



## **DURHAM COUNTY LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST**

**March 16, 2018**

### **Meeting Notes**

- Present:** Wendy Jacobs, Chair; James Hill, Vice Chair; Commissioners Heidi Carter, and Brenda Howerton (Commissioner Ellen Reckhow participated by phone)
- Legislators Present:** Senator Mike Woodard and Representatives MaryAnn Black, Graig Meyer and Marcia Morey
- Others Present:** Wendell Davis, Jodi Miller, Deborah Craig-Ray, Claudia Hager, Jay Gibson, Gayle Harris, Drew Cummings, and Michelle Parker-Evans

Chair Jacobs welcomed everyone and thanked the legislators for coming to the breakfast.

The Chair shared the County's three general priorities for this year which included creating a systematic approach to education and workforce development—a cradle to career pipeline. She noted that Durham had great jobs, but continued to have challenges with having Durham residents prepared to fill them. There was a need to bring everyone together (schools, community colleges, businesses, etc.). The second priority was early childhood education 0-8, especially 0-3. Every child should have the opportunity for quality pre-K. The third priority dealt with the aging population “silver tsunami” – 65 and older. There were limited resources from the State. Durham would like to be an age-friendly community.

### **Opening Comments from Legislators**

Senator Woodard commented that there may be something on gun legislation in the short session – the revenue picture was fairly solid and may not be addressed in this session.

Representative Morey stated that Durham had a lot to be proud of. She spoke about the community forum on early childhood and noted that she was “sold” on universal pre-K. She expressed concern about the courts and sensible gun regulation. She added that county commission resolutions were helpful to show support.

Chair Jacobs offered a gun control resolution from the Board of County Commissioners.

Representative Meyer noted how some other counties were handling school safety. Stanley and Rockingham counties were instituting armed volunteers. He was concerned about Voter ID and the right to hunt and fish and amend state income tax. He mentioned a Bill to allow Sheriff's Departments to collaborate more easily that should be supported by the Board.

Representative Black commented on a request from schools regarding affordable housing for teachers. The legislators felt it should be jointly sponsored when it went before the full Assembly. Chair Jacobs commented that the matter was time sensitive due to funding; and the Board fully supported the Bill. Representative Black mentioned that several counties already had the Bill in North Carolina and did not have any problems.

### **Brief Overview of Legislative Items**

Chair Jacobs gave an overview of the following items:

#### **1) Update on Durham-Orange Light Rail Project**

The project has been given approval to move forward with design and engineering and will be at 50% of this by the end of March (spending \$100 million on this) and is now eligible for a Full Funding Grant Agreement from the Federal Transportation Administration. We hope to enter into a FFGA with the FTA in September 2019, ahead of schedule. We are also moving forward with the Wake-Durham commuter rail project. Representative Meyer expressed disappointment that the proposal was very different from the original proposal. Chair Jacobs responded that Durham County had no control over state funding. She assured him that we would be looking at every way possible to fund all projects. Commissioner Reckhow interjected that in addition to Orange County having some projects deleted, Durham County also had some projects deleted. Representative Meyer encouraged the Board to talk about the shift of funds to local taxpayers to help citizens understand. The circulator being removed was a contentious issue according to Representative Meyer.

Representative Black questioned the Duke status with light rail. She was concerned about it running by the Emergency Room. Chair Jacobs stated that it would be elevated. Commissioner Reckhow added that there had been continual work with Duke over the past five years. Chair Jacobs emphasized that the right of way donations would be important to reach the funding goals.

Commissioner Howerton noted that infrastructure dollars were being sent to the State and the State would decide where the dollars were spent.

#### **2) Juvenile Justice Reform**

Juvenile Justice Reform "Raise the Age" (was a 2017 Durham County Priority item) S.L.2017-57(S 257) Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act "Raise the Age" included in the 2017 state budget, increases the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to include crimes committed by 16 and 17-year olds, effective December 2019. This bill impacts Durham County which is one of two county run juvenile detention facilities in NC. Durham County is seeking opportunities for partnership and funding for planning and building a new facility.

Commissioner Howerton stated that the NCACC needed statistics around disconnected youth for the THRIVE conference.

Chair Jacobs stressed the help needed from legislators around setting up a regional Youth Home. Jodi Miller briefly described the scope involved in expanding the current Youth Home. It would involve doubling the current 14 beds and additional facility uses as well assessment space. Representative Black asked her to think about community college courses and therapy so that individuals would be trained when they leave the facility.

Commissioner Carter mentioned mental health updates from Alliance Behavioral Health lobbyists. Senator Woodard commented that there may be some movement in the short session or possibly a special session.

Representative Meyer and Commissioner Howerton departed the meeting.

Vice Chair Hill questioned whether there was a chance a having semi-automatic guns go thru a permitting process. Representative Black asked that it be sent over in draft. He also asked about the chances of removing the lottery cap. Senator Woodard noted that it had been discussed.

Manager Davis reiterated the importance of early childhood work and welcomed the support from the State.

Chair Jacobs thanked the Delegation for coming. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

V. Michelle Parker-Evans  
County Clerk to the Board