

June 1st Citizen Comments

Comment 1: Ivy Burch, Jimmy Anderson, Jesse Huddleson, Tammie Hall, Glenda Stone, Meagan Fisher, Kate Brown, Stephanie Yarborough, Madelyn Owens, Shawn Svoboda-Barber, Durham Citizen “Shady”, Dan Cates, Courtney Sanford, Angel Brown, Kellye Ducre, Tim Hoffman, James McDuffie, Daniel McKinney (white male), Lygia Yarborough, Ronda Taylor Bullock

I am writing to state my strong opposition to any effort that might be made to terminate County Manager, Wendell Davis because of his stated concern about racism being directed toward him by one of the county commissioners. I also ask that any "investigation" of him because of those statements be dropped immediately. Mr. Davis has served Durham County well for 6 years now, and I believe that to terminate him at this time would be a gross violation of his rights and an affront to the entire African-American community of this county.

Comment 2: Jesse Huddleston

Additionally, the Durham community needs an independent, anti-racist investigation to respond equitably to the series of events related to the initial allegations of significant racial bias and mistreatment made about our County Commissioner Heidi Carter by our County Manager Wendell Davis. The responses that have resulted from the County Manager’s letter being made public are inequitable and unacceptable.

Comment 3: Emily Wilkins

Racial bias just as sexism is often unconscious. Well-meaning people can say things which are viewed as racist or sexist by another. Personal growth is sometimes painful but living in a culture which demeans you or limits your free expression because of your race or sex is almost always painful. Commissioners, I beseech you to “Do the Right Thing!”

Comment 4: Gracie Johnson – Lopez

As a citizen of Durham County and diversity strategist, it is important to me that our local government functions efficiently and with transparency. These unresolved allegations of abuse of power and racism are troubling and resulting in a cost to a community who need our dollars and focus on critical priorities like housing, health and food.

Therefore, I strongly support the external investigation with the expectation that:

- cause(s) of these ongoing issues are fully explored
- whatever and whomever are held accountable
- restoration of an aligned leadership and role clarity between our County Manager & County Commissioners

Comment 5: Nathan Garrett

I have known Wendell for many years’ and I know of his management skills and his ethical conduct.

I was born in 1931 in Tarboro and my family moved from there to Durham in 1933 when I was two years old. I graduated from Hillside in 1948, Yale in 1952, served in the military for two

years, lived in Detroit for eight years and returned to Durham with my wife and children in 1962. I was a Durham Commissioner for one term in 1972 and I have served our county, city and state ever since I returned by using my skills as a CPA and an attorney to address racism in every way I could. I served in the North Carolina Fund as its CFO and Deputy Director for four years. That organization was formed in 1964 by then governor Terry Sanford to "break the cycle of poverty" in our state. I founded and served as executive director of The Foundation for Community Development in 1967 to develop community leaders to help low income residents fight racism and other ills in locations throughout our state. I served for twelve years as a Duke University Board member and spoke out whenever I thought I needed to such as to get the board to stop investing in South Africa so as to help fight the racist behavior of its government.

I AM NOT A STRANGER TO RACIST BEHAVIOR IN THE NORTH, SOUTH AND MIDWEST IN OUR COUNTRY AND IN SEVERAL OTHER COUNTRIES TO WHICH MY WIFE AND I HAVE TRAVELED. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE SEEN IMPROVEMENTS, WE STILL EXPERIENCE IT. WE STILL SPEAK OUT AGAINST IT AND KNOW THAT IF WE BLACKS DO NOT SPEAK WHEN RACIST BEHAVIOR IS SEEN, BEHAVIOR WILL NOT CONTINUE TO IMPROVE.

Wendell expressed what he saw in a commissioner and should not be punished for it. I still respect him very highly.

Comment 6: Georie Bryant

I believe that firing Wendell Davis would be perceived by the Greater Durham community -- especially the Black and Brown communities of Durham-- as retaliation to protect injustice. Racism in this Country has been allowed to divide communities and socio-economically oppress. The biases many Americans carry due to race are a by-product of a manipulation monnie by those who hold privilege and power to maintain their status quo. That same structure that influences many peoples thinking in this country has cost many their lives. I would think that in 2020 the Durham County Government would do everything within its power to not only dismantle and distance itself from any racist ideology but also uplift those brave enough to speak against Racism in any system.

I wish I could say I know that you would do the right thing, but the simple investigation seems to show that maybe you might not have it in you. I pray that Mr Wendell Davis' job is safe for the foreseeable future.

Comment 7: Monnie Riggin

I am deeply disturbed about the effort underway that could easily lead to the termination of our county manager, Mr. Wendell Davis. Please accept this as my strong opposition to any effort that might be made to terminate him because of his stated concern about racism being directed toward him by one of the county commissioners. It is clear to me that racism is alive and well in this county. I ask that any "investigation" of Mr. Davis, because of those statements, be dropped immediately. Mr. Davis has served Durham County well for 6 years now, and I believe that to terminate him at this time would be a gross violation of his rights, an affront to the entire African-American community of this county, and outrage to white people who are in solidarity with them.

Comment 8: Durham Citizen

I totally support the action taken by the County Manager which should be a wake-up call for all. Accept what was revealed whether you see it that way or not and use the revelation to move on to improve human relations and working relationships and to try to understand and respect one another for the good of ALL of the citizens of Durham County.

Comment 9: Scott Harmon

I am opposed to any effort to terminate County Manager, Wendell Davis, because of his expressed concerns about racism directed toward him from your body.

The “investigation” of him should be dropped immediately. Investigating a black employee because they brought a complaint of racism is a gross violation of their rights, and an affront to the anti-racist work that thousands of Durhamites, of all races, are undertaking. I urge the commissioners to continue the complex, difficult, and exhausting work of unraveling the deep-rooted systems of racial bias in our government and culture. Please find another way to resolve this.

Comment 10: Walter Jackson

I write to add my voice to that of others in urging the Durham County Commissioners to put aside any efforts that are or might be underway or undertaken to dismiss or investigate County Manager Wendell Davis because of his comments that he believed that some actions taken against him or statements made to him were racist in nature. With all of the crucial issues facing our county, state, nation and the world community at this time our commissioners and county manager need to be able to devote their full attention to dealing with efforts to stop the pandemic and ameliorate as much as possible the economic disaster hitting our county and many of our citizens. You've got to know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em, and it is certainly time to fold 'em on this matter.

Comment 11: Harold Chestnut

Over the past few months, I have read and kept a close eye on the Board’s handling of the letter from the current County Manager, Wendell Davis. The letter alleges racially bias treatment and behavior of him and other Durham County employees, from current County Commissioner Heidi Carter. Since the publication of the allegations, a lot of things such as the county and city government computer hack and now the major worldwide pandemic, COVID-19, have kept the community’s eye off of the response to these allegations from the Board of Commissioners.

As a longtime community leader in Durham, I am totally appalled to know that the Durham County Board of Commissioners, are moving forward with an investigation, before allowing things to calm down for the people in the community. However, what is more inexcusable is that the alleged preparator, Commissioner Carter, was involved with the selection of who will and what to investigate. This is a total neglect of ethics and fairness. It goes totally against what the Board of Commissioners are sworn to uphold.

If allowing Commissioner Carter to be involved in her investigation was not enough to be unethical, now the Board of Commissioners wants to bring up charges against an employee who

spoke up. This appears to be workplace retaliation at it is best. However, for me as a black male in the community, it feels more racially motivated. County Manager Davis, a black professional, went to his superior Board, to inform them of the unfair racially bias treatment he alleges against him and other black county employees, from a person on the superior board. Instead, of recusing her from the investigation, charges are brought up against him, tell me where is the justice in that?

Durham is a great city. However, the handling of this situation revealed some the boardroom injustices that are still alive in 2020. I urge the Board Commissioners, to slow down, rethink about the actions you are taking and the great divide in the community and distrust of the Board of Commissioners it will cause.

Comment 12: LaManda Pryor

I am writing on behalf of concerned citizens in Durham County regarding County Manager Davis' letter addressed to Commissioner Heidi Carter, regarding her inherent racially biased behaviors directly impacting him and other Durham County employees of color. Instead of investigating the merits of his complaint, the Durham Board of County Commissioners under the leadership of Commissioner Wendy Jacobs has decided to retaliate against the person making the claim. The Board of County Commissioners message is abundantly clear to Durham County employees, "keep your mouth shut regardless of how you are treated". Durham County employees are not safe in this environment where the highest Durham County employee is being publicly attacked for speaking out against discrimination.

Chairman Jacobs has failed to lead a fair and unbiased investigation. Commissioner Carter will not recuse herself and gets to actively participate in deciding who the "independent counsel" will be to investigate claims against her. She also has participated in direct conversations involving how these allegations should be investigated. Any leader knows this is totally unfair and unethical. Power and privilege is on full display for the world to see. Why not allow for a fair investigation and allow truth to fall where it may? The Board of County Commissioners is counting on our distraction due to COVID-19 as they stealthily work in the shadows. This corruption must end! It is 2020 and people of color are having the same fight of our forefathers for our voices to matter and for basic ethical fairness. There is no humanity in this for any of us. It feels like a modern-day lynching behind the desk of elected officials.

Time is of the essence to demand that the Durham Board of County Commissioners to be held accountable and to do with is RIGHT. The Durham Board of County Commissioners has proven it is incapable of conducting a fair investigation regarding this matter. The entire process must be reset and overseen by an independent body. As an actively involved community member who was born and raised in Durham, I am calling on all friends of all races, ethnicities, gender, and walks of life in Durham County, in North Carolina and around the US, to not sit quietly on the sidelines while we are set back fifty years before our eyes.

Comment 13: Nia Wilson

I have been an Old North Durham resident for more than 20 years. I am writing today to strongly admonish you to listen to the demands of Durham community members to halt ALL investigations around the allegations of racism within your offices. Durham community members

are facing unprecedented challenges at this moment and any effort to push an investigation through, at a time when there is so much instability in our homes and our work places, greatly impacts our abilities to fully observe and engage with this process and is a clear affront to the workings of democracy. We are demanding that you do the necessary work of this moment and focus your attention and resources on ensuring that all of Durham county residents and front-line workers have everything needed to get through this very frightening time.

I am also writing to state my strong opposition to any effort that might be made to terminate County Manager Wendell Davis because of his stated concern about racism being directed toward him. I also ask that any "investigation" of him because of those statements be dropped immediately. Mr. Davis has served Durham County well and I believe that to terminate him at this time would be a gross violation of his rights and an affront to Durham County's entire Black community.

Comment 14: Jackie Turnwald

I have been a resident of Durham County for twelve years. As a part of the Durham community, I call upon the commissioners to halt all investigations related to the County Manager's experiences of racism and more specifically, for the investigation against Mr. Davis to be dropped entirely. It seems inappropriate (at best) and possibly unethical for the commissioners to charge ahead with investigations that should be transparent to the public while community members, experiencing a state of emergency, are unable to gather and must focus their energies on daily survival. When a county employee speaks out to experiences of racism, there is a responsibility to investigate those claims and closely examine how our county operates. I ask that this be done at an appropriate time, by an independent party, and when it can be done with full transparency. However, no such investigation should ever be conducted by the individual or individuals named as enactors of said racism. And our county certainly should not be participating in the Jim Crow Era behavior of turning the accusation on its head in order to frame the alleged victim as the aggressor. If Durham is anywhere near as progressive as we claim to be, we can certainly do better.

Comment 15: Harlan Joel Gradin

I am writing to urge you to focus your enormous energy and resource on COVID-19 emergency.

I must quote the powerful words of City Councilman Mark-Anthony Middleton, who clearly explains why this laser focus is essential:

“The multiple non COVID-19 related investigations being undertaken by the Durham County Board of Commissioners should be halted immediately until regular order is restored in our county. Any funds being dedicated to such should be directed towards Personal Protective Equipment acquisition, muscularizing feeding programs, and providing assistance to Durham's financially stressed small businesses.

I call on the Durham County Board Of Commissioners to temporarily halt all investigations and grant the people of Durham the full attention and resources of our county to keeping us all alive.”

Thank for considering my note.

Comment 16: Delvin Davis

I am a Black man and 18-year resident of Durham. I am writing to share my deep concern with how the Board has moved forward with an investigation of our County Manager, especially during a time when a pandemic restricts community input. Not only are there questions about direct retaliation for the allegations Mr. Davis made in his letter, there are questions about the inclusiveness of this decision -- excluding feedback from the greater Durham community and certain members of the Board.

Even if one disagrees with what Mr. Davis has alleged, or the timing of the letter, we still have to protect his right to say it. Racism usually doesn't police itself well on its own. Mr. Davis's right to address this issue should be protected in a manner that is transparent and trustworthy. As such, I would implore the Board to cease its investigation of Mr. Davis, and only conduct its independent investigation of the board at a time when the community is able to fully engage.

If we can understand reconsidering the appointment of a City Council representative during a pandemic, we should also be able to understand not conducting an investigation of our County Manager for the same reasons. Our County is trusting you to make the right decision on this, and to make it in the right way.

Comment 17: Anita Daniels

I am writing as have other concerned Durham citizens regarding the public investigation of Durham County Manager Mr. Wendell Davis. As an individual who is and have been very involved in the community as well as a former County and City employee, I am gravely concerned about two issues associated with the investigation:

1. While the Privacy of State Employee Personnel Records legislation allows some personnel information to be public, to publicly announce an investigation into an employee's conduct is not listed in the article. https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByArticle/Chapter_126/Article_7.htm
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2. Unless I missed it, I did not see an announcement from the BOCC regarding an investigation of Mr. Davis' claim of overt racism and abuse of power by Commissioner Carter. At this time, most citizens are worried about staying alive during this COVID-19 pandemic. We cannot actively participate in any discussions about these matters. It would seem reasonable for our elected leaders to use the bulk of our public resources (considering we will experience a steep reduction in taxes to maintain BASIC and REQUIRED County and City services) to meet the needs of the citizens not investigate the actions of the County Manager for verbalizing a claim of abuse by someone we elected. At best, investing in a mediator would be less costly and ultimately improve communication and trust between the BOCC and the County Manager moving forward.

When I was 24 years old, I interviewed for a Social Worker II position at NC Correctional Institution for Women. The Director of Programs, Mrs. Carol Caldwell, told me, "You have such a beautiful command of the English language." I agree with her and thanked her, not realizing at the time, it was a blatant micro-aggression painted as a compliment.

Mr. Davis was Deputy County Manager when I worked for Durham County. I found him to be a brilliant, exceptional, consummate professional. I learned so much from him and former County Manager David Thompson about how to conduct myself professionally in a political arena.

If Mr. Davis' behavior was inappropriate, how you handle it should not be public until a final decision is made. Additionally, his complaint should not be ignored. One of our former judges was censored for behavior unbecoming. The behavior was investigated and based on the findings appropriate consequences were applied. I encourage you to do likewise.

Lastly, I am hopeful Mr. Davis will not be penalized or punished overtly or covertly for bringing his concerns to the citizens of Durham because he did not believe he could trust the BOCC to intervene on his behalf. The need to make such a decision speaks volumes about the distress and lack of confidence he felt.

Thank you for receiving my email. I am hoping you will do what is best for all parties - - all parties being Mr. Davis, the BOCC (including Commissioner Carter), and the citizens of Durham County.

Comment 18: Clarence Lewis

I am writing this email to express my support of County Manager Wendell Davis. As a long-time resident of Durham, I have had the opportunity to experience the extensive progress in the growth and expansion of the Durham community. This progress can be attributed to excellent management and leadership of our public officials. Just to name a few, Bill Bell and Wendell Davis immediately comes to mind. I have had the pleasure to know each of these individuals. Because of their outstanding and competent leadership, the Durham community has risen to a place of prominence where people love to come to live, work and play. Wendell has played a major role in this success.

It is my understanding Wendell is under investigation for certain actions and statements made by one of the county commissioners made toward him for what he believed to be racist remarks. I am writing to state my strong opposition to any effort that might be made to terminate County Manger Wendell Davis because of his stated concerns about perceived racism being directed toward him. It is my request that any "investigations" of him because of his stated concerns be dropped immediately. Wendell has served Durham County exceptionally well over the last 6 years and I believe that any attempt to terminate him at this time would be a gross violation of his rights and an affront to the entire Africa American community of Durham county. I see no wrong in him stating his concerns about what was perceived as unfair and unwarranted remarks from a commissioner. In order to make the workplace a venue of fairness s and justice for all, unfair treatment needs to be brought to the service for attention and resolution.

Comment 19: George Quick

As the former Chief Financial Officer for Durham County, I have had the opportunity to work with the Board of County Commissioners and the County Manager for several years before retiring in 2017. From this prospective I have an incredibly unique look at our present situation. I have never in my life seen a member of the majority admit being a racist. The reality is that

because they have always acted in this manner, it seemed ok. But when seen from the point of view of a minority the act is looked upon quite differently. Life experiences make a difference. Have you ever been told that you could not have a job because of your race? Your Manager has. In this era of “Trumpism” we need to remember that we cannot fire everyone that calls us a racist or whose ideas we disagree but should acknowledge that our act has offended someone and take the necessary steps to better educate ourselves.

Effective communication and good management skills work together and are acquired through years of experience. Unlike the County Manager and his Senior Staff most elected officials do not bring a compensating background to their position but acquire it through years in office.

This manager brings to his position a wealth of knowledge and experience that has helped to keep Durham County a leader in the State. A respect for this fact can go a long way to help Durham County maintain its status as a high-performing county.

The present accusations (Managers Letter to Commissioner Carter) are documented in the videos of the meetings in which they were made. How they are interpreted is a function of the viewer’s life experiences. The investigations taking place cannot determine if the manager’s interpretation is right or wrong. The fact is that Commissioner Carter’s remarks offended a major portion of the voters in Durham County. She needs to address this issue with the citizens of Durham County and its County Manager. Removal of the Manager and continued investigations by the Board will only make this situation worst. This is an opportunity for the Board to step up and do the right thing.

Comment 20: Katherine Shor

My name is Katherine Shor. I am a member of Organizing Against Racism Durham, Durham for All, DSA Durham, and the NC Environmental Justice Network.

I am writing to state my strong opposition to any effort that might be made to terminate County Manager Wendell Davis because of his stated concern about racism being directed toward him by one of the county commissioners. I also ask that any "investigation" of him because of those statements be dropped immediately. If any investigation should be pursued, it should be into Heidi Carter's actions and statements that precipitated the letter from Mr. Davis.

The allegation that Mr. Davis issued his letter to interfere in the elections may be true - but does it matter? If he is acting in the public interest of the Durham community to prevent a harmful Commissioner from being re-elected, I trust his judgment. We must treat Mr. Davis as the whistleblower that he is and he must be afforded those same protections. As white people, we must trust the black community when they sound the alarm and call out injustice. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Comment 21: Natalie Rich

I am writing to you because I strongly oppose any effort to terminate County Manger, Wendell Davis, and any investigation of him based on the statements he made that Commissioner Carter’s actions towards him were racist.

On a plantation tour in Charleston South Carolina, I met a white historian of Southern history. He told me something I'll never forget: "How do you know something is racist? When a person of color says that it is." To apply any other measure is essentially saying: "I, as a white person, know more about what is and is not racist than you as a person of color, who has actually experienced racism."

Doing or saying something racist doesn't discount or diminish the good work we, as white people do. It doesn't make us bad people. It's the result of living in a racist system that advantages white people and socializes us to support that system. I've found this article by Robin DiAngelo to be helpful in understanding this myself: <https://libjournal.uncg.edu/ijcp/article/viewFile/249/116>

As a fellow white woman, a Durham resident, and a member of the Organizing Against racism (OAR) Durham White Caucus, I hope you will cease the investigation of County Manager Wendell Davis and join us in learning to "examine the ways that we have been conditioned and to develop deeper awareness of the power and privilege we have access to in a racialized society in which we are members of the dominant culture" (OAR White Caucus objectives).

Thank you for your service to Durham County.

Comment 22: Alice Sharpe

I'm writing to implore you to reassess your current approach in response to the County Manager's letter re: Commissioner Heidi Carter. A mediation might prove much more beneficial than an investigation. The goal of the former is to reach a common resolution. The goal of the latter is to determine who's right or wrong and to punish someone. Moreover, the investigation does appear to be retaliation on the County Manager for speaking out instead of trying to get to the underlying issues, in my opinion.

The haste and rapidity of the investigation of the County Manager does make me wonder why broader public input is not being encouraged. Given more time, the public could give valuable input. Right now, the focus of so many is staying safe, healthy and afloat financially.

The financial well-being of the County is also an issue. An investigation is undoubtedly expensive and comes at a time when the County coffers are low and will remain so for some time. Is an investigation the highest and best use of County tax-payers dollars? Also, this would be an absolutely horrible time to change County management if that is the goal of the Commission. Durham County tax-payers and residents would suffer, needlessly.

The optics are not good, and some may question the motivation of the Commissioners as they pursue this course of action which you have time to correct.

Comment 23: M. Hill Faison

Please include in your budget tax assistance for people on fixed income and the elderly. Predominantly, black people that have lived here all their lives. Gentrification is pushing these people out of their homes by building these expensive homes and the taxes go up. There are people pressuring them to sell their homes and these people succeed most of the time. These neighborhoods are losing the diversity that is needed.

Comment 24: Anne Drennan

I am in favor of tax assistance for long-time, low income homeowners to be able to stay in their homes. Durham prices are forcing many to have to vacate since the taxes have risen so much over the past few years. Thanks for your service to helping everyone in Durham

Comment 25: Breana Van Velzen

Thank you for the work you do for our county. I have been impressed with the county staff and the county's attention to anti-racism and inclusion in the past--especially around affordable housing and transit. I have also met several of you in my professional sphere and was delighted to have caring commissioners. However, in following the treatment of the county manager's claims about racism, I noticed that it was met by an investigation and defensiveness.

This concerns me for several reasons:

- 1) Black people (and people of color) are historically not believed, and these investigations tend to skew systemically anyway, which is historically and a contemporary issue. What is the county doing in addition to hiring an independent agency to make sure that there is equity?
- 2) Could the money be better spent on education for interpreters or other necessary yet underfunded aspects of public education in Durham County?
- 3) Regardless of the outcome, how is the county board of commissioners and the county staff addressing racism? Racial equity training is not good enough--though it is a good start. How is racial healing and racial inequity being addressed? How are you addressing microaggressions and implicit bias? (I would be happy in a professional capacity to provide training materials and resources for free. There are also several organizations in Durham who do this work on a national level and would be happy to help.)
- 4) Clearly, the county manager has a grievance, whether or not it was racially motivated--how are the commissioners utilizing best practices (and human-centered, dignifying, and empowering practices) of leadership for their staff? Especially in regards to communication?

While I understand this is a difficult spot to be in, I hope you will consider taking it as an opportunity for improvement. It never hurts to continue to learn and grow. As a queer woman of color and second-generation immigrant, I often find myself still learning about my own internalized colonialism and anti-blackness. I am not exempt from lifelong learning of my own biases and how to bring about a better world. Please do the same, especially since a private personnel matter is now a public one, and you have the opportunity to treat the county manager with dignity and grace and the situation with an open mind.

Comment 26: Tyrone Baines

I am a member of the National Academy of Public Administration, the highest professional Association of Public Administrators; the American Society of Public Administration; a former City Commissioner and former Chairman of The Board of the National Center for the Healing of Racism. I have also had the privilege to work with some of you and with County Manager Wendell Davis as you developed the Durham County Strategic Plan. I have trained public

administrators from the Undergraduate level, the Doctoral level to Super- Grade Federal Public Officials.

Durham County is a high performing county by the standards used to measure county governments and you have won several awards. These achievements are the results of the outstanding work of Manager Wendell Davis and his staff members. I was encouraged when you decided to have an independent investigation of the complaint that Manager Davis made concerning racial bias. I have also heard the complaint from others in our community.

I am concerned about the cloud of racial bias that is spreading across our community and State because of the perceived lack of transparency and objectivity in your investigation of his complaint. In keeping with being a first-class county commission, it is important that your investigation be independent, thorough, transparent and engender the confidence of our citizens.

I ask you to please consider the following thoughts:

1. When Manager Davis leaves office, how will we recruit a top-quality County Manager to come into a county that has a reputation for racial bias?
2. What industries will want to move their employees to a community that has a county government that tolerates racial bias?
3. Do Commissioners Reckhow and Hill want their legacy to be that they were part of a commission that tolerated racial bias as they leave the Commission?
4. An organization that is aware of a problem and does not address it runs the risk of having that problem become a public issue.
5. Managers do things Right and Leaders do the Right Thing.

I urge you to do the right thing and have an independent, thorough, and transparent investigation of the Racial Bias complaint.

Comment 28: Mary White

I am writing to assert that as a citizen of this city, on behalf of others so adversely affected. We wish to express our concerns about the gentrification that is taking place here that is pushing families out of their places of residence all over the city. We urge your support on any methods of slowing this trend, and effectively widening the possibility of low-income citizens to be able to become homeowners and to be able to STAY IN THEIR HOMES, Whatever means that are available to you to ensure this capability will undoubtedly be recalled at the time of re-election to office.

Thank you in advance for your faithful remembrance and actions taken to re-examine the situation and move with strength toward our best advantage.

Comment 29: Meg Stein

I am a longtime Durham resident who has lived here since 2006 and I have been a homeowner here since 2010. I am also a white woman who continues to work hard to understand how all of us can be truly anti-racist in this country. I am writing today to state my strong opposition to any effort that might be made to terminate County Manager, Wendell Davis because of his stated concern about racism being directed toward him by one of the county commissioners.

I also ask that any "investigation" of him because of those statements be dropped immediately. Mr. Davis has served Durham County well for 6 years now, and I believe that to terminate him at this time would be a gross violation of his rights and an affront to the entire African-American community of this county.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Comment 30: Corye Dunn

I am concerned that in a time of such human and budgetary uncertainty you would spend scarce resources on an investigation whose basis is questionable and whose goals are misguided. I am referring, of course, to the investigation of the County Manager. Please refocus your attention and our collective funds on the real crises of the day. Make sure our English Language Learners and students with disabilities have the resources they need to learn in this confusing time. Keep our libraries strong so they can adapt to our new reality. Provide our first responders with appropriate protective equipment. Connect youth and adults with job and business opportunities. Conduct safe and inclusive elections. These are the things we need in Durham. Internal squabbles must be set aside. It makes our County government look petty and nearsighted. Please do better for us.

Comment 32: Minnie Forte-Brown

I am a lifelong Durham resident...born and raised in this city. I dare say that I am one of the ONLY elected officials in office currently that holds that distinction. I am disheartened and concerned with the swirling rumors about the possibility of the dismissal of County Manager, Wendell Davis, prior to the seating of the newly elected board of County Commissioners. This rumored move doesn't pass the "smell" test. It wrecks of revengeful and racist overtones a tone that is not representative of the Bull City and one that will not make us proud. It will cause much unneeded disruption.

Nearly 30 years ago, the brilliant and prophetic voice of Dr. Cornel West wrote RACE MATTERS. In his book he declares that "racial progress is undeniable in America. Never before have we had such a colorful menagerie of professionals in business, education, politics, sports and the labor movements. Glass ceilings have been pierced.....NOT smashed by extraordinary persons of color. Overt forms of discrimination have been attacked and forced to become more covert. Yet, the legacy of white supremacy lingers, often in the face of the very denial of its reality". This is where we are today in Durham and with the board of County Commissioners.

This is a teaching moment. Race Matters and Language IS the Heart of Culture. You cannot separate language from culture. As a Black person, and a woman, a Christian, an HBCU graduate, a mother and grandmother, my language and my experiences are one. That is the same

for everyone. We have two selves individual and collective. What is difficult to understand is that until you know me individually, you only deal with me from the collective self...the groups to which you know I belong. White people owning racism is hard but it is REAL. The collective of white folk has power over ALL people of color, and in every aspect of our lives, housing, health, employment, education, etc. Plain and simple. You know that "ism" means power. The individual self-determines whether or not YOU choose to operate within the power of the collective or expose your individual self to be different, inclusive, respectful and honoring of all persons. Your language is a tool of power.

I have known Wendell Davis for close to twenty years. He is brilliant, upright, focused and committed to the citizens of Durham. I have known Heidi Carter for sixteen years and she is brilliant, focused and committed to Durham as well. The teaching moment is this Before I speak, I must know the individual with whom I am speaking. I must honor and respect the individual. My language has two dimensions (intent and impact) that resonate whether or not respect is realized. ONLY the listener can provide feedback as to whether or not that message is respectful. The speaker can ONLY speak to the intent of the message. That's what makes communication complicated. But once feedback is received it is upon the speaker to perception check and provide a CURE. FIX IT!!!!

An Apology for Unintentional Impact would have Ended this disruption. Please don't create a racial divide in Durham, by making real the rumors circulating regarding the dismissal of County Manager Wendell Davis. He has been an upright, decent, competent, and committed County Manager.

Comment 33: Jim Hurdis

Wake County commissioners recently voted to allocate part of the \$194 million CARES Act assistance to affordable housing. Immediate expenditure of \$2 million to pay for the hotel rooms the homeless are living in. \$5 million to immediately pay for rent and mortgage relief for those in danger of eviction. Altogether \$34 million is allocated for Wake Housing response to be used between by December 31st. The Wake Commissioners have decided to act now. Please step up and act now.

Comment 34: Jeffrey Carter

County Commissioners, I applaud the efforts of the Commission to initiate an independent investigation into Mr. Davis's behavior, since addressing his actions is part of your duty as Commissioners. It's disappointing that Davis continues to try to deflect the attention from himself and his job performance by labeling any form of inquiry into his actions as an act of racism. If he has done nothing unethical or professionally inappropriate, he should welcome the investigation as a means to validate his integrity. I would also like to say thank you for serving as Durham County Commissioners, as I'm sure it's often a stressful and thankless endeavor to lead our community.

Comment 35: Jean Spooner

Please pass a Resolution asking the NC Department of Environment (DEQ)-Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resource (DEMLR) to DENY the permit application for a private rock mine on YOUR public Odd Fellows Tract property.

Due to significant public interest, NC DEQ-Mining will hold a Public Hearing on June 23, 2020 on the recent Application for a proposed new 400 foot-deep rock mine on the Odd Fellows Tract adjacent to Crabtree Creek and William B. Umstead State Park. Durham County is one of the four Municipal Owners of this public land. As such, it would be appropriate and responsible for Durham County to provide comments to NCDEQ regarding the proposed destruction of YOUR property.

Please note: this is unrelated to the lawsuit. The NCDEQ Public Hearing is for an application on a Mining Permit from Wake Stone Corporation to NCDEQ.

NC State Parks requested and DEQ correctly denied the 1980 request for the existing mine on private land OWNED by Wake Stone Corporation. Despite the permit denial, the Mining Commission approved the permit with conditions Wake Stone Corporation accepted to try to mitigate impacts to the public and environment, including stream and property boundary buffers and a 50-Year Sunset Clause, assuring Park patrons of an end to the conflicts to our Park users that we have endured including large quarry trucks, dust, damaged Harrison Avenue pavement, noise, narrow buffers, water quality issues, and more. Wake Stone Corporation now wants to renege on those public promises.

The proposed NEW rock mine located on the opposite bank of Crabtree Creek would leave Crabtree Creek isolated and suspended between two 400'+ deep quarry pits, with very small, insufficient stream buffers on steep slopes. The long-term perpetual liability burdens will fall on the county and city owners and the environment. This is YOUR land.

This will set a disturbing precedent as the first PRIVATE rock mine on PUBLIC property in NC. If approved, it will permanently withdraw this land from our dwindling natural public and wildlife habitat lands, all within an extremely popular recreational corridor.

Our community has consistently maintained a strong desire to conserve and protect the environment. Let's prevent the destruction of YOUR property, and the associated environmental costs. Please help keep our public lands from becoming a HUGE financial and public safety liability for future generations. This perpetual financial, safety, and environmental liability would fall to the County and City owners of this public land.

In contrast, if the proposed destruction of our public property is prevented, we can all move forward to improve the RDU Airport's Brand and community relations which have been severely damaged due to this short-sighted action to destroy our public lands. The proposed quarry only guarantees \$500,000 total over the first five (5) years. This is tiny. Compare this to the Pepsi contract yielding the same in just 6 months (½ year); selling Pepsi products does not destroy our public lands. Let's work together to correct this bad idea and move forward to help RDU with its needed infrastructure funding.

Please pass a Resolution asking the NC Department of Environment (DEQ)-Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resource (DEMLR) to DENY the permit application for a private rock mine on YOUR public Odd Fellows Tract property.

Comment 36: Will Wilson

It reflects badly on Durham that a personal grudge that the Manager held towards a Commissioner was aired publicly, rather than dealt with privately. Only an open, complete investigation of the manager's actions and accusations can clear this cloud over Durham. The sooner the commission completes this action the better.

Comment 37: Ann Rebeck

It seems the investigation of the actions of our County Manager is underway but I am unclear about the status. His continued presence in the job appears to be fanning discord. I am surprised by the fact that, as with any other employee, he has not been put on administrative leave until the conclusion of the investigation. I recommend this as the best choice so that the remaining staff can focus on our current public health crisis.

Comment 38: Hwa Huang

My name is Hwa Huang. I am the group chair for the Capital Group Sierra Club. Given the recent news that the NC DEQ has announced the public hearing date for Wake Stone's proposed quarry will be June 23, 2020, I would like to ask for the commissioners to submit a resolution to the DEMLR at ncminingprogram@ncdenr.gov to deny Wake Stone's mining permit.

Wake Stone submitted the modification application to mining permit 92-10 in the middle of the pandemic when the public was preoccupied with concern for shelter, food, jobs, and healthcare. However, in just two weeks' time, numerous efforts have contributed to the DEQ's decision to have a public hearing:

- Over 480 messages sent from Sierra Club's statewide AddUp campaign
- The NC Sierra Club has sent two letters to the DEQ detailing the environmental damages as reasons why the mining permit should be denied
- Over 740 public comments submitted from The Umstead Coalition's campaign
- A number of elected officials, such as Senator Wiley Nickel, have already reached out to the DEQ. Read Senator Wiley Nickel's press release [here](#).

Additionally, one of our local Capital Group members and former vice chair, Elizabeth Adams, has come across information regarding the history of segregation and racial justice issues surrounding the Umstead State Park, and will be requesting the DEQ conduct an Environmental Justice Snapshot Report.

While the DEQ has the final say on the matter, anyone can email to inform the DEQ (ncminingprogram@ncdenr.gov) on the environmental detriment that the quarry would have on Umstead State Park. I respectfully urge the commissioners to join the public and other elected officials during this critical period and write to the DEQ about the environmental impact the quarry would have on the state park and call for denial of the mining permit.

Comment 39: David Stein

It wasn't so long ago that Durham was the laughing stock of public administrations. School Board meetings in particular were outrageous and behavior on the part of the City Council, when it was a larger body, had me ashamed to face friends from Wake and Orange County.

For the last six years or so I've been incredibly proud of our local government and the high caliber of our officials. But this nonsense about Heidi Carter has triggered many of the old memories. Heidi is the most conscientious, fair, and considerate person I know. The charges are pre-posterous and Wendell Davis needs to be held accountable for his actions. Please act quickly and decisively to bring this sad chapter to an end.

Comment 40: Barker French

It seems unclear whether the David/Carter personnel matter supposedly being investigated by the counsel hired by the County Commission is actually underway.

Mr. Davis's accusations are a personnel matter and deserve to be heard. But, Mr. Davis's inappropriate actions of publicly accusing Ms. Carter should also be investigated.

Comment 41: Tim Knechtel

Where does this investigation stand? He has leveled a very serious charge against an elected official in a very public manner just prior to an election. He by-passed professional and county processes specifically design to hear these complaints. He chose a forum to cause maximum harm to Ms. Carter's re-election effort. It would be a terrible miscarriage of justice if his actions are not investigated. It would be interesting to see who he was in communication with before he leveled his charges.

Be fair. To be fair the investigation must include the motivation nature and timing of his complaint, why he by-passed established procedures as well as is there any basis to his complaint.

Comment 42: Chelsea Merlini

As a Durham resident, I strongly believe that the proposed \$8.5million dollar budget for the sheriff's department should be redirected to funding our school systems; EDUCATING the public as opposed to policing them. Give our children the education and future they deserve. Anyone in the right heart & mind will agree. BLACK LIVES MATTER.

Comment 43: Davis Harper

I am writing out of concern that the independent investigation into the timing and nature of accusations of Mr. Wendell Davis against Commissioner Heidi Carter has not been and will not be conducted in a proper and timely manner. The fact he is still actively serving as manager four months after his public accusations is incomprehensible to me. At the very least, the investigation should happen - and soon.

As a Durham resident and public schools teacher, I can say Heidi Carter has been an exemplary elected leader - attending events at my school, working with students when they have concerns about local government, and advocating for the needs of ALL our public school students. This malicious and public attack on her character is unjustified and deserves a full inquiry.

Comment 44: Antonio Jones

As a student of public policy and administration, racial justice advocate and an informed citizen of Durham County, this letter serves to acknowledge publicly my concerns surrounding the call for an independent investigation into the claims of racial bias made by the County Manager Wendell Davis against Commissioner Heidi Carter. Several community groups and residents in Durham have also expressed these same concerns, which should be taken seriously by this board if you wish to maintain credibility and the trust of the community. Furthermore, the tactics being used by some on this board which may be violations of Conflict of Interest, Open Meeting, Employee Rights and Ethics Policies are disconcertingly comparable to the tactics used by the administration in Washington, DC.

Based on public documents, disrespectful comments made by some commissioners during public meetings and actions taken against the county manager because of his desire to express his experiences on a very serious subject, one can conclude there is an attempt to find cause to terminate. In addition, there is evidence of a deep seeded dislike for the manager rooted in white identity politics as describe by Duke political scientist Dr. Ashley Jardine in her book *White Identity Politics* (Jardine, 2019).

Equally telling and disrespectful are the use of micro-aggressions towards Durham residents during public meetings prior to COVID-19. During the February 24th meeting, the county manager was openly disparaged and the citizens' concerns were diminished using micro-invalidations by Chair Jacobs. Micro- invalidations are communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color. One can only imagine what happens in closed session. We cannot conflate issues of school funding and contract extensions to deflect the issues at hand.

In closing, given the current political & racial climate against the backdrop of economic uncertainty, this current investigation should be suspended for now and there should be an opportunity for open honest dialogue via a mediator with a racial justice lens if the parties involved are seeking any real understanding. If not, the residents of Durham County should be regularly updated on the status, cost associated and reassurances of impartiality. Durham County is a great place to live; yet we must be willing hold each other accountable with love and respect. Change begins when people stop being in denial.

Thank you for your attention.

Comment 45: Adam Shore

In moving here almost a year ago, I have never believed Commissioner Carter to be anything an ally. Before moving, I researched not only the schools I was applying to but the areas as well, knowing this was where I wished to plant roots. This meant its leaders were researched too. As I stated, she has been an ally to public education and to the people of this community. Upon my arrival here, when listening to others learning more from the actual people, not once did I question these initial impressions. I learned that she led the county's involvement for affordable housing, she advocated to end hunger and improve our bus system, and as I said an ally of schools. She worked to reduce suspensions of children of color, fought the school-to-prison pipeline, and sought reform in the schools' AIG program opening up gifted education for children of color. Commissioner Carter is a woman of conviction and integrity. If she was not

this kind of person, I believe the strong communities in this area would not have voted for her. She has worked alongside the community for racial justice. I believe any review of the public record will show Commissioner Carter is passionate, thoughtful and an effective leader.

Comment 46: Lisa Burke

County Manager Davis' allegations of racism against Heidi Carter are unfounded and have done enormous damage to the Commission as a whole. The timing and public nature of the accusations is suspect, not to mention inappropriate. I am deeply concerned that there has not been more effort to share information with the public.

Comment 47: Julian Parris

My name is Julian Parris. I am a resident of Durham (Ward 1), former professor of statistics, current manager of Learning at SAS, and lifelong proponent of education in all forms. I am writing today to express my strong support of Heidi Carter, whom I have seen work tirelessly, effectively, and inspiringly as an advocate for Public Education. Many things have impressed me about Commissioner Carter, including her long track record of being a transparent and accountable public servant, a strong leader for Durham County, and a strong role model for effective and ethical leadership. I am confident that any review of the public record will show Heidi Carter to be a thoughtful, passionate, and effective County Commissioner who is committed to racial equity and social and economic justice.

Comment 48: Caroline Christman

I am reaching out to in support of Heidi Carter. I voted for Heidi Carter and I believe she is doing a great job as County Commissioner. Here are some reasons why I support Ms. Carter:

- Heidi Carter is a strong and effective advocate for Public Education.
- Commissioner Carter has a long track record of being a transparent and accountable public servant.
- Commissioner Carter is a strong woman and strong leader for Durham County.
- Commissioner Carter is a woman of integrity and conviction.

I am confident that any review of the public record will show Heidi Carter to be a thoughtful, passionate, and effective County Commissioner who is committed to racial equity and social and economic justice. I hope you consider these words. Heidi Carter is doing a tremendous job.

Comment 49: Alex Christman

I just wanted to express my personal support for an impartial investigation into both her AND Mr. Davis (if an investigation is needed). I have served Durham and DPS as a teacher for over a decade, and Ms. Carter has been a consistent advocate for both public schools and racial justice. This all comes as a surprise to me. I am not saying the allegations are impossible, but I really despise the current cancel culture we live in, where voices are intimidated into silence and lives are ruined only on the basis of accusation. If Ms. Carter needs to be investigated for racism, and is exonerated, then I feel there should also be an investigation of Mr. Davis for making politically motivated false accusations.

At the very least, please accept this as a message of support for Ms. Carter. Thank you so much!!

Comment 50: Elizabeth Takla

I am appalled at Wendell Davis' accusations. It's apparent to me that his real intent is to smear Commissioner Carter for questioning him and not rubber stamping his agenda. His motives are appalling and transparent and he should be the one on the chopping block. Saying a comment is "reminiscent of a Jim Crow era mentality" is just a ridiculous statement. Nothing in that comment was racially charged. What a ghastly waste of money to investigate such political rabble.

Comment 51: Rann Bar-On

I am writing to express strong support for the current and past work done by Commissioner Heidi Carter. As a community member, activist, educator, and father of a future DPS student, I have found Commissioner Carter to be the strongest advocate for public schools the Board has seen in many a year. Her clear and unwavering determination to put our public school students, workers, and teachers at the forefront of every discussion is truly a sight to behold.

Most recently, I was delighted to hear Commissioner Carter advocate for the raising of wages for all DPS employees to a minimum of \$15/hr without delay. At this time of crisis, the notion that there are public employees in our County still making less than this barely livable wage is appalling. Commissioner Carter knows that this is a clear issue of racial and economic equity and justice: these largely black and brown public employees bear the brunt of the workload taking care of our students. They deserve more.

Commissioner Carter is a thoughtful, passionate, and effective member of the Board. I have no doubt whatsoever that any fair and unbiased examination of the public record will show Commissioner Carter's deep personal integrity, commitment to racial equity, social justice, and economic equality.

Comment 52: Kevin Lloyd

I am writing in support of Commissioner Carter. As a public school teacher, I am grateful for Commissioner Carter's advocacy for an increase in funds from the Board for Durham Public Schools. Despite the increases the Board has approved in recent years, DPS is still woefully underfunded. Durham is an extremely diverse county and our students have needs that we just cannot meet without more funding. When population growth is taken into consideration, along with the constant undermining of public education by the illegally gerrymandered state legislature, it is easy to see why DPS needs more funds. Commissioner Carter's advocacy for those funds is an example of her record as a public servant.

Comment 53: Susie Proctor

I am writing to support Commissioner Heidi Carter at this time. As a Durham citizen and voter, I am an advocate for strong public education and developing solutions to racial inequities in and outside of schools. Heidi Carter has exemplified these values during her tenure as a public servant, as evidenced by her record. I feel confidently that she will continue to be an effective leader in public education and use her platform to upend racial disparities in our community.

Comment 54: Mike Sstrom

I support the Durham Sheriff Department's proposed flat budget for 2020-21 with its fifteen priority requests rather than the suggested 8.5 percent cut. I am a member of the Sheriff's Community Advisory Board and long-time coordinator of the Durham County jail ministry.

I appreciate the fiscal challenges COVID-19 presents to the county and recognize that the Commission intends to impose a 6.5 percent budget cut in other areas of the county budget, but an 8.5 percent cut on law enforcement would be severe.

Sheriff Birkhead's request to keep his budget flat is quite reasonable. He has taken twelve positions and reallocated them where the most needs exist. If the budget is reduced further, then other needed areas of the Sheriff's department and services at the jail and elsewhere might have to be cut in order to fund these fifteen priorities.

I understand the proposed staff reallocations are from detention staff positions for the female pod commissioner had previously proposed. The jail appropriately separates the inmate population into a female pod and male pods, including the two mental health pods. The Sheriff's proposal to hire a mental health detention sergeant to serve the female mental health pod recognizes this need. The jail has operated other combined programs and services, however, for substance abuse, education, and others for male and female inmates effectively for years without risking the well-being of the female inmates.

Thank you for your consideration and for your dedication to serving our county.

Comment 54: Frances Starn

Heidi Carter's record has proved that she is a woman of integrity and a staunch supporter of public schools. I specifically appreciate Ms. Carter's support of the Durham

Comment 55: Gin Wiegand

As concerned citizens of Durham, we are deeply troubled that no progress has been made concerning the County Manager. It is shocking to us that Mr. Davis continues to hold his position after his shamefully unprofessional and politically motivated false accusations against Heidi Carter. This has gone on long enough. Please excuse Wendell Davis from his duties and hire a new manager with integrity and strength of character to do the job correctly.

Comment 56: Andy Shepard

Commissioner Heidi Carter has been unjustly and unlawfully libeled. Please put County Manager, Wendell Davis, on administrative leave until the investigation is concluded. Given the current situation with community tensions across the country, this issue has to be resolved now before it helps tear our city apart.

Comment 57: Dan Ryan

This is our second message to you on the subject of Wendell Davis. Our first message was not read in its entirety and was truncated even though there was still ample time for the entire message to be read. We will keep this message short in the hope that it will be read in its entirety.

The Durham County Commissioners have a compelling duty and a responsibility to the citizens of Durham County to see that the election related actions of Wendell Davis are thoroughly investigated. There is strong reason to believe that Mr. Davis acted to eliminate the threat of a county commissioner who was critical of his performance by attempting to sabotage her reelection effort on the eve of the primary election this year. This must be thoroughly investigated. If determined to be true, this is election tampering and a punishable crime, and the results of the investigation should be turned over to appropriate law enforcement.

In addition to the concerns noted above, we know the board is well aware of at least one other incident where Mr. Davis acted to eliminate a strong woman who he saw as a threat to his ambitions. There is accumulating evidence that Mr. Davis is intolerant of strong women in his professional work, which alone makes him unsuitable to serve as the Durham County Manager. We ask that the board move forward with the investigation of Mr. Davis but also undertake an immediate review of Mr. Davis' contract. It is the responsibility of the county commissioners to address the inappropriate actions and behavior of the manager, and to replace him with someone who has the trust of the board, the trust and respect of Durham County employees, and the professional skills and ethics that we should all be demanding.

Comment 58: Meg Wannamacher

The Commission must find the courage to investigate Mr. Davis and hold him accountable for his vengeful and unprofessional behavior. In the words of Michelle Obama, "bullies are scared people hiding inside of scary people." Do not let yourselves be bullied.

Comment 59: Harry Albert

We are writing to affirm the Commissioner's decision to hire an independent, impartial outside firm to investigate City Manager Davis for what I believe was gross and inappropriate misconduct equivalent to race baiting a decent and innocent Commissioner just prior to an election because she had questioned his judgement and decision making as part of his city manager duties.

What all of us should be chilled by is the fear of retribution for a person of one race might receive from another for simply calling out their bad behavior, corruption or even just bad judgement. For sure, that does not serve the public interest and in fact what it does to emboldens future bad behavior by those who think they are untouchable from criticism from a race other than their own.

We're simply asking you to please allow this investigation to go forward as planned into Mr. Davis unobstructed by those who support him and want to see it quashed.

Comment 60: Judy Thomson

- Regarding the investigation of County Manager's Wendell Davis' conduct and accusations toward Commissioner Heidi Carter. It is unclear that the Commission has taken any action. There have been no statements or motions at any meetings since February that confirm any progress of the investigation. What is happening?
- An independent investigation IS required in response to his actions. This response is not retaliatory and it is the duty of the Commission as his supervisors. The Manager should

be put on administrative leave until the investigation is concluded. The Commission has failed in its duties to take this action. Any other County employee would be on leave if they behaved in the manner of Mr Davis.

- It is imperative that you drive the investigation to be performed quickly and efficiently to enable Durham County to move forward in serving the good people of Durham County.
- The relationship between the Commission and the Manager is impaired and must be resolved to enable the County government to function well in these extraordinary times. Indeed, in recent televised Commission meetings, despite it being his job, Mr Davis appears to not be paying attention to the point of being disinterested in the work of the Commission. Perhaps he needs to find a new job that is of more interest to him.

Comment 61: Billy Morris

During your February 24 meeting you announced a broad investigation into the concerns brought forward by County Manager Wendell Davis. Despite Commissioner Howerton's recently stated lack of clarity, the broad scope of your investigation is not new and was understood by the public and press since February. You are taking the Manager's allegations seriously and Commissioner Carter has recused herself from the investigation. I understand the stress of the pandemic and the County malware attack, but it has been over three months since you took that action. The public is waiting for answers on whether the County Manager violated state laws and ICMA's Code of Ethics. Please uphold your duties and give us these answers.

Comment 62: Jennifer McDuffie

This issue has been mishandled by the County Manager from the outset. There is an approved PROCESS to lodge complaints against a fellow county employee. There were no official complaints for three years, then suddenly Mr. Davis made vile accusations of racism to the media, not the HR department. In doing this, he wrongfully IGNORED established policy and procedure.

At this point, there has been so much potentially inaccurate back and forth that the ONLY means to a fair resolution is to conduct thorough investigations of both parties by a neutral third party. If Mr. Davis is so sure he is in the right, he should welcome the investigation not try to avoid it.

I implore the Commission to insist on conducting a COMPLETE investigation. To do otherwise would only make the Commission look spineless to the residents of Durham County.

Comment 63: Chris McHugh

Why the silence from you about Mr. Davis' behavior? Durham is being racially divided and YOU are the cause. Please make sure you investigate Mr. Davis. Investigation of a county manager for blatant unacceptable behavior is NOT relation or racially motivated, despite the claims of a VOCAL group. JUST DO YOUR JOB, PLEASE.

Comment 64: Philip McHugh

Mr. Davis' conduct in the Commissioner Carter fiasco has been egregious and intolerable. He has acted unprofessionally and unethically. He has inappropriately waged a personal vendetta against Ms. Carter, and you, the County Commissioners, have stood idly by, abdicating your responsibility and ordering a costly, needless investigation by an outside law firm. You have

made Durham a laughing stock. You should have fired or at minimum suspended Mr. Davis based on his actions. He interfered with a primary election. He should have reported his concerns to the County HR Department. He should not have leaked his letter. He should not have recruited his friends in the community to attack Ms. Carter at Work Sessions. He has racially charged a situation to obfuscate it. He is an undesirable employee who should be terminated. Durham is better than this. You should be better than this. A County employee should not be intimidating his bosses. Start doing your job. Fire Mr. Davis immediately.

Comment 65: Barbara Rumer

As the County Commission moves closer to the investigation, I encourage you to consider the following:

- 1) I fully support the commission's plan to investigate the county manager's allegations of racism in a thorough, fair manner.
- 2) Because of the inappropriate way in which the county manager made those allegations (using county letterhead to bring a personnel matter into a public forum rather than going through established Durham County Human Resources channels for personnel issues; timing the release of the letter just before early voting began when that election included position held by the commissioner in question), his behavior must also be investigated in the same thorough, fair way.
- 3) Every Durham County employee is expected to abide by county policies. The county manager is no exception.
- 4) Because you, as county commissioners, supervise the county manager, I urge you to take this duty seriously by conducting this investigation now. These two issues need to be resolved quickly to allow the commission to focus energy on other pressing needs of the county.

As a recently retired county employee, I am appalled that this situation happened and that it has dragged on as long as it has. I know we can do better! I hope you will take very seriously your responsibility to investigate the county manager's behavior as well as his allegations. Thank you.

Comment 66: Marcie Pachino

Once again, the Durham County Manager, Mr. Wendell Davis, has proposed a budget which fails to fully support Durham Public Schools. Every year of Mr. Davis's tenure, the School Board, school employees, and public school supporters have to fiercely advocate on behalf of DPS students to be sure their needs are met because Mr. Davis's budget proposals lack investment in the county's most precious resource—public schools. In this year's budget, for example, he is recommending funds for new sheriff positions and new sheriff vehicles instead of livable wages for DPS classified staff. As a recently retired, 31-year veteran teacher in DPS, I know well the harm inflicted on DPS's students, staff and teachers by inadequate funding.

Sadly, Mr. Davis's myopic views extend beyond his lack of support for the public schools. I know many county employees who describe a toxic work environment as a result Mr. Davis's poor leadership. I worry that highly valued stewards of Durham County will leave their positions because of poor management and mistreatment.

I urge the Durham County Commissioners to fully fund the Durham Public Schools and not accept Mr. Davis's short-changed budget. And I urge the independent counsel hired by the County Commissioners to complete a thorough evaluation and investigation of Mr. Davis's management.

Comment 67: Durham Resident

North Carolina law states that for all County employees, no employee while on duty or in the workplace may: (1) Use his or her official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or nomination for political office;

In February, I emailed the County Commission, the clerk for the Durham District Attorney and the Chair of the Durham Board of Elections asking you to investigate if Durham County Manager Wendell Davis had violated state laws, specifically the aforementioned statute. It has also been alleged that the County Manager recruited former Commissioners to file and run for office. Are there other laws and policies that have been violated? You must investigate who had the motive to leak the February 11th letter to the press and beyond. Local politicians must stop throwing fire to further their own political aspirations.

A code of ethics complaint against County Manager Wendell Davis has been filed with the International City/County Management Association. In conversations with ICMA staff, they were concerned with the Manager's conduct and their staff initiated an investigation quickly. Details of the ICMA Code of Ethics inquiry are listed below.

I appreciate your attention to these serious concerns and your allegiance to your oaths of office which requires you to uphold the Constitution and all laws of North Carolina. You are taking the Manager's allegations seriously and Commissioner Carter has already publicly recused herself from that investigation. During your February 24, 2020 meeting you announced a broad investigation into these multiple concerns. Despite Commissioner Howerton's recently stated lack of clarity, the broad scope of your investigation is not new and has been understood by the public and press since February. I understand the stress of the pandemic and the County malware attack, but it has been over three months since you took that action. The public is waiting for answers on whether the County Manager violated state laws and ICMA's Code of Ethics.

As we are mindful of these potential serious violations of state law, we must also ask whether this Manager is up to the task of leading our community at this time. This pandemic and ongoing national injustice has deepened our shared concerns of racial and systemic inequities. We need to come together with a county administration that is laser focused on creating solutions for our community's pain rather than sowing division in our community.

Does Durham want a manager who retaliated and allegedly discriminated against a black woman on the basis of race, age and sex discrimination? The lawsuit states that "after Davis was appointed county manager, he immediately retaliated 'by publicly humiliating her, demoting her to a low-level position, cutting her pay in half and requiring her to perform onerous tasks intended to overwhelm her.'" How much did the taxpayers of Durham spend to defend the Manager during that lawsuit alone? It's been reported that legal fees were over \$300,000 of taxpayer funding which could have been used for local initiatives.

Why did the County Manager recommend over \$1.3 million in new funding to the Sheriff's Department, including an additional 12 positions and 34 vehicles while resources are scarce? Did the County Manager implement any substantive improvements while incarcerated people were dying in our jail? Have your evaluations of the County Manager's performance been consistently excellent or do you have concerns? Do you share the concerns of the UNC School of Government about the unusual 'golden parachute' five-year contract awarded to the County Manager by a previous Board? Does Durham want a County Manager who fails year after year to budget funding for public school employees to raise their pay to at least \$15/hour? Does Durham want a County Manager who didn't allocate funding for property tax relief for struggling families during this pandemic? What is the local plan for federal CARES funding developed by this manager and how has the public been able to weigh in on the plan? Is the Manager even present and working during the pandemic? Can this County Manager ever work effectively and equitably with this entire duly elected Board after his interference into a fair election? Does the County Manager have a pattern of false allegations of racism against others when his work is challenged? As we work towards healing, does Durham want a County Manager who called protesters who toppled a confederate monument, "unlawful and inappropriate?" Is the County Manager a champion for Durham or stirring dissent to maintain his own power and six-figure salary?

As we chart a path forward, you five are obligated to confidentially and fully investigate the Manager's conduct and evaluate him as one of your employees. You must listen to disparate voices, keep confidential information, and make decisions in the ongoing best interest of our beloved community. County employees are watching and know that they are held to the highest standards of ethical and legal conduct and the manager must be as well.

Time is of the essence as we work to secure the public trust and rebuild relationships.
Thank you for your service,
S.W. (Durham Resident)

Comment 68: Jane Brown

The actions of our County Manager are unprofessional, lack judgement and integrity, and should not be tolerated. A timely investigation is warranted and he should be put on administrative leave until this is complete. The toxic environment Wendell Davis has created is unwarranted and calls for the County commissioners to resolve this quickly so they can focus on the important issues facing Durham.

Comment 69: Alex LeMay

As a parent, teacher, and citizen, I absolutely advocate for Durham to take a strong stand when it comes to racism. The more honest, thoughtful, compassionate, and constructive conversation we have about it the better.

The accusations against Heidi Carter are not honest, thoughtful, compassionate, or constructive. Mrs. Carter has worked for years supporting students of DPS and Durham as a whole. If you look at her record, she has always been a champion of equity. She has advocated and does

advocate for policies that promote social justice, economic justice, and support for those often ignored by systems.

This issue could have been addressed constructively, but instead, came as an accusation that has created a divisive negativity and diverted energy from work that very much needs to be done. She is responsive to the people she serves. If concerns about her words or actions exist, she welcomes constructive dialogue and works to both understand others' views and clarifies her own.

Labeling Heidi Carter as a racist both ignores her character and her long history of dedicated and equitable service to Durham.

Comment 70: Heiko Rath

I have in the past reached out to you as you are one of the four legal owners of the Oddfellows Tract property next to Umstead State Park. RDU Airport signed a lease with Wake Stone which would make this the first private mining operation on public property in North Carolina. In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic Wake Stone filed for a permit with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

I am reaching out for your support in instructing DEQ to deny Wake Stone Corporation's Mining Permit modification 92-10 submitted on 4/8/2020. I am very concerned that this permit modification for additional/new mining operations on the Oddfellows Tract will result in severe negative environmental impacts on Umstead State Park, neighboring residents, Crabtree Creek and the public.

The original mining permit that Wake Stone has operated under was only permitted with a strict sunset clause to end operations no later than 2031, 50 years from 1981. In November 2017 Wake Stone reached out to DEQ and without any public input had the wording of the sunset clause substantially changed, effectively rendering it pointless. I am also requesting DEQ to reinstate the original sunset clause.

Please send a letter to DEQ requesting the mining permit modification 92-10 for the Oddfellows Tract to be denied to protect our environment. This is in line with the county's stated goals of improving water quality, changing behaviors to achieve environmental quality and protecting open spaces.

Substantial more information on this topic can be found at <https://umsteadcoalition.org/FAQs> which also has details on the original 50-year sunset clause.

Comment 71: Betty Irvin

I write this email with a very heavy heart, given the horrific murder of a George Floyd in Minneapolis, and (what I consider) the massacre of Ahmaud Arbery in Atlanta, just two among far too many acts of racism and hatred in our country. After graduating from Duke in 1981 and raising a family in Southwest, Virginia, I moved back to Durham in 2014. The city I returned to was definitely not the Durham I left; my thanks and congratulations to all who brought about the transformation. There is one current Commissioner whom I know personally and trust beyond

doubt to encourage and sustain Durham's progress, especially in these times of racial turmoil: Heidi Carter. I have known Heidi since we lived in the Canterbury dorm on West campus at Duke, back in 1978-79. She is one of the most level-headed, intelligent and fair-minded women I know. In no way can I ever believe that Heidi's comments or actions were prejudicial against Mr. Davis or any person of color. But rather she has acted and will continue to act in good faith as a Durham City Commissioner. I sincerely appreciate Heidi's work for our city and will support her for as long as she chooses to serve.

Comment 72: Jean Domanico

As I wrote previously, my husband Paul and I have been Durham residents for over 30 years. We have three grown children who all graduated from Durham Public Schools. Over the years we have seen Heidi Carter serve the community selflessly both as member of the Board of Education and as a County Commissioner. She has worked hard, with honesty and integrity, for ALL of Durham's residents and we strongly support her.

We hope that a thorough, fair investigation will take place in a timely manner on the circumstances and timing of Mr. Davis's letter accusing Heidi Carter of racism.

Comment 73: Edward White

I am writing to express my support for an investigation into Wendell Davis's behavior surrounding the letter leaked to the press with allegations of racism. Davis' conduct in this situation has been extremely inappropriate and concerning. Rather than going through appropriate internal channels for a grievance, such that his concerns could have been investigated and addressed in an unbiased way, he leaked his letter to the press and did public interviews. This either reflects very poor judgment, or more likely was an intentional political stunt meant to influence the upcoming election. How can someone with such poor judgment and disregard for the ethical responsibilities of his role as a leader of the county continue to remain in his position? The Board of Commissioners has been negligent thus far in their response to Mr. Davis' conduct, and I urge the board to immediately and thoroughly investigate his behavior and take appropriate action.

Comment 74: Nicholas Graber-Grace

I am a member of the Durham Association of Educators. I listened with interest last week to presentation that Durham Public Schools provided to the Board of Commissioners. I was pleased to hear each of you indicate your support for getting all school workers to a minimum wage of at least \$15 an hour.

I was also pleased to hear that, based on the numbers presented by Mr. Paul LeSieur, the total amount of new operating money from the County that DPS will need to accomplish this goal is \$7.6 million -- nearly one million less than the \$8.5 million our organization had projected and had asked you for.

The Durham Association of Educators continues to urge you to find \$8.5 million in new operating support for DPS next year to meet these and other critical needs, yet we understand the difficult financial position the county is in due to lost revenue. I urge you to do everything in

your power to provide increased economic security to school workers by approving the \$7.6 million required to move everyone to a \$15 living wage.

This is the most important wage equity issue currently under the purview of the County and of DPS. Black Lives Matter. Economic justice for Black and Latinx and working-class families matters as well.

Comments Submitted After the Deadline Date/Time (May 31st at 12pm)

Brittanie Howard

Submitted 5/31 at 12:55pm

After hearing the allegations and troubles surrounding the service of Heidi Carter, I am inclined to write with my support of her. Heidi Carter is a strong and effective advocate for Public Education - a passionate servant that public schools need, especially in times like these. Commissioner Carter has a long track record of being a transparent and accountable public servant and has upheld her integrity and pro activity in the face of adversity and challenge.

As a Durham resident, I would hope that our city would applaud the long-term efforts of a public servant and would allow their track record to speak louder than the voice of their opposition. I trust that you all will act on that same doctrine.

Janine Wolf

Submitted 5/31 at 12:56pm

It is unclear that the Commission has taken any action in the situation regarding Mr. Davis. There have been no statements or motions at any meetings since February that confirm any progress of the investigation. Investigating the Manager does not make Commissioners racist. Accusations of this should not deter you from doing your job. The delay in resolving this issue has enflamed racial tension in Durham and caused many people to choose sides. It is very destructive to Durham.

Pam Silberman

Submitted 5/31 at 1:42pm

I understand that the County Commissioners will be hiring an outside law firm to investigate allegations of racism by Heidi Carter. At the same time, the law firm should investigate allegations of misconduct by the County Manager, Mr. Davis. According to the Indy, there are some suggestions that his allegations may be politically motivated to help increase his chances of reappointment. I do not know if that is the case but having an independent investigation of both parties will help the County Commissioners determine whether there has been any wrong-doing by either party.

Susan Oleniacz

Submitted 5/31 at 7:39pm

I am unclear why, per Mr Davis, oversight of county managers by county commissioners is racially motivated. I thought that was their job. And his job, working for the people of the county, requires financial transparency. If he has nothing to hide, he should open his books for review.

Rebecca Levine

Submitted 6/1 at 10:56am

I hope I am not too late to relay my support for the work Heidi Carter has been exhibiting in the County Commissioner office. Let Durham be an example for our country by supporting strong women who not only bring passion to the table but also ACTUAL change. Supporting public education is the MOST critical thing we as individuals, cities and countries can do to make the change we want for this world. Think of a world of amazingly educated young adults and the power that can bring to a world of change.

Heidi Carter sees that as our future. I ask your support of a person with a long track record of being a transparent and accountable public servant. A person of high integrity and conviction. A person who believes there is a future full of positive change.

Any review of public record will show Commissioner Carter to be thoughtful and effective. NOW MORE THAN EVER - TODAY MORE THAN EVER BEFORE - please support a person committed to racial equality - and both social and economic justice.

Hear our plea - we as individuals can only ask for this change. You as our elected leaders have been asked to create that change. Please help us be a better Durham starting today.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Monica Toomer, Clerk to the Board
June 1, 2020