

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Monday, August 3, 2020

9:00 A.M. Virtual Work Session

MINUTES

Place: Commissioners' Chambers, second floor, Durham County Government
Administrative Complex, 200 E. Main Street, Durham, NC

Present: Chair Wendy Jacobs, Vice Chair James Hill, and Commissioners Heidi Carter,
Brenda Howerton and Ellen Reckhow

Presider: Chair Wendy Jacobs

Citizen Comments

Citizens were requested to email their comments to the Clerk no later than Sunday, August 2nd at 12 noon. Monica Toomer, Clerk to the Board, read three minutes' worth of each citizen comment. At the Board's request, verbatim comments are included below.

Sally Hodges-Copple

I am writing to voice my support for tax assistance grants to help low-income homeowners keep their homes. From what I understand, this policy gives homeowners security from tax foreclosure, while the alternative option (deferring delinquent taxes), requires homeowners to pay with 9% interest and fees, putting low-income families at greater risk of losing their home. I hope the County will join the City in supporting tax assistance grants to keep longtime Durhamites in their homes.

Thank you for your work on behalf of our community.

Jenna Funicella, Konstantin Bakhurin, and Jen Eisenmann

Thank you for your tireless efforts and leadership in this very challenging time for our community. I'm sure you are all well aware of how the pandemic has revealed and exacerbated long-standing problems, including affordable housing. While much of the focus lately has rightly been on preventing a coming eviction crisis for renters, low income homeowners, especially those of color, also face a double burden.

I urge you to enact tax assistance grants for longtime, low-income homeowners. This policy will help fight displacement and gentrification, since homeowners whose taxes rise faster than their incomes may be forced to sell their homes to pay taxes. As you may know, research shows that African American homes nationwide are consistently assessed at higher values, relative to their actual sale price, than white-owned homes. This results in African American homeowners in the best of times bearing an unfair share of the burden of paying for local government and now facing potential displacement in these worst of times.

Jen Eisenmann

It has come to my attention that you negotiated with City Council to appoint the Sheriff and Police Chief to an "advisory board" for the Community Safety and Wellness Task Force. Our communities do not need the police to advise them about what systems will keep them safe; they know what's best for them and should be free to work together to develop their ideas without police oversight. I view the Commission's

proposal as its own form of policing - intervening in this critical process to enforce a vision of Durham's future in which "new" systems of safety are premised on the same logics of crime, punishment, and anti-Blackness.

I am imploring you to develop the Community Safety and Wellness Task Force with NO police involvement at your next meeting on August 10. We have been under police control since the founding of Durham - they have had their say. Our communities know the way forward. We only need to let them lead.

Karen Blase

We must support racial equity through ACTION. Enact tax assistance grants for longtime, low-income homeowners NOW. We cannot just march and chant our way to equity, we must act our way to racial equity.

Sadie Nott

I'm writing to you to implore you not to assign any members of the Durham Police or Sheriff's Departments to the newly established Community Safety and Wellness Taskforce. In order for this entity to truly be free from the confines of systemic racism and this county and city's history of policing and violence against black and brown bodies, we must let the communities themselves speak for what their needs are.

Please take this opportunity and allow Durham continue to grow and be a beacon of progressiveness and light on these issues.

Tom Harris

This comment from the Criminal Justice Reform Action Team of Durham CAN (Congregations, Neighborhoods and Associations) is a follow up to the email message sent by Rev. Timothy Condor, Co-Chair of both the Durham CAN Strategy Team and Clergy Council, on June 12, 2020, to the Durham County Commissioners requesting sufficient funding be provided to Sheriff Birkhead to allow universal COVID-19 testing for both staff and residents at the Durham County Detention Center. As Rev. Condor explained, we see this commitment to testing as urgent for his staff, the approximately 260 residents of the jail, and our broader community. The Sheriff has informed us that he has had ten positive cases among his staff and had tragically lost a team member to COVID-19. Currently, they are only minimally testing. In fact, as we understand it, the current policy requires his staff to individually seek testing through their own insurance coverage or personal resources.

We have recently learned through contacts with the NC Office of State Budget and Management and NCPRO that Durham County has either recently or will soon receive its second round of CARES Act funding, in the amount of \$6,239,422. Moreover, Jodi Miller, Durham County Safety General Manager, has informed us that the County Commission has not yet adopted a plan for the expenditure of those funds. When you do adopt that plan, we urge you to include sufficient funds for universal COVID-19 testing for both staff and residents, current and future, at the Durham County Detention Center. Both Sheriff Birkhead and County Health Director Rodney Jenkins have informed us that they will assure these tests are administered if they receive CARES Act fund earmarked for that purpose.

For your additional information, Ms. Miller also informed us of the need for the County to check the CFR guidelines to ascertain whether the purposes for which we ask you to expend the County's CARES Act fund are permissible. Our own research shows they are permissible. On page 4 of the guidelines, under "Nonexclusive examples of eligible expenditures," two of the expenses listed are "Costs of providing COVID-19 testing, including serological testing" and "COVID-19-related expenses of maintaining state prisons and county jails."

Charles Cooperberg

Please slow down changes to Durham's UDO, rushing is not appropriate

Carl Rist

Attached to this email (sent on August 2nd) is a sign-on letter from a number of individuals, neighborhood associations, and civic organizations in Durham that urges the Board of County Commissioners to provide direct tax assistance to long-time, low-income homeowners. Doing so will be an important way to fight displacement and gentrification, while also building wealth for Black homeowners, who have long borne a disproportionate share of the burden of paying for local government (see below for estimates of the Black homeownership rate by Census tract for Durham County).

We look forward to further deliberation on this proposal at Monday morning's work session of the county commissioners.

Brian Vannah

As a Durham resident, my wish for the Community Safety and Wellness Task Force is to create a safer and healthier community. I want to keep police, including the Sheriff and Police Chief, away from this Task Force. Their input is not needed. The community knows how to keep the community safe better than the police who have spent decades harming it.

Even if they don't get to vote, allowing the police to sway discussions is counterproductive to the goals of the task force. The Police Department and Sheriff have so much power in our city--they do not need the extra boost that they would enjoy as advisors to the task force.

I believe that the researchers on the task force will be able to obtain any information they need regarding things like crime statistics, arrest patterns, etc. from law enforcement agencies outside of the task force meetings, so there would be no need for the police to be present in meetings.

I urge you to ensure that law enforcement be kept out of this discussion entirely as our community grapples with systems of legal oppression.

I am writing to urge the Durham County Board of Commissioners to approve a cop-free Durham Community-Led Safety and Wellness Task Force and its bylaws at your next meeting. Again, I urge you not to include the Sheriff, Sheriff's Deputies, or any police-related workers as County representatives or advisors on this Task Force because that would defeat the Task Force's purpose--to move beyond reactive, short-term solutions using a punishment or imprisonment framework.

Rita McDaniel

My name is Rita McDaniel I'm not a homeowner but would like to be one someday. I'm asking that you all will approve grants to help low income homeowners keep their homes. Can you imagine years ago how these families felt being able to buy a home that they can call their own? What a feeling of accomplishment! But as they have aged and our communities have changed having the feeling of being overwhelmed with the fear of losing their home having not enough money for food medicine and other essential needs. I'm asking that you all will vote yes and help many people of low income stay in their homes with the pride of knowing that our County Commissioners are invested in the people who have invested back by raising their families and being able to pay their taxes in their early years.

Manisha Dubey

As a Durham resident, my wish for the Community Safety and Wellness Task Force is to create a safer and healthier community. I want to keep police, including the Sheriff and Police Chief, away from this

Task Force. Their input is not needed. The community knows how to keep the community safe better than the police who have spent decades harming it.

The relationship of this advisory board to the taskforce is not made clear enough in my opinion and could easily become an overpowering force that could influence the work of the taskforce because of unavoidable power structures that those law enforcement or other department leaders embody/can wield. Another glaring contradiction this raises for me is the assumption that these leaders would not make themselves available to any community member as a resource/support if they were not serving on such a taskforce like the community safety and wellness taskforce or if these officials were not serving in this "resource/advisory panel". It seems like formalizing a relationship between these departments and the community work in a way that could be easily construed as power and control rather than recognizing that of course and obviously these department leaders should always make themselves available as a resource and advisors to community work when called upon.

I am writing to urge the Durham County Board of Commissioners to approve a cop-free Durham Community-Led Safety and Wellness Task Force and its bylaws at your next meeting. Again, I urge you not to include the Sheriff, Sheriff's Deputies, or any police-related workers as County representatives or advisors on this Task Force because that would defeat the Task Force's purpose--to move beyond reactive, short-term solutions using a punishment or imprisonment framework.

Sarah Bickley

I strongly oppose text amendment #TC2000003, which create a new process for development called "Development Agreements." These Development Agreements (DAs) allow developers to strike deals with the Planning Department behind closed doors, with no resident input. Durham residents are already struggling to have our voices heard- these DAs will make Developer voices even stronger while actual Durham residents are left out in the cold. Under a DA, residents will not hear about new developments until they are before City Council/County Commission when the deal has already been struck. Now, more than ever, we should be empowering our residents- not shutting our voices out of conversations that guide the future of Durham.

I specifically oppose text amendment # TC2000003 (Development Agreements) because this proposed amendment removes the voices of Durham residents from the table and strengthens a structure that prioritizes the voices of wealthy & well-connected developers over those of current residents.

We need more transparency in government, not less. This text amendment will hurt Durham's ability to engage minority voices and help us plan for our own future.

This text amendment has no limits and can be used on a project of any size (from a single home to a multi-million-dollar development), fundamentally undermining our current rules and regulations.

This text amendment is being proposed and rushed through to help a specific developer. City policy should be made thoughtfully and deliberately to benefit all residents, and not rushed through to benefit a single person.

This proposal should be separated from the specific rezoning case #Z1900036 on Farrington Rd. Having the deadline for a massive change to the UDO should not be driven by whatever deadlines a single developer has requested.

This is another example of Developers promising affordable housing, but not being willing to give up even a little of their profits. The more we keep allowing developers to rewrite our code, the more we will attract developers who care mostly about profits and not about Durham.

I urge you to against this proposed text amendment.

Stella Adams

My name is Stella Adams and I urge The Passage of the long-term Durham Resident Tax Assistance Grant Program put forward by the Coalition for Affordable Housing and Transit. A map provided by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition that has been previously provided to Commissioners shows that a significant portion of Durham County has a Black Homeownership rate of 75%. This is far above the national average and this land has been in the Black community for nearly 100 years. The loss of this land due to an inequitable tax valuation would be a travesty and a breach of your obligation to affirmatively further fair housing.

Rural farmers in Durham county would also benefit from this program. Many family farmers have lost income for reasons beyond their control, tariffs, and COVID-19 are hardships they could not anticipate. These family farms are in danger and these landowners would benefit from the relief a Long-term Durham Resident Tax Assistance Grant Program would provide them during these exceptional times.

Our long-term residents are the people who built this county, they built homes here and raised their families here. This County owes them and should not be responsible for their land loss. I strongly urge you to provide relief to these long-term residents of our county.

Cole Parke

I work as a community organizer with a statewide organization called Carolina Jews for Justice, and I'm a resident of Durham, NC. I'm proud to call this city and this community my home, and I'm mindful, too, that a significant part of what makes this place so special long predates my relatively recent arrival. As a matter of both honoring the longtime members of this community that made it what it is -- especially poor, working class, Black, and Latinx people—and investing in a racially just society, I'm writing to encourage the Board to enact tax assistance grants for longtime, low-income homeowners.

Lorisa Seibel

Dear County Commissioners, County Clerk, County Manager, General Manager of Financial Affairs, and Tax Assessor.

In 2019, tax values rose 79% in the East End neighborhood (North Durham on Dowd Street). When Tax Values Rose 56% in 2016, this historically Black neighborhood lost African Americans, lost homeowners, and lost population. In 2016, cost-burdened mortgage holders rose to 81%. In 2017, evictions spiked at 511, half the population. This is happening in all of the historic African American neighborhoods in Durham, both rural and urban.

In 2020, we can act to help homeowners and residents of the East End and other rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods keep their homes.

We ask you to fund Grants to support Long-Time, Low-Income Homeowners in gentrifying neighborhoods keep their homes. Please support the Coalition for Affordable Housing and Transit proposed Tax Assistance Grants.

Please see the attached data showing the loss of long-time, low-income homeowners in the East End.

Jim Svava

I would like to commend the Commissioners for considering how the County can join with the City to provide tax assistance to very low-income long-term homeowners.

Taxes are rising for these families but incomes do not. These conditions can lead to additional displacement of longtime homeowners and destabilization of their neighborhoods. The proposed Tax Assistance Grant (TAG) program helps long-time homeowners Countywide with incomes below 30% AMI and target neighborhoods and Habitat homeowners up to 60% AMI.

The Program will limit payments by the eligible homeowners to one percent of their income (two percent for the target groups). The amount of tax that exceeds the limit will be paid by a grant to the Tax Administration Office from the City and County.

The Deferred Payment approach also provides relief, but TAG provides more assistance and does not require repayment of deferred taxes plus interest. We need to get this program in place to help with this year's taxes. Please see the longer attached comments.

Tamara Oxley

It is inequitable that the poorest members of our community pay the highest percentage of their income to property tax. Our county must be in the business of ensuring that the investments that homeowners make in their homes are secure—rather than financially crippling low-income community members with increasing, prohibitive property taxes that threaten to remove them from their own homes.

Tax assistance grants are an important immediate step but they are unsustainable. Instead, Durham citizens want the Board to consider longer-term options that take into account and address the generational impact of increasing property taxes on low-income residents. The county must act to keep property taxes affordable for low-income homeowners – it is immoral to casually and continuously price residents out of their own homes in the communities they have contributed to for years, decades, or generations.

Kathi Beratan

I am writing in support of the People's Alliance request that you support tax assistance grants to keep taxes affordable for low-income homeowners. Affordable housing is a central concern in Durham, so finding ways to help low-income people stay in their current homes should be an important focus. Tax assistance grants are one way that the City can help low-income homeowners keep their houses through the growing economic crisis. It can also begin to correct a long-standing inequity in property assessments here and across the nation resulting in the poorest homeowners paying a disproportionately high percentage of their income in property taxes. Tax assistance grants could give low-income homeowners long-term security from tax foreclosure and help them start to build wealth. Much more needs to be done to assist low-income communities, of course, including updating Durham's ordinances and permitting process to give communities a voice in development decisions, but this proposal is a good start.

Brandon Williams

As a concerned Durham resident who lives in the Walltown neighborhood, I urge you to adopt a countywide tax assistance grant program (in partnership with the City of Durham) to provide urgently needed financial support for long-time, low-income homeowners. I share the views of the Coalition for Affordable Housing and Transit, Durham People's Alliance, and Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People whose letter articulates this program as a matter of equity (addressing racial disparities in property tax burden), urgent financial need (in context of COVID-19), and public good (aligns with goals of the Durham County Strategic Plan).

Moreover, the Walltown Community Association has been requesting property tax relief for some time now, most recently articulating it as part of our vision for the redevelopment of Northgate Mall. We know that what happens with the mall property will only exacerbate the burden of long-time, low-income homeowners in our neighborhood and believe these grants can help offset that impact.

Please take the necessary action to support this initiative and secure funding for it in the FY 20-21 budget.

Breana van Velzen

I hope you are well. I live in Walltown, which is an historically Black neighborhood, and I work with several other historically Black neighborhoods in the city and county. Homeowners have been hit with much higher property taxes. I would not like to see my neighbors displaced, rent prices go up further, or people unable to make repairs on their homes due to taxation. I want our neighborhoods to retain their character and residents. Especially during this time of crisis, please pass the tax assistance grant program—help our community in a very concrete way that will allow for the least amount of displacement, especially for senior citizens. We don't have many options left for our collective thriving as more and more well-paid young professionals move into luxury housing in Durham. We have to take responsibility for all of our residents.

Chair Jacobs summarized the three main issues mentioned during citizen comments: tax relief, concerns about the UDO Text Amendment related to Development Agreements, and the Community Safety and Wellness Taskforce.

Directive: Jodi Miller to follow-up with the Sheriff's Office and Public Health Department regarding the Board's request for information about options for COVID-19 testing in the Detention Center (for both staff and detainees). The Board hoped to discuss this during the Monday, August 10th Regular Session.

Consent Agenda

The Board was requested to review the following Consent Agenda items for the August Regular Sessions.

20-0338 Board of Elections Robert Half International Contract Amendment

Commissioner Reckhow described reading about other counties installing drop-off boxes for election ballots as an alternative to mail-in voting—this practice would help assure citizens that their ballot was properly submitted. Elections staff was encouraged to investigate the feasibility of installing drop-off boxes for absentee ballots as an alternative to mail-in voting in strategic locations (e.g. outside the Board of Elections Office, North Regional Library, East Regional Library, and South Regional Library). Derek Bowens, Director of Elections, discussed the statutory and administrative rule conflicts in place. Technically speaking, ballots had to be returned by mail or in-person. He was awaiting guidance from the State Board of Elections on potentially implementing manned drop-boxes at one-stop locations.

Commissioner Howerton moved, seconded by Commissioner Reckhow, to suspend the rules.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Reckhow moved, seconded by Commissioner Howerton, to approve the Board of Elections to enter into a contract amendment, in the amount of \$144,000, with Robert Half International Inc., to continue providing critical election services to the residents of Durham County and ensure optimal organizational efficiency.

The motion carried unanimously.

Directive: Derek Bowens and Philip Lehman, Chair of the Durham County Board of Elections, to present a report at the Monday, August 10th Regular Session to brief the public about the steps they were taking in terms of preparations and election services.

20-0343 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000005 to Recognize Durham County Grant Revenue: “LSTA EZ Grant - Website Translation”

Chair Jacobs spoke on the importance of equitable digital access and inclusivity.

20-0346 Approval of FY20-21 Contract (\$352,182) with Urban Ministries of Durham

Chair Jacobs noted she did not see any changes in the scope that reflected what came out of the meetings between Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD) and the Board. Drew Cummings, Chief of Staff, stated that staff was still working with UMD in terms of follow-up from said meetings. He assured the Board the issues they raised would not be forgotten.

Directive: If the contract would return before the Board, staff to research what resources were needed (and their associated costs) to address the issues raised by the Board with UMD.

20-0353 Contract Approval for CJRC Transitional Living Facility

Gudrun Parmer, Criminal Justice Resource Center Director, provided the Board with information regarding the capacity for transitional housing and the Formerly Incarcerated Transition (FIT) Program.

20-0354 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000007 to Increase Security Services Contract for Increased Security needs at the Youth Home

Manager Davis provided clarification regarding why the County contracted with NightHawk Security for security services rather than working with the Sheriff’s Office.

General Manager Claudia Hager confirmed NightHawk Security employees earned over \$15 per hour.

20-0361 City-County Planning Department FY21 Work Program

Directive: Sarah Young, Acting Planning Department Director, to provide the Board with an assessment of the Revised Interlocal showing which activities in the Work Program pertained to either the City or the County.

20-0364 Contract Renewal for County Funded Early Literacy Initiative-Reach Out and Read

Directive: Drew Cummings to share the report information with Stelfanie Williams, Duke University Vice President for Durham Affairs.

20-0380 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000012 Appropriate \$100,000 of General Fund COVID Reserve to support COVID positive families experiencing food insecurity.

General Manager Jodi Miller discussed the types of expenses that were reimbursable through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and stated she believed the expenses that fell under the COVID Reserve were included under that category.

Rod Jenkins, Public Health Director, stated staff would endeavor to tie this to the work happening at Holton Career and Resource Center.

The Board suggested this partnership be featured in the County's weekly newsletter as it was a great example of collaboration and COVID-19 efforts happening in the community.

There were no comments made for the items below:

20 0292 Authorization to enter into a contract with SHI International Corp. for purchase of goods related to Microsoft Volume Licensing for the Durham Sheriff's Office

20 0314 Approval of Contract with Chirpy Bird, Inc. to Provide a HIPAA Privacy & Security Risk Assessment & GAP Analysis

20-0345 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BC000003 - Approval of Fund Balance Appropriation and Transfer from Lebanon Service Tax District Fund in the Amount of \$25,000 to Fund Unanticipated Personnel Costs due to COVID-19

20-0347 Budget Amendment No. 21BC000004 to recognize \$219,744.29 in Federal Funding Provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES Act)

20-0350 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000006 to Recognize Durham County Grant Revenue: Digital Collections and Large Print Funds from The Forest at Duke

20-0355 Restaurant Lease for Admin Building II

20-0363 Request for Approval of "New Lease Line Agreement" with Duke Regional Hospital for the new EMS Station #1

20-0366 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000010 Cooperative Extension recognition of grant contribution from the Rosetta W. Harris Charitable Lead Trust B via the NC Agricultural Foundation Inc. to Increase Staff Support for the Fall 2020 Kids Voting Durham Election

20-0367 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000008- Recognizing Coronavirus Relief Funds Received from the State Board of Elections to the Durham County Board of Elections (\$277,268)

Discussion Items

20-0385 Durham Recovery and Renewal Task Force Update and Funding Requests

The Board was requested to receive an update from the Co-Chairs of the Durham Recovery and Renewal Task Force (RRTF), Katie Galbraith, president of Duke Regional Hospital, and Maticia Sims, Vice President and Corporate Controller of Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC. The update included funding requests submitted by the RRTF to Durham County and City governments for consideration.

The purpose of the Task Force was published as follows:

“Mayor Schewel and Chair Jacobs issued emergency stay-at-home orders and other declarations to keep Durham safe during the COVID-19 crisis. Now the time has come to plan for how Durham will recover, renew, and reemerge, and to accomplish the dual purpose of keeping our community safe while helping our economy reopen. To make the best decisions about how to revise emergency declarations and stay-at-home orders, they decided to form a task force on recovery and renewal to advise them. The task force would meet weekly with them over the next 100 days, engaging throughout with community partners, experts, and local businesses, in order to provide elected leaders with actionable guidance and advice.”

Ms. Galbraith and Ms. Sims brought forward four proposals on behalf of the RRTF which responded to urgent and important community needs. These proposals, summarized below, were intended to support Durham’s recovery and renewal while reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

- **Increase awareness and use of Back on the Bull.** Back on the Bull was an evidence-based public health campaign with a health and safety checklist developed by behavioral scientists in collaboration with public health experts. The website housed a database of local businesses and organizations that committed to take appropriate health and safety measures to prevent transmission while accepting guests. Increasing the number of residents who referenced Back on the Bull would increase the planning tool’s power in shaping behavior and creating accountability. Community members who were least likely to be reached were the most at-risk of exposure to the virus. Additional funds were needed to raise awareness and leverage the full benefits of the campaign. With additional funding, staff could plan on reaching approximately 300,000 people in Durham at least six times over the next five months with information about how they could do their part to help Durham get “back on the bull.”
- **Offer free disposable mask dispensers on every Go Durham bus to increase access to face coverings for transit riders.** The City of Durham Transportation Department was providing free face masks at the central downtown transit bus terminal. On average, 500 free face coverings were given out each week—at this rate, staff was set to run out of supplies within the next few days. Not only were Durham bus riders a population at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19, but limiting mask distribution to the central terminal placed bus drivers and riders at greater risk because commuters who picked up a mask at the central terminal had to first ride a bus to the terminal without wearing one. Strengthening this effort could also help establish the public transit system as a key strategy for providing access to face coverings to the community.
- **Use a Community Health Ambassador program to increase voluntary compliance with public health best practices in Durham establishments via in-person support from trusted community members.** The Ambassador program built upon a widely accepted public health strategy of community health workers—culturally competent, frontline public health workers who were trusted by the communities they served. Ambassadors would provide in-person support to up to 150 businesses and other establishments per week, spend their days visiting businesses and other organizations to listen and understand the needs and challenges they were facing, observe current practices, and partner with establishment owners to identify and remove barriers to compliance, subsequently reducing the risk of transmission among employees and customers. In-person support was crucial to increasing compliance. Without this level of support, the County would continue to see a wide variation in compliance levels across

Durham. This investment could help avoid pursuing unnecessary enforcement mechanisms as seen in other communities across the country, employ people from communities that were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and ensure the digital divide that disproportionately impacted people of color did not decrease the level of compliance support for historically marginalized businesses and establishments.

- **Create a new grant fund for evidence-based investments that establishments could utilize to create safer spaces for employees and customers.** Methods to reduce the risk of transmission included providing face masks to employees and customers, placing hand-sanitizer stations throughout the building, using Plexiglass to create barriers in locations where social distancing was not possible, using infrared thermometers to take contactless temperature checks of employees and customers, upgrading to high-quality air filters and increasing the rate of air change, and shifting traditionally indoor activities to outdoor spaces. While some of these evidence-based practices required modest investments, many entities underwent financial strain due the pandemic. A request for support—with expenses like the ones described above—was the most common request across sector-specific and community-focused roundtables.

It was noted that the Gillings School of Global Public Health put forth the Community Health Ambassador program proposal which the County would operate.

Commissioner Reckhow made the following suggestions:

- Promote buying local on the Back on the Bull website, which only emphasized safety, by adding a catchy, clever tag line beneath the “Back on the Bull.”
- Consider funding the first two phases and then performing a check-in with the Board regarding the status before funding the third.
- Research whether the CARES Act would cover County purchases of masks and gloves for the proposals.

Susan Amey, Discover Durham President/CEO, discussed which proposals would be the most prioritized if the County did phased funding. The hope was to fund Phase 1B and 2 as that would cover until October—the combined cost for these was a total of \$190,000 to be split evenly between the City and the County.

Ms. Miller discussed the possibility of certain expenditures being reimbursable.

Manager Davis assured the Board that staff would review the proposal and perform deeper vetting to understand which of the line items would be eligible for CARES funding or alternative source funding.

Ms. Sims discussed the early steps taken by the Task Force to avoid duplicating existing work within the County or community partners.

Ms. Galbraith and Ryan Smith, RRTF Director of Policy and Partnerships, confirmed the funding total was a one-time expense to cover 12 months.

Pilar Rocha-Goldberg, El Centro Hispano Director, discussed the affects of the pandemic on the Latinx community of Durham.

Discussion was held regarding the amount of time staff had to provide to the Board with the information that was requested.

The Board supported the Community Health Worker program, but there was uncertainty regarding the funding level. Chair Jacobs, at the Manager's recommendation, stated the commitment to the \$95,000. The Board also supported repurposing some of the small business funding to use for the grants.

20-0376 Update on the Durham Transit Plan

Aaron Cain, Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO Planning Manager, provided the Board with an update on the development of the Durham County Transit Plan. Brooke Ganser, City-County Planning Department, discussed the engagement results and next steps. They answered questions regarding the use of Ambassadors in the next phase of engagement and added community groups suggested by the Board.

20-0377 Greater Triangle Commuter Rail (GTCR) Update

Katharine Eggleston, GoTriangle Chief Development Officer, provided the Board with an update on the Greater Triangle Commuter Rail Study.

General Manager Jay Gibson provided the Board with a status update of the hiring process for the Transit Manager position.

20-0349 300 and 500 Block East Main St. Redevelopment - Design Development Review and Update

The Board was requested to receive an update from the development team on the design development phase of the Structured Parking Deck, review the schedule for the overall project and discuss the Childcare/Pre-K location. Since the previous update to the Board, staff worked towards the progression of the design, approvals of the MOU's, LOI and amendments. The project team hoped to discuss and receive feedback regarding the design development and project schedule in preparation for the Master Development Agreement/other agreements prior to entering into the Construction Documents Phase. Staff also made recommendations on the Childcare/Pre-K location to the Board.

Julie McLaurin, Community Studio Principal, presented the Board with the Redevelopment Schedule, parking update, and ground level floor plan. Joel Dabrowski, AIA, Senior Design Architect, presented on the design of the project.

Chair Jacobs agreed with setting up an advisory group for the Request for Application (RFA).

Discussion was held regarding the inclusion of an area for library overflow parking in the deck for patrons (rather than employees). The Board was under the impression that the overflow area would be on the second floor, with the third floor being for residents and the higher floors for County employees.

Linda Chapel, Child Care Services Association (CCSA), presented the Downtown Durham Child Care Analysis. Based on the analysis, the CCSA made the following recommendations for the development of a childcare facility as part of the 300 and 500 Block East Main St. Redevelopment project:

- Commit to developing a model program for high quality early education services for infants and toddlers. The shortage in the supply of infant care in Durham and the square footage of the interior space (6000 sq ft) designated for the child care facility make a center for younger children more ideal.
- Establish an advisory group to develop and guide a Request for Applications (RFA) process to identify an operator for the space.
- As part of the RFA process:
 - decide upon enrollment priorities, whether for the development’s housing residents, county employees or others
 - require that the operator achieve and maintain a 5-star rated license as a minimum standard, within a specified time period
 - consider requiring NAEYC accreditation, within three years of opening, to further assure high quality
 - incentivize/promote philanthropic investments by prioritizing nonprofit operator applicants in the RFA process
 - provide opportunities for teacher observation, training and practicum in partnership with higher education
 - establish that the program must accept children receiving public subsidies and other childcare financial assistance
 - consider income-based sliding-scale tuition policies to mitigate the high cost of infant care
 - mandate the employment of degreed teachers and equitable compensation packages
- After a competitive RFA process, rent the designated facility space to the selected operator for a nominal fee to support the cost of high quality. Occupancy costs were typically the second largest item in a childcare center’s budget and the market rental rates for Downtown continue to rise. The number of seats available in the program would be limited due to the restricted square footage of the space, making the business model difficult for profitability. Occupancy support would better ensure sustainability and allow for investments in teacher quality.
- Consider granting an allowance for interior and exterior configuration costs. The East Main project timeline estimates a spring 2023 window for space development and configuration. The impact of COVID-19 on the development of the space may be significant—requiring more expenses for sanitation and air quality needs than has typically been the norm.

Peri Manns, Deputy Director of Engineering and Environmental Services, summarized the steps currently underway.

Directives:

- **Peri Manns to provide the Board with a write-up of the parking plan between the Main Library and the deck that included information regarding how many parking spaces for patrons, staff, childcare center and office, residents, etc.**
- **Staff to provide the Board with information regarding the number of affordable units and the plan for the proposed advisory group.**

20-0306 World War I Memorial Signage - Update and Discussion of Next Steps

The Board was requested to receive an update from staff and discuss next steps in light of recent citizen inquiries pursuant to this commemoration. The current monument dedicated in 1921 by the Junior Order of United American Mechanics commemorated the Durham residents that gave the ultimate sacrifice during WWI 1917-1919. The “Roll of Honor” listed the names of Durham County citizens in alphabetical order with the names separated by race. The names of the African American citizens were listed at the bottom of the order.

Chair Jacobs announced her temporary departure from the meeting and turned it over to Vice Chair Hill.

The Board was in favor of uniting the Roll of Honor by listing all the names in alphabetical order regardless of the individual’s race.

20-0352 Administration Building Renovations - Construction Phase Update: Project No.: DC 137

The Board was requested to receive an update on the construction phase from DTW Architects and Planners, Ltd. of Durham on the Administration Building Renovations located at 200 E. Main Street. The purpose of this update was to follow-up on the Capital Improvement Plan discussion previously held with DTW and staff during the June 22, 2020 Regular Session meeting. Questions and concerns were raised about whether the final phases (floors 2 and 3) should be performed and to what extent pursuant to the mechanical, plumbing and electrical system upgrades.

Mr. Manns and Robert Sotolongo, DTW Architects & Planners, Ltd, provided the update on the renovation and options.

The Board discussed their preferences for the different options. Commissioners Reckhow and Howerton spoke in favor of Option 1. Commissioner Carter and Vice Chair Hill were in favor of whichever option provided staff with functional workspaces and clean air in the building.

20-0379 Potential Tax Relief Options for Residents at or below 30% of the Average Median Income

During the June 8, 2020 Regular Session, staff was asked to explore potential tax relief options beyond the current tax exemption programs for residents at or below 30% of the area median income. The current tax exemption programs authorized by the NC General Assembly included the Elderly/Disabled Homestead Exemption, the Circuit Breaker Program (Elderly/Disabled Deferment Program), and the Disabled Veteran Exclusion. In May 2020, the Tax Department, in collaboration with the IS&T Department, launched an online portal that allowed residents to check their potential eligibility for existing tax-exempt programs. In addition to the online portal, staff planned to increase efforts in the following months to expand public awareness of existing tax relief programs.

Dwane Brinson, Tax Administrator, provided the Board with an update on potential tax relief options for residents at or below 30% of the average median income. The three additional options to provide tax relief for residents at or below 30% of the area median income in Durham County were:

1. Longtime Low-Income Homeowner Tax Assistance Grant Program initiated by the Coalition for Affordable Housing and Transit
2. Long-term Payment Deferral Program for residents at or below 30% of the area median income
3. Bolstering participation in the Durham Community Land Trust program

Staff also recommended the Board explore a collaboration with the City of Durham to allocate funds for a housing repair program for long-term homeowners with a household income at or below 30% AMI. While this option did not provide direct tax relief, it would help some longtime residents address home repairs that went undone due to a lack of resources, thus freeing up dollars to support outstanding property taxes. Staff planned to explore this option further and provide additional information to the Board in September. Staff believed a toolbox of these options would help the community and move Durham County closer to its goal of maintaining affordable housing.

Commissioner Reckhow spoke about her concerns regarding the 10-year homeownership threshold and hoped it could be lowered to something more modest or removed.

Chair Jacobs expressed concerns about the fees and interest that would accrue in the Long-Term Payment Plan Deferral Program. She recalled previous discussions about including a check-off box on tax bills to allow residents to contribute to a fund that would help homeowners and defray accrued interest and fees. Bryan Wardell, Assistant County Attorney, confirmed there was no legal impediment to setting up a legitimate nonprofit to collect donations via tax bills to help cover the annual expenditure of deferred interest and fees.

Commissioner Howerton discussed her concerns regarding gentrification.

With respect to program eligibility, Vice Chair Hill believed it was important to consider the amount of time a person had been in the home.

Commissioner Reckhow raised the 10-year requirement in the context of the pandemic and with the consideration of families who had zero income due to job loss. She was in support of working with the Durham Community Land Trust program as well as using a multipronged approach.

Chair Jacobs expressed concerns that the fees and interest that would accrue in the Long-Term Payment Plan Deferral Program could cause residents to be deterred from using the program.

Commissioner Carter believed the Longtime Low-Income Homeowner Tax Assistance Grant Program was the only one that met an urgent financial need of disproportionately high tax increases in historically Black neighborhoods combined with stagnant wages while also helping preserve wealth. She was in support of this program.

Commissioner Carter expressed doubts regarding families participating in the Long-Term Payment Plan Deferral Program and stated it could undermine wealth of long term, low income homeowners by impeding passing down the wealth from one generation to another that could accumulate in one's home.

Commissioner Howerton reminded the Board that the current solution may not be ideal, but it was the beginning of the road in terms of finding alternative solutions.

Commissioner Reckhow moved, seconded by Commissioner Howerton, to suspend the rules.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Reckhow moved, seconded by Commissioner Howerton, to authorize staff to proceed with the development of the Long-term Tax Deferral Program and to direct staff to proceed with implementing the donation option and returning to the Board with more information if needed as well as continue to vet the option of working further with the Durham Community Land Trust program.

The motion carried as follows:

Noes: Carter, Jacobs

Ayes: Hill, Reckhow, Howerton

Directive: Brian Wardell to research whether the County could set up a foundation (rather than a nonprofit) to collect donations via tax bills to cover the annual expenditure of deferred interest and fees.

20-0378 Federal Aviation Administration Grant Offer Acceptance - Raleigh/Durham Airport Improvement Grant

On Monday, July 13, 2020 the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority received correspondence and a Grant Offer from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). On Thursday, July 16, 2020 the Airport Board of Directors accepted the grant. The grant provided an amount of \$6,881,956 in entitlement funding that the Authority would use to reimburse previously expended funds for the reconstruction of Taxiway F.

The Board was requested to suspend the rules and accept the grant on the part of Durham County. The grant documentation must be fully executed by Durham County and returned to the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority, in advance of the FAA's deadline of September 1, 2020.

Commissioner Reckhow moved, seconded by Vice Chair Hill, to suspend the rules.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Reckhow moved, seconded by Commissioner Howerton, to accept the grant on the part of Durham County.

The motion carried unanimously.

20-0351 Removal of Citizen Board Member Due to Poor Attendance

The Board was requested to remove the following member in keeping with the Attendance Policy approved by the Board of County Commissioners in August 2014. "If an appointee has

absences (excused or unexcused) which constitute more than 50% of the meetings in any calendar year or three (3) consecutive unexcused absences or five (5) consecutive excused absences in any calendar year, he or she is obligated to resign.”

- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council - Lesly Gonzalez

The Clerk’s Office was notified of the absences and made attempts to contact the board member. There was no response.

Commissioner Howerton moved, seconded by Commissioner Reckhow, to suspend the rules.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Howerton moved, seconded by Commissioner Reckhow, to remove Lesly Gonzalez from the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council due to poor attendance.

The motion carried unanimously.

20-0384 Discussion on the Joint Durham Community Safety & Wellness Task Force

This item was postponed to the Monday, August 10th Regular Session for the sake of time.

Meeting Recess

Chair Jacobs announced that the meeting would be recessed for 30 minutes to provide everyone a brief break before the Closed Session.

Meeting Reconvened

Chair Jacobs announced the reconvening of the meeting at 4:00 p.m. with Commissioners Howerton and Reckhow present.

Closed Session

20-0382 Closed Session

The Board was requested to adjourn into Closed Session to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee, pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6).

Commissioner Reckhow moved, seconded by Commissioner Howerton, to adjourn to Closed Session.

The motion carried unanimously.

Reconvene from Closed Session

Chair Jacobs announced that direction was given to staff.

Adjournment

Commissioner Howerton moved, seconded by Commissioner Reckhow, to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tania De Los Santos", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tania De Los Santos
Administrative Assistant