She mentioned mental health being a concern and explained the importance of school nurses, training for teachers and SROs.

2) Were SROs a budget issue?

- Commissioner Reckhow stated the City informed the County that they would end funding for those officers. She continued to say the County stepped in and made sure there would be officers in every middle and high school.
- Commissioner Carter expressed how glad she was that the Sheriff's Office agreed to step in and form relationships with each student.
- Chair Jacobs clarified the City only funded five (5) SROs at select schools while the County funded the remaining SROs. She also added the Sheriff's SROs go through a year-long training program to help them prepare for the job.

3) Was the Public Health Department working on a program for tick and rat control to protect children and water? We also need a stiffer penalty for the Park Avenue neighborhood with regards to those breaking rules outlined in the Animal Ordinance (picking up dog litter.)

- Commissioner Howerton responded she was unsure, but would follow-up with Gayle Harris, General Manager, to provide an answer.
- Commissioner Carter stated she was on the Animal Services Board and would follow-up if an address was provided.

4) There is a need for a full-time, part-time and weekend worker in the Animal Control Department. The excuse has been they only respond to calls or accept rabid dogs or biting dogs outside of normal business hours.

- Chair Jacobs stated it was understood that more help was needed in the Animal Services Department. She added the department has made a request for additional help and the Board was reviewing it closely.

5) Tax administrators were looking to raise next year's taxes. Would everyone's taxes be raised including new buildings and homes?

- Commissioner Reckhow responded the County was completing a re-evaluation of property, which did not necessarily mean a tax increase. She added the tax administrator reviewed the anticipated values for 2019 and once the value was established, the new tax rate would be created.

- Chair Jacobs explained the state requires that market values be used as the basis to determine property. She added it was up to the property owner to challenge the tax value once assessed.
- Claudia Hager, General Manager, stated information could be sent to the PAC-1 Office about the process with details on how the rates were set.
- Chair Jacobs added that the State offered relief programs that assisted the elderly community with payments.

6) When taxes are increased, the trash and water services are not improved. What can be done to improve the services?

- Commissioner Reckhow responded the trash and water services were both provided by the City of Durham. She explained the areas that the County control which included Educational Services, Public Health, Animal Control and Library Services to name a few.
- Claudia Hager, General Manager stated the 2019 Summary of the Budget (handouts provided) showed detailed items funded by the County.

7) There is a challenge separating the City and County responsibilities regarding Lead Base paint. We are asking the County for proactive measures that Durham can take so the children can be protected before they are exposed.

- Commissioner Reckhow responded there needed to be a State law that required homes at the time of sale or rental to be inspected for lead base paint prior to move in. She added the County could work with reinvestment partners to do home repairs and assess them for lead.
- Commissioner Howerton stated the County and the City could work collectively to address the situation. She continued to say at times the State could take a while to take action and this issue needed to promptly be addressed.
- Commissioner Carter added another proactive solution could be to increase screening for children to help decrease exposure.

8) The last time someone wanted to file an appeal regarding their tax assessments, they had to hire someone to get a new assessment. Is that still necessary?

- Commissioner Reckhow responded no, it was no longer necessary. She added staff made the system user friendly so any citizen could go online, review properties on their street to conduct comparisons and raise their own concerns.

9) If additional changes were made to a property after a tax assessment was made, would another assessment immediately take place or would it occur at a later time?

- Claudia Hager, General Manager, responded the changes would be assessed during the next tax assessment period.

10) The tire mulch at the East Durham Park has been addressed by the City and they agreed on the removal. Over half of the schools have playgrounds that are made out of tire, would the County make removing the tire mulch a priority and look at replacing it with wood mulch?

- Commissioner Reckhow stated there would be research done and once completed, the County would provide an outcome and make a decision.
- Commissioner Howerton asked the resident to attend a joint Board of Education and County Commissioner meeting to voice her concerns and provide suggestions.
- Commissioner Carter asked the resident to send any materials to the Board for review.

Chair Jacobs announced on Thursday, April 26, 2018 from 6pm-8pm there would be a Light Rail Design Workshop held at the Holton Career & Resource Center. She stated this event was open to all citizens to provide input, raise concerns and ask questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Monica Toomer".

Monica W. Toomer
Deputy Clerk to the Board