



*Progressive Democrats of Orange County*

## **Municipal Candidate Questionnaires**

**\* near the name signifies PDOC has endorsed this candidate**

### Carrboro Mayor and Town Council

**\*Damon Seils - Mayor**

Michael Benson - Mayor

**\*Barbara Foushee - Town Council**

**\*Danny Nowell - Town Council**

Randee Haven-O'Donnell - Town Council

**Jacquelyn Gist - Town Council**

### Chapel Hill Mayor and Town Council

Hongbin Gu - Mayor

**\*Pam Hemminger - Mayor**

Zachary Boyce - Mayor (not eligible for endorsement/Not a Democrat)

**\*Karen Stegman - Town Council**

Vimala Rajendran - Town Council

**\*Paris Miller Foushee - Town Council**

Adam Searing - Town Council

**\*Camille Berry - Town Council**

[Robert Beasley](#) - Town Council (not eligible for endorsement/Not a Democrat)

[Jeffrey C. Hoagland](#) - Town Council (not eligible for endorsement/Not a Democrat)

### Hillsborough Mayor and Town Commissioner

\*[Jenn Weaver](#) - Mayor

\*[Kathleen Ferguson](#) - Commissioner

[Anna Linvill](#) - Commissioner (not eligible for endorsement/Not a Democrat)

\*[Robb English](#) - Commissioner

### Mebane Mayor and City Council

\*[Montreena W. Hadley](#) - City Council

### Chapel Hill/Carrboro Board of Education

\*[Mike Sharp](#)

\*[George Griffin](#)

\*[Riza Jenkins](#)

[Tim Sookram](#)

## Carrboro Mayor and Town Council

### **\* Damon Seils - Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Carrboro Mayor  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Carrboro? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

Two of my top priorities are (1) pandemic recovery and (2) adopting and implementing the Carrboro Connects comprehensive plan. First, on the topic of pandemic recovery, we have met some immediate needs in Carrboro by dedicating \$1.3 million in local and state/federal funds to the countywide emergency housing assistance program and more than \$300,000 in emergency grants and loans to local businesses. As we begin allocating funds from the American Rescue Plan Act—\$6.8 million coming to Carrboro alone—housing security and local business support should continue to be budget priorities. We should build on these commitments by using the federal rescue funds to support local nonprofit groups that are providing critical community services. The federal rescue funds also present an opportunity to identify systems and processes that should change for the long term to support community resilience and foster community engagement. For example, we should explore a pilot participatory budgeting process or other meaningful engagement mechanism in which community members participate directly in decision making about how to use the rescue funds. This experience would inform future efforts to engage community members in identifying and prioritizing public spending projects. Second, I have long advocated that decisions about long-term growth and development in Carrboro should be guided by a community-driven comprehensive plan. We are now deep into the Carrboro Connects comprehensive planning process. Once adopted, Carrboro Connects will guide decisions over the next 20 years on our greatest challenges, from growth and development to affordable housing to climate change. A key area of the plan is land use. Today, we have a land use ordinance that is outdated in many ways and that largely promotes a sprawling, suburban form of development. We need land use policies that promote more compact, walkable, transit-oriented development and that result in greater variety and quantity of housing opportunities in a community and a region that are under strong growth pressure and have become less affordable.

## **2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

I support maintaining the rural buffer. I also support maintaining the current zoning of Carrboro's extraterritorial jurisdiction and continuing the incremental development of the town's transition areas, consistent with the Joint Planning Land Use Plan, the Northern Study Area small area plan, and the Mapping Our Community's Future report. We should promote (re)development that is compact in form, walkable, and transit-oriented and that is concentrated within the urban core. The rural buffer, the extraterritorial jurisdiction and transition areas, and other elements of the Joint Planning Land Use Plan are important components of accommodating development within the urban services boundary and restricting sprawl outside of it. But these components must be taken together. Erecting unnecessary barriers to development within the urban core simply drives up development pressure outside of it, increases the costs of housing and transportation, undermines progress on our climate goals and our efforts to shift people away from single-occupancy vehicles, and defeats the purpose of the rural buffer to limit sprawl.

## **3. What would Carrboro look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

Carrboro would look like a community that connects its residents to social, civic, retail, health care, and employment opportunities by:

- placing pedestrian, cyclist, and transit user safety and convenience as the highest priority;
- creating a network of bicycle facilities that links neighborhoods to each other, to downtown, and to transit;
- providing high-frequency bus service during peak hours on key corridors; providing frequent, reliable local bus service 7 days a week throughout Carrboro and Chapel Hill; and making frequent regional connections; and
- delineating a "downtown slow zone" by redesigning streets, upgrading sidewalks and bike lanes, installing gateway treatments, and discouraging unsafe driver behavior.

## **4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

At the risk of being overly repetitive, I have to again stress the importance of adopting a Carrboro Connects comprehensive plan that updates our land use policies to promote more compact, walkable, transit-oriented development as the best approach to promoting livability, affordability, and environmental sustainability. Local governments

should adopt and implement policies and plans that reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions. In Carrboro, these efforts should include implementation of the town's Energy and Climate Protection Plan and the Community Climate Action Plan. We are making capital improvements to address climate change, such as energy efficiency upgrades to town facilities. This year, we agreed to a definition for "net zero" buildings by agreeing that new and renovated town buildings will be evaluated in terms of their contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, we should work with other jurisdictions to advocate for changes in state laws and policies, and collaborate in joint efforts to achieve greater impact. One good opportunity for taking an environmental justice approach is the implementation of our Community Climate Action Plan. The town can prioritize projects in the plan that both reduce carbon footprint and support vulnerable and directly impacted communities—such as through home weatherization and other energy efficiency projects in older, less affluent neighborhoods that improve the quality and cost of housing while reducing per capita greenhouse gas emissions. In general, I would like to see more community-first planning, such as the effort undertaken with the Roger's Road community for the Mapping Our Community's Future initiative. Policy making should center communities and groups who historically have been excluded or marginalized. Local governments should work in authentic partnership with these communities and groups to develop a vision and strategy for making change. Mapping Our Community's Future identifies the community's priorities for environmental preservation, affordable housing, and economic opportunity, and it articulates strategies for achieving that vision. Advancing change in this way is likely to be more sustainable, because it emerges from deep community engagement.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

The Triangle region is in a housing crisis characterized by a few main drivers, including lack of supply to meet high and growing demand, lack of variety in types of housing, and a suburban-oriented form of development that exacerbates the lack of supply and promotes a monoculture of single-family homes that are largely accessible only by single-occupancy vehicles. This is a recipe for unaffordability. I was a strong supporter of the Town of Carrboro's recently completed initiative to dedicate a 1.5-cent property tax rate increase entirely to our Affordable Housing Special Revenue Fund, which has enabled us to fund the creation of new affordable units, maintain existing affordable units, and provide emergency rental assistance. Already, this fund has made a big impact, such as through the largest individual grant the town has ever provided to support CASA's Perry Place project on Merritt Mill Road, as well as a large grant to support the Habitat for Humanity project on Cobb Street. The town has also prioritized

grants from the affordable housing fund to support critical home repairs, utility payment assistance, and other efforts that enable residents on low and fixed incomes to stay in their homes. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have allocated \$1.3 million in local and state/federal funds to the county's emergency housing assistance program earmarked for Carrboro residents. For the purpose of achieving the Town of Carrboro's specific adopted policy goals for affordable housing, we are focusing efforts on improving access to homeownership for individuals and families with income between 60% and 115% of the area median income (AMI) and improving access to rental housing for individuals and families with income at 60% of AMI and below. Because of Carrboro's small size, using our affordable housing fund to support housing for individuals and families earning less than 30% of AMI will require leveraging our special revenue fund in partnership with other local governments and nonprofit housing providers. Developing affordable housing at this level requires significant public subsidy through grants, tax credits, and other programs. The amount of subsidy required to make a big impact requires collaboration and coordination between the towns, the county, and nonprofit partners, similar to what we achieved with Perry Place. One important way for local governments to contribute is through the use of publicly owned land. Consistent with the Mapping Our Community's Future initiative and the ongoing partnership between the towns and the county, I support the Rogers Road zoning initiative and other strategies to encourage compatible development (including affordable housing) in the Rogers Road neighborhood, including on a portion of the Greene tract. Meanwhile, the Town Council has also directed town staff to investigate the potential use of other town-owned land for affordable housing.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Carrboro between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

First, we need housing, land use, and transportation policies that lead to more and different types of housing and more and better transportation options that do not require vehicle ownership. As in most social domains—including health care, employment, education, and criminal justice—people of color are disproportionately represented in the communities most affected by housing unaffordability, gentrification, and displacement. Increasing the availability of housing and lowering transportation costs helps lower-income individuals and families gain access to social, civic, and employment opportunities and, therefore, is a key tool for achieving our goals to address racial disparities in wealth, health, and other indicators of well-being. I want to also include a plug for Carrboro's recently established Racial Equity Commission. This community advisory board will make recommendations to the Town Council for short-, medium-, and long-term steps the town can take to address systemic racism, boost

economic mobility and opportunity, and create generational wealth in the Black community.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I place a high priority on being accessible and responsive. In my time on the Town Council, I have arguably been one of the most accessible elected officials in Orange County. I regularly hold open community office hours (currently at about 50 events and counting) to hear from residents about their ideas and needs. I have built relationships with community leaders and organizations to ensure that the decisions I make are in line with our common goal of advancing a progressive agenda for Carrboro and the region. On the subject of workers specifically, among my first accomplishments in office was to revive the Town Council's effort to bring the town's lowest-paid employees up to a living wage. This effort coincided with the launch of the Orange County Living Wage Initiative, and I am glad the town remains a certified living wage employer. I have also been a leader statewide in undoing some of the effects of the anti-LGBTQ, anti-worker House Bill 2 and House Bill 142. We need changes in state law, and I have been working with colleagues in other towns and cities as cochair of the North Carolina chapter of Local Progress—a statewide network of progressive local elected officials—to highlight this issue and organize for change. For example, a couple of years ago, I introduced a resolution in Carrboro to coincide with resolutions in other jurisdictions that called on the General Assembly to raise the minimum wage for all workers, provide for paid leave, empower public sector workers to negotiate the conditions of their employment, and repeal “right to work” laws. For the past few years, I have been working in coalition with Equality NC and the Campaign for Southern Equality, along with Mayor Lavelle and others, to help communities across North Carolina in adopting comprehensive nondiscrimination ordinances. We have been successful in doing this all over the state, from small towns like Hillsborough to big cities like Charlotte. As a result of this work—which is ongoing—today approximately 2 million North Carolinians are now protected by local laws that prohibit discrimination in employment and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and other characteristics.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

## Michael Benson

**Running for Carrboro Mayor  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Carrboro? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

Reconfigure the downtown library project to just parking. The cost has jumped from \$12 million to \$26 million and is rising to over \$50 million. Money that should be put into infrastructure and alternative energy. Support our downtown businesses by having accessible parking. Find solutions to affordable housing versus continuing to have studies.

**2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

It contains development. That is its purpose.

**3. What would Carrboro look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

Light rail to Durham using the existing Norfolk Southern line. Better bicycle lanes including a lane to and from Calvander. Better use of density housing that's included affordable housing. Parking in the downtown for people that need a vehicle and to bring people from the county to our downtown businesses.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

Solar and wind power. Alternative energy. Increase bicycle ridership. Safe sidewalks for walking (lighting improvements). Impress upon the University to turn away from coal.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

The Mayor leads the council and I would appointment Barbera Foushee as the point person to answer this. She is well versed and qualified.



**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Carrboro between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

People of color and low incomes are being pushed out of Carrboro as we write this. People of color, artists, bartenders... the people that are the backbone to this town. we need to find a way to lower the cost of housing and to possibly supplement the cost of some of the basic services.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

By having longer hours more of a full-time mayor than a part-time mayor that works a couple of evenings a week. Accessibility to the people is important.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**\*Barbara Foushee- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Carrboro Town Council  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Carrboro? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

When we resolve the persistent issues affecting our most vulnerable community members, we are able to create sustainable change for all. So addressing priorities through a racial equity lens improves outcomes for all Carrboro residents. Affordable housing and climate change mitigation are equally important within our community. As we consider priorities, we must interweave climate change mitigation into all of our solutions. Globally, we've seen the dire impacts of climate change and we need to act urgently to create policies and take actions to reduce energy usage, conserve water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I will work to address the scarcity of affordable housing and climate change issues by continuing to advocate and educate our community on the importance of the expansion of housing opportunities and how

climate change/environmental justice impacts all of us. Priorities are reflected in the town's budget so I will push for more funding allocation for these areas.

**2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

The rural buffer currently has limited urban sprawl and should stay rural in character with some low-density residential uses. I will continue to advocate for compact, dense housing within Carrboro to help reduce sprawl in the rural buffer. Preserving the rural buffer will take creative thinking in Carrboro's development planning so that new structures can be appropriate for the existing surroundings in scale and in design and minimize environmental impact.

**3. What would Carrboro look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

Connected locally and regionally with public transit options which reduce dependency on individual vehicles. Carrboro already has comprehensive bicycling and greenways plans and we continue to work on more infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians. Funding should be allocated in a way that is supportive of increasing transit services, improvements to current infrastructure and support for new projects. I am also supportive of continuing to look for ways to increase connectivity in Carrboro and to seek funding for greenway development. Given the small scale of Carrboro's budget, we have to partner with larger counties and municipalities to support an integrated mass transit system throughout the Triangle area. Collaboration is key for our local and regional transit picture. There should also be a deep community engagement process prior to making any decision about integrated mass transit to ensure that we would be moving towards an equitable and sustainable solution for everyone. Community education is also an important component as we continue to look for viable solutions that will serve all community members.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

We must advocate and educate our community on how climate change/environmental justice impacts all of us. The Town of Carrboro will continue the implementation of its Community Climate Action Plan and Energy and Climate Protection Plan. Priorities are reflected in the town's budget so I will push for more funding allocation for these areas. Policies that reduce reliance on greenhouse gas emitting vehicles · Creating walkable communities · Partnering with businesses and individuals to invest in energy

conservation (create incentives) · Invest in weatherization and preservation of affordable homes which save energy costs for the economically disadvantaged. · Protect water supply Communities of color will bear the brunt of the effects of climate change and should be at the table as policies are developed and implemented; we can't leave anyone behind. Deep community engagement and an inclusive process will assure that they have seats at the climate table.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

We need to increase options, across socioeconomic statuses, particularly for low to very low wealth and the missing middle class, (i.e. housing for our extremely low income community members about \$19,000 for an individual and about \$27,000 for a family of four in Orange County). I would start with engaging local elected officials to activate land use policies that would allow for this housing. I would also work with community leaders and developers to identify funding sources for the effort. In considering suitable land for this housing, we must keep in mind critical factors, such as proximity to public transit which enable people with low access to financial resources to engage in the community as well as minimizing environmental impacts.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Carrboro between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

Persistent income equality is a real problem for people of color as well as the overall economy. This gap is a result of very complex interactions among social, historical, political and institutional forces. My plans are: continuing to advocate for increasing the minimum wage, advocating for additional support for education, and helping working families to build assets by enabling investment in housing and employment opportunities.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I have always had a very high level of activism within the community as I worked with various organizations such as the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., OWASA Board of Directors, Blue Ribbon Mentor Advocate and My Brother's and Sister's Keeper of Orange County to name a few. I seek input through engagement and ongoing conversations with town staff when possible and community members. This is

how I keep my finger on the pulse of the community; to know community you have to be in community. Accountability and transparency are key when you are serving in an elected office.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**\*Danny Nowell- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Carrboro Town Council  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Carrboro? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

My two main policy priorities are 1) to radically expand the stock of affordable housing by placing subsidized rentals, denser market-rate multifamily rentals, and "missing middle" ownership opportunities like duplexes, townhomes, and condos at the center of our town's growth and planning priorities and 2) to use every available means to decrease car dependency and increase transit service and use. More broadly, I see these two goals as the most important two steps to developing the denser, economically vibrant community we need to develop on our already existing footprint in order to meet our climate and equity goals. With our town presently oriented around single family homes, our development process defaults to a sprawl-based model, while working people without the capital to buy into our increasingly unattainable housing market do not enjoy the convenience or sustainability of the "15 minute city" many of our affluent residents live in. The economic ramifications of this status quo for our town are very real: as property taxes drive so much of our revenue, we are increasingly beholden to raising taxes on a class of assets fewer and fewer people have access to, when we need to be pursuing means to stimulate local business and adding homeowners to the equity pool in the currently non-existent middle of the market. Ultimately, climate change demands that we radically re-orient our process of building towns to make more connected, diverse, and car-free communities; without addressing the racial and economic equity gaps in our housing market, we won't be able to achieve that re-orientation. By systematically and strategically expanding access to transit and housing by placing them at the center of an intentional, vibrant local economic model,

we can address many of the most pressing challenges facing Carrboro over the next term.

## **2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

In a very basic sense, the Rural Buffer constricts the approaches we're able to take to town development, forcing us to make more strategic, sustainable use of our existing development footprint rather than expanding town development outward. Ultimately, as my previous answer indicates, I think this approach is what climate realism demands of our growth approach regardless; in the long-term, I am not persuaded the Rural Buffer moves our community closer to just and equitable outcomes, but it does present us with the opportunity to model responsible and sustainable infill development that still preserves Carrboro's unique character.

## **3. What would Carrboro look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

Ultimately, most important to me is that residents twenty years from now are not using their cars on a day-to-day basis, or have at least reduced car use so much that they might feasibly achieve car independence by 2050. This would have to mean radically expanded transit service in current high-density corridors, and a significant reinvestment in bike and pedestrian structures in our economic centers like downtown. It would have to mean a massive investment in regional commuter transit as it presently exists, and the rebuilding of local coalitions for larger structural changes like light rail. I'd like to see Carrboro pursue "complete streets" that reduce the amount of impermeable surface dedicated to car travel and feature protected routes for bikes and pedestrians and re-planted green areas. Finally, many more Carrboro residents would need to be able to work and shop within their neighborhoods—our zoning and development strategy must give people the opportunity to be economically present in the community without relying on their cars.

## **4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

I think both strategic, sustainable upzoning and the "complete streets" approach offer significant benefits for improving our land use and environmental justice outcomes. As discussed in previous answers, zoning more of our town for small business and multi-family residences moves us toward a denser, more economically diverse town that might be able to radically reduce our carbon emissions and car dependency, while

developing more "complete streets" will allow more Carrboro residents to enjoy the bikeability and walkability many affluent residents already do. We know that negative externalities from car use disproportionately affect people of color: cars are expensive and require a significant investment upfront to even have access to; workers of color are likelier to face longer commutes, which are associated with a host of negative health outcomes; car infrastructure like roads, highways, and parking lots has historically been developed in ways that have broken up working class communities of color; owing in large part to that historical development, people of color are far likelier to be injured or killed in collisions. By reducing the centrality of cars to our planning and daily economic activity, we're limiting a major driver of racial inequities. As for ensuring that zoning and development does not exacerbate gentrification or offload negative environmental consequences onto communities of color—as has happened too often in places like the Northside and Rogers Rd communities—I am committed to actively "organizing from office" to stay in touch with affected communities on the ground and ensure that the housing and businesses we develop are restoring equity to the working class people of color who've built this town and staffed its major employers.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

I believe 30-60% AMI needs to be the priority range for all affordable housing, receiving the bulk of subsidies for both rentals and community partners like Empowerment and the Community Home Trust maintaining affordable ownership stock with assistance from the Affordable Housing Special Action Fund. While I think we can work to integrate these goals into our market-rate developments to make sure we're weaving these units into our community in a meaningful way, we also have a huge opportunity in the Greene Tract to develop a community on public land that places this housing at the very center of its strategy.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Carrboro between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

Most immediately, expanding opportunities for affordable housing will allow more working class people of color to build wealth and equity rather than struggle to stay afloat with fundamental expenses. Increasing opportunities for the development of local businesses, and using town resources to support BIPOC owners and businesses that provide hourly employees with meaningful benefits or co-operative models, will help to people without private investment-level capital build meaningful equity. More broadly,

the driving aim of my integrated development plan is essentially to un-redline our town—to build a town where a more economically and racially diverse group of neighbors share services and community without having to commit too much money to basic living expenses to save and thrive.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I am very committed to the approach of "organizing from office." My campaign has run a larger field operation than any other Carrboro municipal campaign I'm aware of because we believe we need to build new, dynamic, accountable structures of solidarity that represent the perspective of every resident, not just the ones with the resources and means to participate in the usual places. I will continue to work relentless to reach neighbors outside of our town's usual power structures, and to seek the input of coalition partners that have been working with our underrepresented communities for a long time already.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**Randee Haven-O'Donnell**

**Running for Carrboro Town Council  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Carrboro? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

Community Action Priorities 1a. Racial Equity and Social Justice 2a. Climate and Environmental Action Racial equity and social justice in tandem with climate and environmental action policies, practices and procedures perfectly interface and are core for the intersectionality of all other policies. 1b. Why? I have been dedicated to racial equity and social justice throughout my career in my work a science educator, diversity trainer, community activist and representative. Since being on Council, On every platform I have fought vigorously to establish policies that embrace and reflect race

equity and justice. During my time on Council, in concert with colleagues, I have taken an active role in building our hometown into a caring place where race, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, economic status, physical, emotional or intellectual ability do not determine outcomes for access or success. 1c. My plans and strategies align with and are not limited to the race equity and social justice work in progress as a Carrboro Race Equity Commission co-creator and liaison with Council member Barbara Foushee and the Town of Carrboro Race and Equity Officer and GARE Anita Jones-McNair, Town of Carrboro Race and Equity officer we framed the establishment of Carrboro's Race Equity Commission. Barbara and I serve as liaisons to the newly formed Commission. Key to the strategy to advance race equity is to ensure that we help build a strong Racial Equity Commission. I am also an active member of the NC DEQ Equity and Justice Advisory Board. In that capacity, my work extends across the state in an effort to inform NC DEQ decision-making and policy for equitable and just actions, engagement and addressing the cumulative, disparate impacts of race, "religion or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."

<https://deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/environmental-justice/secretarys-environmental-justice-and-equity-board-0> 2b. Why climate and environment? Inspired by Senator Gaylord Nelson's proposal for Earth Day, I helped plan and run an Earth Day Celebration that first year and continue to do so. This year, I paired my dual priorities at two Carrboro events. April 22, the Town of Carrboro, Climate Reality Orange County Chapter, and Present Day on Main sponsored an Earth Day Celebration and Plant-Based Food Footprint Food Sale. This event focused on the importance of a small food footprint of a plant-based diet. As an extension of my sustained work the local living economy, the last three years I have been networking with non-traditional Black, Brown, BIPOC, business entrepreneurs and their enterprise. PDOM and a majority of Black, Brown and BIPOC vegan and vegetarian food vendors participated in the Earth Day event. The vegan and vegetarian food vendors joined me again, June 24th for Carrboro's PRIDE Food Rodeo and Dance Party. The Earth Day and PRIDE events highlight a perfect fusion of my dual passion for people and the planet. The event cross-pollinated my values and priorities on race equity, justice and climate action. 2c. Plans and strategies: I have long been an activist working on climate action and environmental sustainability. On climate and environmental action my continued work plans and strategies include and are not limited to: Education: Engage and educate the community to lean-in and address the addiction to fossil fuels and shift habits of living through the continued implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CCCAP). As a liaison to the Environmental Advisory Board and the Climate Action Plan Task Force, I envisioned, implemented and continue the work to implement the CCCAP by designing aligned educational outreach modules. I was the architect and curriculum content planner, I co-constructed the presentations with community module model builders. The



current library of Carrboro Community Climate Action education outreach modules consist of: Emissions: Transportation, Energy Efficiency (including Solarization and Weatherization), Ecosystem Preservation, and Protection, Food Footprint and Emissions, Composting: Community and Neighborhood, In development: Stormwater and Repurposing Stuff Energy Efficiency: electrification and solarization, solarizing the roof and parking deck of the 203 Project. Implement community-wide, neighborhood championed, energy efficiency and weatherization audits and funding for upgrading homes for efficiency. Design thinking public and private partnerships continue work with community members to engage with solar contractors to formulate potential “out of the box” pilot programs testing the viability of communitizing solar linked households to arrays in parks and open space in anticipation of micro-grid, compact recirculation of solar energy. Energy Localization: I support and will advocate the localization of solar, geothermal and wind power in the development of local energy micro-grids and micro-grid neighborhood sharing based on renewable, regenerative energy. I will continue the work I have done and presently do to address the climate red alert priority and its existential challenge. Transit: As a liaison to the Chapel Hill Transit Partners, I have learned about the inner workings and decision-making that goes into mass, public transit design thinking. I recommend scaling-up multi-modal transit BRT, and on-demand and mobility on-demand targeted service through public-private microtransit partnerships.

## **2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

Having a rural buffer is key to comprehensive planning, zoning and permitting concentrated, dense development and growth within the urban services boundaries. The rural buffer is an interjurisdictional agreement established by Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Orange County to coordinate land use plans, set boundaries to contain urban sprawl, protect watersheds and the environment from the impacts of unbridled growth. A rural buffer is essential as we know compact urban design, development and transit is sound environmental stewardship.

## **3. What would Carrboro look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

I expect in twenty years I will be able to affordably travel anywhere in the metro regions of the state with clean energy efficiency, safety, ease, and reliability. I intend and will work so that twenty years from now the 2014 concept of complete streets is complete in Carrboro. Complete streets will provide the safety and mobility on a human scale, it will have freed up former roadways to fully accommodate pedestrians and cyclists and whatever electric scooters/carts will exist by then. Carrboro will have built out her

bikeway system with bike paths, bike boulevards, pedestrian sidewalks, formal and informal community paths and trails networked into the Mountains to Sea Trail, and our regional greenways. I expect a tight network of public and private microtransit partnerships, that single occupancy vehicles are few, preferably completely obsolete. That there is a dynamic, multi-modal transit system consisting of and not limited to: electrified BRT, service for mobility on-demand, Carrboro is a hub for rail to Hillsborough east to Durham, RDU airport and Raleigh, and west to Greensboro, and southwest to Charlotte.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

First and foremost it is important that our land use policies reflect race equity and justice in zoning, set-backs and permitting. We have work to do on our land use policies so that they mitigate the cumulative impacts that disparately impact neighborhoods and communities of color. Doing so would ease the addition of more diverse housing stock to include providing PeeWee and Tiny homes, for example, for folks who are below or at 30% AMI. We need to constrain and/or restrict mega square foot single family home building and development. The goal is to have a more sound, energy efficient, gentler footprint on our ecosystem. Our policies must reflect and support downtown density, which adds to the robust vibrancy that bolsters the local living economy and is an efficient land use. Dense, compact, appropriate square foot, right-sized, human-scale housing with expanded storey height is a wise use of the urban footprint. Density downtown, is a sound land use. The consolidation and densification of the downtown urbanized area can serve to protect and preserve the natural habitats and wildlife corridors and their ecosystem. Sprawl and suburbanization guts the environment. I urge density, compact, and 5 storey height housing, especially for downtown. Facility improvements and all town building must be green planned, designed and built. We must move to electrification and plan to be a microgrid renewable, regenerative energy efficient community. Consider our big sister neighbor, Durham, and how well compact, dense housing has proactively re-ignited and re-emerged downtown Durham and freed up spaces that are dedicated to amenities that enhance downtown urbanized living on a appropriate square footage, right sized, human scale. Facility improvements must be green planned, designed and built. We must move to electrification and plan to be a microgrid renewable, regenerative energy efficient community.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

Fortify work with the non-profits, implement the recommended plans to expand a diverse stock of affordable housing. Expand housing stock serving the most vulnerable and housing insecure at or below 30% AMI. Conserve and preserve the current stock of affordable housing; expand housing stock that serves the 30% AMI community and the housing voucher programs. Consider “lifetime housing” providing housing security that meets individual and family needs which expand and contract over the course of a lifetime. Meet affordable housing stock needs at or below 30% AMI with the inclusion of PeeWee, Tiny Homes, auxiliary dwellings designated for 30% - 50% AMI, modular homes, to provide dignified housing for the housing insecure. Pursue public/private financial partnership opportunities and funding and affordable housing incentives; ex: payment in lieu of contributions to the Affordable Housing Special Review Fund. Provide resources for maintenance and to sustain and up fit the affordable housing stock. Address utility costs needs by providing heating/cooling energy efficiency, weatherization resources and subsidies. Consider our big sister neighbor, Durham, and how well compact, dense housing has proactively re-ignited and re-emerged downtown Durham and freed up spaces that are dedicated to amenities that enhance downtown urbanized living on a appropriate square footage, right sized, human scale. Durham Council overwhelmingly supported an Affordable Housing Investment Plan that will use a municipal bond to provide housing security for low-to-moderate income residents.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Carrboro between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

Carpe diem. In this time of economic uncertainty it is a time of innovation, thinking outside of the box and meeting the business interests and skill development opportunities of those who have been disproportionately impacted by racial disparity. I continue to be relentlessly local and urge recirculating our dollars within our local living economy and advocates a living wage. As liaison the economy Carrboro Economic Sustainability Commission, the last three years, I have worked with Black, Brown, BIPOC artists and business owners, many of whom have non-traditional, entrepreneurial enterprises. I have been networking with the BIPOC community of businesses creating opportunities to showcase their businesses and highlight their business and vending at our Carrboro events. I am also a member of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP Economic Development Board, together, we have been working on a broader scale plan to uplift the financial needs of the Black, Brown, BIPOC business needs. A major drawback for non-traditional entrepreneurs is business space. This is how I plan to address it. I am a strong supporter of the Rogers Road Mapping Our Community Future Green Tract mixed use recommendations. I am also a strong advocate for the potential development of small square footprint residential live-work

homes in the historic Rogers Road community. The Town of Carrboro Council and planning staff are exploring ways properties in this neighborhood, within the Carrboro jurisdiction, can have the flexibility for live-work expanding Black, Brown, BIPOC business opportunities and the local living economy. Additionally, the Town of Carrboro has property on Old 86 that can be reimaged and designed as a business accelerator and maker space. It would be awesome to establish space for a non-traditional entrepreneurs guild for trades, crafts, artisans, and commercial prep kitchens, to name a few.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

All of my work and engagement in community activism has been co-constructed with community. I am a strong advocate of participatory democracy and governance. As a public school teacher and former President of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Association of Educators, I have lived experience navigating employee concerns and lobbying the local School Board and state legislators for cost of living salary and benefits. All workers need a safe and responsive space and forum to share their concerns without retribution from their supervisors and/or peers. Along with Council plans to embrace more expansive participatory governance for Carrboro residents, we need to be mindful of how best to authentically engage and bring voice to town employees. Council will work with the Town Manager to identify the best strategies to engage and elicit input from town employees that meets their level of comfort while assuring genuine concerns are met. The Town Manager and Council may then co-construct a model and pilot it for effectiveness. That said, I have experience with town employees who have raised concerns and wanted to know the most effective way to address them. I see the need for a strategy that ensures the employee's sense of safety and security as it appropriately addresses the matter. For town residents, as a community activist and Council member, I think of input as one directional. My classroom experience has taught me the value of sharing personal experiences and the truths. It means going to the people, all people. It means neighborhood conversations taking place in neighborhood spaces. It means bringing neighborhoods together, sharing and interweaving conversations into a diverse fabric of community. I envision a robust listening and dialogue platform that elevates the voices and stories of folks in the community and serves as a community building tool as it engages and brings life to the stories and truths of community folk. Part of this work has begun with GARE training, the Comprehensive Plan: Carrboro Connects and the newly launched Race and Equity Commission, of which I am a liaison. I will seek to further enact engagement of this kind as it has the potential to form relationships beyond Council to include those amongst neighbors and amongst neighborhoods. We are all Carrboro.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

## **Jacquelyn Gist**

**Running for Carrboro Town Council**

**Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Carrboro? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

I am proud of my work helping to lead Carrboro as we have grown and changed while maintaining our sense of place and community. I look forward continuing to help lead Carrboro as we work to live up to the values we share. I am excited by the hard work done by the Carrboro Comprehensive Plan Task Force and am looking forward to helping bring their work to life. I have said that the Comprehensive Plan will allow us to translate our professed values to our built environment. The 2 top policy priorities, as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan Task Force Report, must be Equity and Inclusion and mitigating climate change. Some of my plans and strategies for these are outlined in my answers to other questions. To successfully meet both of these goals economic development and increased community engagement are key. Increase Economic Development; (In addition to the development of the Entrepreneurs Village outlined below) Work to bring Think Tanks to Carrboro. We are perfectly situated for Social Science research organizations and consulting firms that can draw on the research, expertise, and graduates of our outstanding area universities. Carrboro's progressive values, vibrant arts, food, and music scenes are a natural draw for think tank and consulting firm professionals. Create density bonuses for commercial development to include affordable space for small businesses and start ups. Work with the appearance commission to revise the town ordinance to allow for a greater range of design and material to encourage creative commercial development. Allow a greater range of pop-ups and food trucks to add to the vibrancy of downtown. Make downtown Carrboro a destination by working with business owners to create a cohesive Carrboro feel and appearance by fixing sidewalks, creating planters, adding awnings, and installing public art. Increase Community Engagement Increase citizen participation on advisory boards and commissions by continuing to hold meetings remotely after the pandemic. This will allow more people to serve by eliminating the need for a rush through dinner, find child care, or find transportation. iPads can be provided to those who may not have access to

a computer. Hold town council listening sessions and meetings in neighborhoods throughout the town. Install kiosks around downtown and in neighborhoods to allow people to share ideas, give feedback and request services. Hold pop up events in the town parks and at the Farmer's Market to get community feedback and vision Engage neighborhoods, including multi family neighborhoods in participatory budgeting for their communities.

## **2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

When the Rural Buffer was adopted in 1986/87 it was to preserve agricultural land, open space and natural resources by not extending water and sewer and by only allowing rural residential housing. While the buffer does protect rural character and natural resources when it was enacted it also drove up the cost of buildable land in the towns and added to the cost of housing. Town policies can be much like a Rubik's Cube- getting one side right often messes up the other sides, this is the case with the Rural Buffer. It is time to revisit the Rural Buffer with a closer eye. The process of enacting Carrboro's Comprehensive Plan gives us an opportunity, while working with OC and CH, to re-examine the rural buffer. Determining which areas truly are environmentally sensitive and need to be protected and which are not will allow for further more dense development in designated clusters which can be located near transportation corridors to provide public transit.

## **3. What would Carrboro look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

In twenty years Carrboro will maintain and enhance our sense of place and community through an improved transportation system. I support continuing to expand and improve our sidewalks, public transit and bike ways. Carrboro residents will be able to easily get to other towns in the Orange County and the Triangle using BRT. By having more people out and about and interacting with each other our sense of community grows. I hope that there will be an electric shuttle service, ( owned by a local entrepreneur who received a small business loan from the town) making loops through Carrboro's northern neighborhoods to bring people to town for the Farmer's Market or an evening out on weekends and evenings. This service would add to our local economy as well as reduce car dependency.

## **4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

As we move forward with the Comprehensive Plan we have an opportunity to update and fine tune our land use ordinance to truly protect natural resources and mitigate climate change. Policies changes and actions include better protecting our creeks and waterways,advocating with the state to upgrade the building code to allow for the requirement of energy efficient construction that meets LEED standards, require charging stations in all new residential and commercial development ( this was passed this summer) Strengthen our tree protection ordinance and planting more trees in low income communities to reduce heat islands. Too often environmental concerns are used to mask nimbyism or preserve public space for the elite in much the same way that concerns over traffic did in times past.This cynical use of our environmental crisis is particularly disturbing because it can create a false dichotomy of Green vs Equity. When low income and BIPOC communitis are the most likely to suffer from the environmental damage brought on by climate change mitigating climate change IS a social justice issue and the two should not be separated. Carrboro is currently working to upgrade our storm water control ordinance and facilities.I serve as the council liaison to the Storm Water Advisory Commission.My work on the council has involved advocacy for storm water management,affordable housing and equity. As the Storm Water Advisory Commission begins it's work of making recommendations to strengthen the ordinance to control the increased flooding that has come with climate change I will ask that they work along side of our Affordable Housing Advisory Board to understand the impact of their recommendations on affordability and work together for solutions that protect our environment and support housing affordability. I have already spoken to and gained the support of the AHAB chair to begin this collaboration.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development?What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

I strongly support the Rogers Road Mapping Our Community's Future plan for using part of the Greene Track for mixed use including affordable housing,I also support building Pee Wee homes on the Greene Track and other town owned sites.We need to target AMI levels below 60% including below 30%. I am excited about the concept of Pocket Neighborhoods,small clusters of small and tiny homes containing 10 or fewer units that include shared amenities and common space ,much like existing co-housing communities, I have recently been in conversation with a local architect who is working to design these projects. I have supported and will continue to support projects such as the CASA homes on Merritt Mill Rd and the apartments for Club Nova members. I was excited to vote for the new Pee Wee Homes to be built on Hill St.We should allow and encourage the use of under underutilized properties such as the parking lot on the corner of Sweet Bay and Roberson, Carrboro Plaza ,underutilized parking lots for

existing apartment complexes and properties along Hwy 54 corridor for further development if it includes at least 30% units affordable to families/individuals earning 60% or less AMI. Increased density doesn't have to mean a loss of Carrboro's sense of place or character, I complain I hear regularly about what's happened in our neighboring town. I have been extremely interested to learn of Portland's Better Housing by Design project and its Green Building for affordable housing policy. Learn more at <https://www.portland.gov/bps/better-housing/about-project> We can incorporate lessons from Portland as we move forward including working with our local design community and future homeowners/renters to design sustainable affordable . Allow for the development of auxiliary dwelling units and increased density on existing lots. Increase town funding for the maintenance and preservation of existing affordable housing stock and support local agencies such as EmPOWERment, Community Home Trust, Habitat and others. "Affordability" and "Sustainability" are the key buzz- words used by housing developers when they are applying for permits in our towns; it is what they know we want to hear. Far too often, they fall short of their promise or what they consider "affordable" is not what many families can afford. Recently I had a conversation with a developer who was exploring a project that he said would be "affordable" I ask him if he was willing to give me a price point or AMI % that could be included in his permit-never heard back from him. To ensure an affordable housing stock we need to view all housing development proposals through an affordability lens and hold developers legally responsible for the words they use under oath at public hearings.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Carrboro between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

I initiated Carrboro's Truth Plaque Committee and am proud of the work we done and will continue to do. Examining and telling the whole truth of the experience of the Black community in Carrboro cannot fit onto plaques, however. Decades of racist housing, lending, educational and employment practices created the wealth gap between people of color and white people. In Carrboro's there is a history town zoning and other policies which created and perpetuated the wealth gap. Last spring, as the council was discussing equity, I proposed that we could not move forward with righting past wrongs until we have a full understanding of those wrongs and the role past town governments played in perpetuating systemic racism. I have asked that the town do an exhaustive review of the history of zoning in Carrboro and how it impacted the economic well-being of people of color. The results of this study will inform our actions moving forward. Encouraging and supporting minority owned businesses and entrepreneurship plays an important role in bridging the economic gap and beginning to right past wrongs. I have actively supported and will continue to support Carrboro's recent initiatives such as the



Buy BIPOC campaign and the BIPOC Business Round Table. Affordable housing and affordable workspace are barriers to starting and maintaining a successful business. I have proposed and will continue to work for the development of an Entrepreneur Village. Working with area housing non-profits Carrboro can develop affordable owner-occupied and rental units for people starting their own businesses. The Village Center will include a small business support center as well as a co-working space to encourage and support small local BIPOC businesses. Once established these small businesses will add to the vibrancy and diversity of our local economy. \* the space for # 7 will not allow me to enter more than one line so I am writing my answer here instead. #7 By continuing to engage with all members of our community as we go about our daily lives. That is one of the beauties of living in a true community. I talk with people on the bus, in the store, at town events, in the park, at the Farmers Market- in short whenever I am out and about. For me the hardest part of the stay at home order was not being able to casually engage with people. I know it was for many people. I reach out to people who have an interest in agenda items, quickly respond to emails and phone calls and listen to/learn from the members of the advisory boards that I am liaison to including Human Services, Recreation and Parks, the Arts, The Storm Water Advisory Commission and the Appearance Commission as well as the members of our other task forces, advisory boards and commissions.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

see above

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

# Chapel Hill Mayor and Town Council

## Hongbin Gu

### **Running for Chapel Hill Mayor**

### **Registered Democrat**

#### **1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

My top three priorities are: 1) diversify housing and economic development opportunities; 2) reduce car-centric development, invest in low-carbon mobility and green climate infrastructure; and 3) build strong and inclusive community. These interconnected components of my Chapel Hill Green Recovery plan provides a comprehensive plan and a whole-community approach to bring system-wide changes for a more green, inclusive and resilient future. The misplaced priorities of the past decade have failed us, when we dehumanized housing strategy to maximize units of luxury apartments instead of the housing needs of essential workers, people under 30% AMI, starters and young families. We provided incentive packages and opportunity zone for large cooperations, but offer limited support for local small businesses who are leaving the town in significant number. My economic development strategy does not rely on the “one-big-thing” promised by corporations or on the myth of “trickle-down housing” pitched by luxury apartment developers, but will level the barriers for homeownership and economic development and create a system that will empower people to achieve their aspirations. To enable all different kinds of people to make Chapel Hill their home, I will promote gentle density, allowing townhomes and backyard cottages in our communities. This will diversify our housing supply while preserving the character of our neighborhoods. On the transit corridor, condos and townhomes provide opportunities for homeownership, mobility at a reasonable cost. In the area of economic development, My main focus will be on innovation and small businesses. The year of pandemic is also the year of historic new startups and small business applications. I would love to see in our town a small business incubator, a shared restaurant space, a maker’s place, a media lab.... and training programs for people in the community who want to try their ideas but need a place and handhold to get started. A vibrant economy is a diverse economy. By partnering with university faculties and researchers, we’d like to create an ecosystem with the funding, mentor networks and flexible shared workspaces to make Chapel Hill a vibrant hub of entrepreneurial activities. I will make a special effort to nurture young, female, minority and immigrant entrepreneurs to create the economic diversity that provides vitality and resilience. The plan does not follow a “top-down” approach to grow economy; rather, it will grow our town’s economy from ground up and middle out, strengthening the local community and encouraging upward mobility.

## **2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

Rural buffer is a significant limiting factor for Town's land use planning. The boundary is a joint decision by the County and municipal governments. It puts a hard stop on urban expansion in its effort to protect water quality and agriculture character of the Orange County. Unlike Cary, Apex and other fast growing cities in the Triangle, the Town of Chapel Hill has stayed in its size since 1988. As long as CH remains a desirable place to live, the population of Chapel Hill will continue to grow. It puts ongoing tension on how to manage the increasing density. More people brings the need for more services, more houses, more cars, more parking and more road... a non-solution when the total space is fixed. This is the reason for the need of comprehensive planning. To accommodate higher density, we need diverse housing, reduced car-dependence and multi-modal transportation with reliable transit and bike/walk connectivity, we need amenities, public spaces, green infrastructures and social network to maintain the mental and physical health of individuals and the wellbeing of a community.

## **3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

Every morning, families will safely walk/bike to schools with their kids in protected lanes lined with flowers/trees. There will be no early morning or afternoon traffic congestions around schools. Downtown service workers, teachers, town staff will take a bus near their home near a transit line. Most off-campus UNC students/staff/faculty will take a bus or ride a bicycle to work or go to classes on UNC campus. Professionals work at Duke and RTP can ride a bicycle to work in well shaded greenway. Everyone can hop onto a high-speed bus/trail to go to airport, watch a DPAC performance, or go to downtown Raleigh.

## **4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

- Retrofitting public facilities and public housing to meet energy efficiency building standards. We have delayed/neglected basic maintenance of our facility for too long. This is an urgent issue to tackle while significantly boost our climate goal. • Reduce car dependence: transportation contributes to 1/3 of our GHG emission. This initiative will include sensible parking reform, safe sidewalks, bike lanes and greenway connections, and land use planning with higher density along transit corridor with easy access to jobs, schools and neighborhood stores.

- Community-wide Green recovery initiative: It takes community engagement to tackle big issue of climate change. We can provide funding and tax initiative to make this happen for people to adopt community solar & electric cars/bikes, install a network of storm water green infrastructure of rain garden and harvesting facilities in their back yards, plant trees and community gardens, and to clean creeks and remove invasive species •
- Work with UNC to bring urgency to phase out the coal plant, design sensible housing/mobility/energy strategies that will reduce the University's carbon footprint. It has shown that the black-brown and low-income communities are always the ones subject to the most blunt impact of the climate change. The area in Chapel Hill that's most subject to flooding are the low-income communities, the black-brown and low-income communities usually have much lower tree canopy coverage than the rich affluent communities. Many of affordable housing communities are subject to highway noise and pollution. When the 1200 MLK conditional zoning was being discussed, there was no condition to ensure the community is being protected by safety buffers to shield them out from light, noise and emission pollutants. As Mayor, I'll make sure that the affordable housing development is subject to the same environment protection standards as the market housing development.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

Inclusionary zoning negotiation is only one way to secure affordable housing units, and we were only successful at 80% AMI and above level. We need an all-hands-on-the-deck approach to address the diverse affordable housing needs. Residents of the mobile home parks continue facing the ongoing threat of displacement. It is a threat known to the town for years but without major action. Many residents are essential workers with income below 30% AMI. We need to explore legislative tools to preserve the community, working with the County with land and low/no interest loans to provide a pathway for homeownership and stable housing. For teachers, nurses and civil servants, we need gentle density in a comprehensive plan to provide diverse housing over time. It allows affordable duplexes and triplexes to be built in existing communities without significant impact on the environment or community character. Affordable housing also needs to be supported by affordable transportation with public transit and bike/walk networks to connect housing to work/school and neighborhood access to pharmacy, healthy food, playground and greenways.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

We need to understand the disparity is due to the long history of racial redlining and the current economic policies/conditions that greatly favors the people with resources and high education. We need a comprehensive approach to address the issue from homeownership, income, education, business opportunity aspects. To enable all different kinds of people to make Chapel Hill their home, I will promote gentle density, allowing townhomes and backyard cottages in our communities. This will diversify our housing supply while preserving the character of our neighborhoods. On the transit corridor, condos and townhomes provide opportunities for homeownership, mobility at a reasonable cost. In the area of economic development, My main focus will be on innovation and small businesses. The year of pandemic is also the year of historic new startups and small business applications. I would love to see in our town a small business incubator, a shared restaurant space, a maker's place, a media lab.... and training programs for people in the community who want to try their ideas but need a place and handhold to get started. A vibrant economy is a diverse economy. By partnering with university faculties and researchers, we'd like to create an ecosystem with the funding, mentor networks and flexible shared workspaces to make Chapel Hill a vibrant hub of entrepreneurial activities. I will make a special effort to nurture young, female, minority and immigrant entrepreneurs to create the economic diversity that provides vitality and resilience. The plan does not follow a "top-down" approach to grow economy; rather, it will grow our town's economy from ground up and middle out, strengthening the local community and encouraging upward mobility. In the long term, we need investment in early education for the people of color/people with low incomes to make sure the people have the opportunities of upward mobility. As a town government, I would like to see us strengthen the early education and family support programs for the people of color/low-income community.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I'm a strong believer of transparent, accountable, and RESPONSIVE leadership. I have made myself available to people through my Council career to listen to them to visit their community and to understand their concerns. They always gave me new understands and new perspectives on a complex issue. I'll continue to do so as a Mayor, will engage our town workers and residents for their input. I'd like to be the voice of the voiceless.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**\*Pam Hemminger- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Chapel Hill Mayor  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

1) Taking bold action to meet our ambitious climate goals of being an equitable, resilient and clean energy community before! 2050. The Town of Chapel Hill accounts for a small percent of the energy usage and greenhouse emissions in our community so, to truly achieve our climate goals, we need everyone to participate.

- Motivating the community to take action and make changes
- Advocating at the state and federal level for policies and funding that support our goals

• Committing necessary funds and applying a climate lens to everything we do In April, the Town adopted our first Climate Action & Response Plan and declared a Climate Emergency. The Climate Action Plan identifies five “Top Action Categories”. Within these, focusing on buildings and transportation have been identified as areas where we can have the most impact and get the greatest “bang for the buck” so I am currently focused on efforts to:

- Add solar to the roofs of town facilities like Public Works and Transit
- Create a community solar farm
- Complete bikeways and greenways to support multi-modal transportation
- Green our fleet (including our buses)
- Continuing my leadership on Jordan Lake One Water (JLOW) to improve water quality in the Jordan Lake watershed
- Partnering with the University around their plans for growth, student housing and climate action

2) Diversifying our tax base Chapel Hill property owners pay some of the highest combined property taxes in the state which, because of our high house values, is

forcing many people out of our community and negatively affecting our business community. To take the burden off of residential taxpayers Successes to-date include:

- Working in public-private partnership to redevelop an underutilized part of Rosemary Street and create a biotech/innovation hub to keep UNC spin-offs in town
- Creating a Millhouse Road Enterprise Zone for light industrial companies that will house the Carolina Donor Services' corporate headquarters
- Recruiting Wegmans to take over the former Performance Auto brownfield site
- Getting new Class- A office space in walkable, transit-supported places – like downtown and Glen Lennox – so new and growing companies can stay in Chapel Hill
- Working with Governor Cooper's office and Orange County to bring Well ( 400 jobs) to Franklin Street
- Bringing BioLabs to downtown As a result, since the beginning of my tenure as mayor, we have brought more than 1,000 good-paying jobs to Chapel Hill and projections show that having year-round employees and visitors downtown will bring several million dollars a year in consumer spending for local businesses. New revenues benefit the town, county and our schools and can be used to pay for things we want – like new affordable housing, greenways and parks, arts and recreation.

## **2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

Over 30 years ago, Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Orange County's creation of the rural buffer set us on a path toward environmentally-responsible development by preventing sprawl. It was also an early and visionary response to sprawl's negative effect on climate. We're mostly built out, so we have to be careful how we develop our remaining parcels. Often, especially on our transit corridors, that will mean buildings need to be taller. With good design and planning, this new development can fit well into the fabric of our town while allowing us to retain more green and reduce impervious surface. In 2021, the Town completed Phase 1 of a Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) rewrite by adopting an updated Future Land Use Map (FLUM) which focuses on our transit corridors as the place for denser growth, building places that can have more community amenities and where people can walk, bus, or bike to work and dining and shopping instead of relying on cars. We just saw the results of a housing study we commissioned with UNC, which points to our community's need for more "middle" housing for young professionals, families with small children, and downsizing seniors. The protections it gives to our rural communities, and the role it will play in our town mitigating climate change. We want to be part of the increased vibrancy and economic success of the Triangle and use that energy to build better lives for Chapel Hillians – for those who live here now, and the ones we'll welcome in the future.

### **3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

It is an exciting time to envision our future. My goal is for Chapel Hill to retain the warmth of a small town while promoting a vibrant economy, social equity, high quality of living, and environmental sustainability. Glimpses of that future include:

- A vibrant downtown where year-round employees, visitors, and residents support a thriving, diverse business community and the downtown innovation hub has expanded and is filled with UNC startups and growing companies.
- A well-connected community where people walk, bike, e-bike, and ride the bus more, thanks to completion of a town-wide transportation and recreation network of greenways, multi-use paths, sidewalks, and bikeways laid out in the town's Mobility & Connectivity plan.
- Transit-oriented neighborhoods along major corridors that foster community with green gathering places and support our climate goals by incorporating green building design and green infrastructure.
- New "missing middle," "middle income," and affordable housing that meets the needs of different incomes and life stages and allows people who work here to live here, and people who live here to stay in the place they call home.
- Fun places to be and things to do for everyone -- especially families -- like a splashpad and an inclusive playground, expanded greenways, new green spaces and parks, and more arts, recreation, and festivals. I've been working toward this future as your mayor for the last six years. Under my leadership, the Town has already been putting the following community-created plans into action to make this vision a reality:
  - 2017 Town-wide Mobility & Connectivity Plan
  - 2018 Affordable Housing Strategy, Master Plan and \$10 million affordable housing bond
  - 2021 Climate Action & Response Plan
  - 2021 ReVive Plan for Economic Recovery and Resilience
  - 2021 Downtown Together partnership to reinvigorate downtown
  - 2021 Future Land Use Map (FLUM) UNC has announced that BioLabs, a tech [incubator?] will be bringing new jobs downtown and helping keep UNC spin-offs in Chapel Hill
- We're investing in a new downtown parking deck, to spur redevelopment on Rosemary. Plans are underway for a new wet-lab building at the old Wallace Deck, bike and pedestrian improvements and two new public parks in the area.
- The Town has plans to move forward on twelve mobility plan projects this year to make biking and walking safer and more convenient
- We've approved a new family fun park in town, coming soon.



- We've partnered with UNC on a joint Housing Needs Assessment to make sure we're growing in a way that will let us be the diverse, welcoming place we want to be.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

Land-use planning is also an important part of the Chapel Hill Climate Action & Response Plan I championed, which is aimed at reducing our carbon footprint and building resiliency. The plan focuses heavily on five high impact action areas, three of which relate directly to land use: Sustainable Development, Green buildings, and Green infrastructure. Some of the policies included in the plan that will help Chapel Hill mitigate climate change include:

- Locating density along our major transportation corridors
- Planning for transit-oriented, walkable communities
- Updating our Green Building policies to move buildings toward Net Zero
- Creating a green infrastructure ordinance so that people build with nature's tools
- Improving our stormwater ordinance to reduce flooding and improve water quality
- Protecting our tree canopy
- Converting community buildings to all electric
- Creating a town-wide electric vehicle (EV) charging stations network
- Electrifying our municipal and transit fleets
- Switching to LED lights in parking lots and town athletic fields

Equity and inclusion are at the heart of our plans, and we have been working proactively with communities of color to build resilience and reduce the impact of gentrification on their neighborhoods. We have a team working to implement GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) practices across all our decision-making processes and have just hired a new DEI officer to make sure that we're not only saying we believe in equity and inclusion, but that we're living those principles. One example of our work to reduce the impacts of gentrification on people of color and low wealth neighborhoods has been the Northside Neighborhood Initiative where we have partnered with the Northside neighborhood, Jackson Center, UNC and our non-profit partners. We developed the Rosemary Street Guidelines to make sure we did not surround the neighborhood with tall, massive buildings. We have been planting trees in Northside and other low wealth neighborhoods to reduce the heat index and bring more green canopy.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

Since taking office, I have worked hard to make sure that Chapel Hill is on a path to make solid progress in creating and preserving affordable housing in our community. This has included:

- Initiating and championing the Affordable Housing Strategy and an Affordable Housing Master Plan with development and preservation targets and an on-line dashboard to track our progress.
- Instituting a Town Properties Task Force to identify opportunities for creating affordable housing on town-owned land as a way of reducing project costs
- Passing a \$10 million affordable housing bond
- Instructing our Housing and Community Development staff to review foreclosures abandoned properties to identify new opportunities for preserving affordable housing in Chapel Hill. Based on market data and information gathered from our housing partners, we have been focusing on 80% AMI for homeownership opportunities, 65% AMI and below for rental units. Providing units for 30% AMI and below is the most difficult. We meet this need through the Town's 350 public housing units, which charge rents on a sliding scale, based on a family's ability to pay, but the wait list is very long. Some strategies we're using to add new units at this level is to partner with community organizations to make use of town-owned properties, add units into existing public housing communities as they redevelop, and negotiate with developers to accept Section 8 housing vouchers in their units. We've had success with this approach. For example, there are currently two projects – CASA's Perry Place and 2200 Homestead Road – which will include new units for 30% AMI and below. Both projects utilized town-owned land. The town currently spends \$6 million a year to support affordable housing and, because affordability is about more than housing, we also support a wide range of programs and services such as the fare free transit system and EZ Rider shuttle.

My top housing priorities are to:

- 1) Continue using the "penny for affordable housing: in our tax rate to give grants to our partners and go out for another affordable housing bond when we have the debt capacity to do so.
- 2) Continue advocating for housing that meets the needs of individual earning 65% and under when approving development projects.
- 3) Create strategies and options for individuals living in mobile housing neighborhoods so that they can remain in our community
- 4) Continue support for the Town's Employee Housing Assistance and Master Leasing programs as a way of making it more affordable for employees to live in Chapel Hill.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

- 1) Working to make Chapel Hill more affordable by diversifying our tax base Chapel Hill currently has one of the state's highest combined tax rates ,which exacerbates the wealth gap and has forced some long-term residents to leave our community and prevented younger generations from staying. This is one of the reasons I have been so focused on diversifying our tax base by getting new commercial office and retail space out of the ground. New property taxes from these projects help support Chapel Hill, Orange County, and our schools and can be used to help us pay for things – like more affordable housing, improved transit service – that will help bridge the economic gap.
- 2) Supporting the ReVive Economic Recovery and Resilience Plan We convened an advisory committee of twenty-one diverse business and community members to lay out a long-term plan to create a more diverse and vibrant entrepreneurship and small business sector. Supported by \$650,000 in Chapel Hill ReVive Plan money, this program invests in small business, with special programs for woman- and BIPOC-owned-business, to support a recovery that will lift all parts of our community.
- 3) Focusing on job opportunities and education During my tenure as mayor, we've brought more than 1,000 good-paying jobs to our community. More jobs bring more opportunity and better wages can be a key driver of making housing more affordable. To equip community members to fill these jobs, and the jobs we're working to create, we have programs in place to help individuals of all ages gain access to job training and education. The Town also offers summer internships for low income teens through our Summer Youth Employment program. We're also working with the University and other partners to find a way to to expand opportunities for the internships and apprenticeships that can provide a step up into a good-paying job.
- 4) Encouraging local employers to hire locally and pay a living wage. More than half of the households in Chapel Hill are currently cost burdened by the high cost of housing. In 2016, Chapel Hill became an Orange County Living Wage employer and, while we cannot require local employers to follow suit, we will continue to advocate for them to do so.
- 5) . The Town has implemented other programs – including our Employee Housing Assistance program and a Master Leasing program aimed at making it more affordable for town employees and essential workers to live in Chapel Hill. Along with the University, we recently completed a housing needs assessment and I am hopeful that, as we continue our work together, we can encourage the university, health system, and other large employers to adopt similar programs for their employees too.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I value hearing all sides of an issue so do a lot of reaching out when thinking through decisions or looking for new ideas. This means placing calls or scheduling meetings with affected individuals, community partners, and others to hear what they are thinking about an issue at hand. I also reach out to members of staff, seeking their input and professional expertise to better understand an issue or get answers to my questions and those I hear from members of the community. I also really enjoy being out-and-about in the community talking with folks and have an open door policy to be accessible to everyone. I am fortunate to have worked in a number of different roles in our community over the last 30 years – county commissioner, school board member, board member on various housing nonprofits like Habitat for Humanity, chair of environmental organizations like the Sierra Club. All of that experience and all of those community connections have been invaluable to me when I need to understand the nuances of an issue or bring people together to solve a difficult problem. With so much going on in Chapel Hill, I check in with our community partners to keep my finger on the pulse of our community. That communication has been especially important during COVID as we worked to keep people safe, fed and housed. It's important to me that everyone be heard.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

Zachary R. Boyce

**Running for Chapel Hill Mayor**

**Not a Registered Democrat - We can't endorse**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

My top two policy priorities include establishing a precedent for centering evidence-based policy at the discussion table and addressing demands long overdue for racial equity/restorative justice. These priorities are not mutually exclusive and any solutions required for ameliorating exclusionary functions of exclusively crafted policy

will undoubtedly need interdisciplinary research to counter. Therefore, the strategy is to use my access as a graduate/professional student to the body of cutting-edge research, compounded by that access of my colleagues, in order to center evidence-based solutions in policy implementation during our tenure in the municipal administration if I am elected to serve as mayor.

**2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

Our rural communities are as entitled to the covenant of quiet enjoyment as anyone. Understanding the needs and desires of our rural communities can better enable us to increase access to the more urbanized/metropolitan areas of the Triangle. I think that the community members of the surrounding rural buffers have an important perspective on meeting agricultural needs of the community and state, and that their perspective is as valuable as anyone else's in discussions around public policy development pertaining to land use.

**3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

I envision a thriving community filled with green ways and biking access compounded by a publicly supported transit system with a light rail that connects the triangle research centers as well as all the public research institutions of North Carolina. This will take immediate initiatives divesting from fossil fuel industries and increasing the incorporation of sustainable energy development plans to meet the needs of public transportation while reversing the causes of climate emergency that have too long been a function of exclusionary public policy formation practices.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

I would like to halt any clear-cutting projects for now and in the future in order to evaluate the ecological impacts of any such endeavor. As far as land use and facility improvements go, we must immediately work to minimize the necessity of fossil fuels and replace our infrastructure with solar power, a resource of which scarcity cannot be fabricated merely for economic gain. This will also take intentional collaboration to center the land usage and care practices of our Native American/Indigenous communities that took care of the land for thousands of years before colonizers arrived and disturbed the ecological balances for the last several hundred years in the ways that have directly resulted in climate emergency today.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

Housing is a human right and human rights are not inherently privatized commodities. I don't think it is difficult to read a graph and understand how privatized real-estate development is inherently for profit over human lives. With that said, prioritizing meeting the housing needs of those community members earning between 1%-30% below AMI is the only appropriate starting point.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

We have a responsibility in this community that sits on the hub of knowledge kept within the public research institution to use that research in order to make informed evidence-based policy that increases shared prosperity and decreases marginalization in the community. Greater collaboration amongst the affluent and the minoritized will take a concerted effort to expand our municipalities electorate to include the voices of students. I think partnering with student leaders and state officials to advance legislation that wholly decriminalizes marijuana is a first step to restorative justice in fostering sustainable economic development in historically minoritized communities.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

As a graduate/professional student myself, I am constantly seeking to understand how the needs of student populations, especially minoritized student populations, overlap with those of the rest of the town's community members. By being elected to serve as mayor, I hope to establish a precedent that bridges gaps in the quality of inter-institutional public service that may be provided to our entire community and the greater state of North Carolina with increased collaboration between the municipal administration and the university's leadership.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

## **\*Karen Stegman- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Chapel Hill Town Council  
Registered Democrat**

### **1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

My top priority is to increase affordable housing options. The history of housing in this country is one of racial discrimination and segregation. Whether overtly, as was the case until the early 20th century, or covertly since then, via redlining, racially-restrictive property deeds and covenants, and zoning laws, housing policy in American has served to restrict Black American access to homeownership and the multi-generational wealth-building that accompanies it. Some of these practices continue in other ways and it's challenging to root them out. The legacy of these practices can still be felt in the predominant single-family zoning that continues to limit housing production, preserves wealth for existing homeowners, increases property values and unaffordability and excludes people of color. I will work to address this by continuing to leverage Town-owned land to reduce the cost for new affordable housing construction; creating a "jump the line" policy for development applications to expedite the Town's approval process for those developers who offer 30% or more of their units as affordable housing; and through the upcoming revision of the Land Use Management Ordinance, address exclusionary zoning that limits access to housing in our community. Second, as a current member of the Town Council, I have been a vocal and consistent advocate for changes in how the Town thinks about land use and transit. Reducing vehicle miles travelled (VMT) is a key strategy of our new Climate Action and Response Plan and critical to meeting our ambitious GHG reduction commitment by 2030. Per a recent NCDOT report on VMT reduction, on a per household basis, urban households produce much lower average daily VMT and much fewer trips than both suburban and rural households. In 2009, the average urban household in North Carolina drove 32.7 miles per day while rural North Carolina households drove 74 percent more miles, or 56.8 miles per day. Similarly, urban North Carolina households averaged 4.4 automobile trips per day while rural North Carolina households averaged 23 percent more, or 5.4 trips per day. We know that currently, the average Chapel Hill resident's carbon footprint is larger than that of someone in or NY, SF, Boston. Smart growth approaches that combine dense infill development with access to multi-modal transit options will get people out of cars and offer significant environmental and health benefits for the

community. I have worked hard to help raise the visibility of this important policy shift, which is now a strategy of our Climate Action Plan and I will work to implement it in decisions moving forward.

## **2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

In the late '80s, Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Orange County created a rural buffer. This established a circle around the edge of town beyond which we agreed not to develop. The intent was to preserve the rural nature of Orange County while also preventing urban sprawl. Limiting the land that we can use for new development means that we need to use the land inside the buffer strategically. The tradeoff inherent in the creation of the rural buffer, one which is now becoming more apparent as developable land becomes truly scarce, is that we need to use the land we have strategically. Chapel Hill continues to grow, with a demand for approximately 400 new dwelling units per year to accommodate this growth. Our housing supply has not grown sufficiently, and this inadequate supply leads to housing scarcity and increases housing prices. Additionally, UNC owns a substantial amount of land in town, and, as a non-profit, does not pay property taxes, shifting even more of the already disproportionately heavy burden of taxes onto homeowners. Finally, Chapel Hill is an attractive place to live and people want to live here. Because our supply has not kept up with demand, and all the reasons described above, the pressure on housing prices is intense.

## **3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

The Town's Mobility and Connectivity Plan has an ambitious vision for a network that reduces vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and supports the Town's commitment to sustainability. The proposed network of greenways, multimodal paths, bike lanes, and other facilities connects key destinations in a way that supports safe travel for people of all ages and backgrounds. Greenway expansion is also a top priority for residents. In my vision, that plan is fully implemented. Along with this network, we would have Bus Rapid Transit running both north-south and east-west offering rapid access throughout town and linking to our fare-free bus service that would be available seven days per week, late into the evenings. As a result of our transit investments, the transit-oriented development we also planned for has grown around the transit stops, creating walkable, bikeable, mixed use neighborhoods that include a variety of housing types and price points, resident-focused retail, and incorporates welcoming green, tree-lined community gathering spaces. Many residents go weeks without getting in their cars, if they own one at all.



**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

Because of the rural buffer, as discussed above, we need to use the land inside the buffer strategically. If we try to prevent new housing (re-)development in town to preserve trees, we are undermining the premise of the rural buffer that denser development in town will prevent sprawl and preserve nature within the buffer. We focus on preserving trees while forgetting that on any given night there are no fewer than 40 unsheltered people living among those trees. Those 40 represent only 20% of our county's homeless population, the rest have temporary housing only due to our incredible local shelter and housing providers. It's also important to note that since the start of the pandemic, homelessness in the county has increased by 35%. With thoughtful planning and open conversations with our community, we can preserve most of our trees, grow new trees, create new and appealing green spaces in town, and create the housing we need for all who wish to live here while not pricing out marginalized and lower-income households. Policies that prioritize dense infill development centered around transit, and that allow us to prevent housing scarcity, will lead to a more affordable, accessible, and sustainable community. The Town Council passed the first Climate Action and Response Plan that includes additional details on policies to reduce the Town's carbon footprint, but changing our land use policies and increasing multimodal transit investments will have the greatest impact by far.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

Expanding access to housing for residents of all income levels is a key role of an elected official, through advocacy, collaboration, funding commitments, and policies that create a supportive environment. In my role on the Town Council, I advocated for the affordable housing bond and to use Town-owned land and resources for new affordable housing development, such as the Town's 2200 Homestead Road, Habitat's Weaver's Grove, Empowerment's Peach Apartments, and CASA's Perry Place. I also voted to preserve the Tar Heel manufactured housing community and have been working to identify strategies to preserve other manufactured housing communities in town. I will continue to make housing for 30% AMI a priority in my second term, supporting for example, financing of additional affordable units on Town-owned parcels and the Trinity Court RAD conversion, and advocating for an expansion of our master leasing program.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

1. Increase the creation and success of BIPOC-owned businesses by: developing a dedicated Town program to support BIPOC-owned businesses, including identifying solutions to barriers faced; establishing a mentor program, with a special focus on BIPOC entrepreneurs; negotiate with developers of new commercial development to include minority-business incubators to expand the model used by Empowerment's Midway Business Incubator; 2. Increase access to skilled trade job training through partnerships with Durham Tech and the Chamber to expand offerings available in Chapel Hill for skilled trade training, such as in automotive repair, and and apprenticeships with Town departments such as Inspections, that include a commitment of future employment. 3. Increase homeownership opportunities for low-income households through Habitat, Community Home Trust, the Northside Neighborhood Initiative and other programs that offer subsidized homeownership opportunities.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

This has been a top priority for me on the Council. Engagement in local govt decision-making is too hard right now. We don't hear from enough people and we don't hear from a diversity of people. That is why I have called for development of an Equitable Community Engagement strategy, similar to what they have in place in Durham, that is designed to bring new and innovative structures and strategies to how, when, and why we engage with diverse communities in Chapel Hill, particularly those historically under-represented in government decision-making. I am excited that this is part of the role of our newly hired DEI Officer and she will be taking the lead on putting this in place. Another important way of engaging and giving input is through advisory board membership. I have worked hard to increase diverse representation on our boards in terms of age, race, ethnicity, gender, and lived experience. We have made some progress but there is much more to do. Finally, I have deep roots in the community as a life-long Chapel Hill resident and have continued to build new relationships since being elected. I also regular attend community group meetings such as the NAACP and CEF Meeting of the Minds.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

## Vimala Rajendran

**Running for Chapel Hill Town Council  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

1. Adopt a comprehensive city plan that includes guidelines for growth with an environmentally sound development with affordable housing ownership and rent, Increase funding for public transportation, while also improving bike paths, wider sidewalks (walkable communities). This is important because it offers marginalized citizens mobility to get where they need to go, gets more people out of their cars, and on bicycles and on public transportation. 2. Enforce Chapel Hill's climate action plan - plant more native, canopy trees with deeper roots, insisting on more pervious surfaces in new developments - important to do this to address the climate crisis. Neighborhoods of color are more impacted by flooding, and heat waves. Focus on those neighborhoods to plant community gardens, and other native plantings.

**2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

Rural Buffer was a good concept when it was first put in place in 1986, to separate urban developments from the outskirts that were rural. The town of Chapel Hill was build on what was once farm lands. If developing of the land that is now known as Rural Buffer will result in more affordable housing, while maintaining the environmentally sound, green infrastructure, then I am in favor of developing the three areas of New Hope Creek basin, the University lake watershed, and the Southern Triangle Area.

**3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

There would be fewer cars on the roads, the streets would have wider sidewalks, and bike/pedestrian paths that are safer, and well marked. A safer Chapel Hill for all people.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

Land use and facility improvements must always be based on a well researched environmental impact study. An energy audit needs to happen on all buildings and they need to be made energy efficient. All light bulbs must be changed to LEDs and there must also be more electric car charging stations. Communities of color need to be prioritized for home energy saving improvements.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

Future development permits must not be approved unless affordable housing units are included and they must be located within the development in easily accessible areas, and throughout the area, instead of on the fringes of the property, or in the rear corner. The appropriate AMI to target for affordable housing would be 30%

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

The growing economic gap is a result of age-old practices of low pay for workers, unequal pay along race and gender lines. Chapel Hill increased the wages for Town workers less than a decade ago. It was a good thing but by no means sufficient. Requiring all businesses to pay livable wages would be necessary. Some of these plans may not be within the jurisdiction of the local, municipal government, so with my colleagues on the Council, I will push for dialogs with the County government and the State Government, as well as the US Congress to grant economic relief for marginalized families to own homes, and have tax reliefs.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I will continue to meet with community members by holding listening sessions. I will post a blog with bullet points of important issues, and give links to detailed communication. I will ask for better communication between town workers and the council. I know that the council only hears from the town workers through the Town Manager.... I will be open to hearing from the advisory boards, the workers, and the residents of Chapel Hill to help understand better every issue that needs to be heard and understood.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

### **\*Paris Miller-Foushee- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Chapel Hill Town Council  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

My two top priorities are affordable housing and environmental justice for all constituents. These two priorities are very linked. Building affordable housing for the 30% to 100% AMI would allow those that work here to live here, decreasing car emissions from commutes into and out of town. These two priorities are important because they will allow us to build a livable, equitable, and vibrant town that ensures our people can grow their families with opportunities here. To address these issues, I will advocate for expedited review of affordable and creative development projects that are along transit routes and are uncoupled from parking development. And, I will leverage Town-owned land to further maintain affordability of projects. I will advocate for complete streets (bicycle and pedestrian lanes), the completion of the NS Bus Rapid Transit, and transit-oriented development along MLK that decreases car-dependency. I will also work to sustain the Northside Energysavers program. I live in the historically African American neighborhood of Northside. Elder residents do not have the means or information to upgrade their appliances to more energy-efficient models. The Energysavers program would allow us to work with marginalized neighbors to upgrade their homes to become more environmental. This is a step forward to secure environmental justice.

**2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

The Rural Buffer was designed to promote infill development inside the buffer, while preserving greenspace and natural habitats outside of the buffer. By not using the Rural Buffer for what it has to offer, we are letting valuable opportunities to use land for creative mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented, walkable developments go to waste. The Rural Buffer will inform my land use policies because I will encourage smart,

purposeful development that meets the needs of our residents inside the Buffer along transit corridors to meet community needs and decrease car dependency.

**3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

20 years from now, MLK has very few cars, if not none. The primary mode of transit is the Bus Rapid Transit to travel across that corridor. Biking is safer due to protected bike lanes. Residents can walk from their homes to amenities within 10 minutes without having to get into a car. The streets are cooler and more vibrant. What are now surface level parking lots are retail spaces for local businesses, parks, gathering spaces that are easily accessible to residents without having to get in a car.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

Regarding land use, we need to build multi-purpose, mixed-income, transit-oriented, walkable communities to mitigate climate change by decreasing car-dependency. I mentioned earlier that we should work with communities of color to retrofit home appliances for increased energy efficiency at a fraction of current costs to increase climate and energy equity. I am also an advocate for installing alternative energy infrastructure such as solar panels on public buildings to mitigate climate change by diversifying our energy sources. All of these policies should be implemented through a racial equity lens. Communities of color should not be an afterthought, they should be prioritized in community engagement, planning, and execution of such policies. As a Black resident of the marginalized African American Northside community, I will ensure that we mitigate climate change in a way that benefits communities of color.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

I have a middle-term and a long-term plan to secure affordable housing in future development. Middle-term, we must expedite review of affordable projects to make building affordable housing economically viable for developers. We must also leverage Town-owned land (Greene Tract and American Legion, specifically) to build affordable housing at the 30%-80% AMI level (low income to workforce housing). Long-term, across the country, cities with strong hospital presences are finding that hospitals are economically incentivized to build affordable housing to address social determinants of

health and qualify for Medicare/Medicaid subsidized care that keeps hospital costs low. We can partner with UNC Healthcare to look into such programs that would benefit both parties immensely.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

Right now, our housing developments are largely segregated by income. This means that amenities are also segregated by income. This is why I will support mixed-income, mixed-use, transit-oriented developments so that access to amenities are equal regardless of income level. These amenities could include: car-free access to groceries, pharmacies, recreational activities for families and children, and childcare support. Additionally, we can work with the minority and women-owned business community to ensure that we are providing them with the resources they need to grow and employ locally. Funding and providing amenities for entrepreneurs of all backgrounds will continue to bridge the economic gap in Chapel Hill.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I am a progressive, grassroots advocate. I serve on the Board of EmPOWERment Inc and the Marian Cheek Jackson Center. I served on the Town's Reimagining Public Safety Taskforce. And, I work at the Inter-Faith Center for Social Services. I am constantly seeking input from and engaging with residents of all backgrounds to secure resources and changes in our community that benefit constituents. Running for office is a culmination of my work in the community. Town staff is invaluable in collecting and acting on data to move our community in the right direction. I would rely on them for technical and expert information that I would couple with community input to make my decisions on Council.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

## Adam Searing

**Running for Chapel Hill Town Council  
Registered Democrat**

### **1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

1. Save our parks and wild open spaces like the Greene Tract Forest, Legion Park, and our creeks and trails. The largest public forest in Chapel Hill, the Greene Tract Forest, is threatened with development that bears little resemblance to proposals from years of community planning. Our public property on Legion Road is in danger of being divided and part of it sold for commercial uses - instead of creating an amazing park as residents have asked. Miles of trails and acres of beautiful hardwood trees beside many creeks are now slated for removal for water retention projects to support even more building. (While we've "paused" the Booker Creek removals in this election year, removal of acres of trees at the headwaters of Booker and Bolin Creeks is still on the table and this issue has not gone away.) Our woods, trees and wild spaces help make Chapel Hill great and are an important reason so many of us love living here. Especially after this awful pandemic we need to put a much larger priority on our parks and green space than we have in the past. To do this we need to halt plans to sell off our public land to private interests and focus on what our residents want. In Chapel Hill, our Town Council frequently sets up large community meetings, asking residents to spend hundreds of hours of time and input and then produces comprehensive, hundred-plus page reports on the results. However, if the community results don't match what the current Council wants to do those reports are often disregarded, frustrating residents. In the case of the Greene Tract Forest, more than 20 years of public planning and community meetings have consistently produced multiple reports recommending that around 80% of the Forest be preserved around 20% be set aside for affordable housing and development in character with surrounding neighborhoods. At no point has anyone in these years of reports asked for the current plan - two large roads run through the forest and 80 acres of the public's forest sold off to private developers for market rate housing and market rate development. A "preserved area" is now just green space around the headwaters of Bolin and Booker Creeks that can also contain retention ponds, road development and utilities. This development on our public forest could be as big as five times the size of the town's recently approved controversial Aura project on private property, would be by far the largest project built on town land in decades and the largest sale of public land in decades to private interests. This isn't what has been asked for in the past. Is this really what we want now? We need to bring similar scrutiny to proposals to sell part of the public Legion Road Park property to commercial developers and to develop even more housing. Over 1000 apartments - including over



140 affordable units - have been built or are already proposed in the Legion Road area and the community there has consistently asked for a park on the entire property to serve surrounding communities, most recently after hundreds of hours of time helping the town produce a community report. Other, wealthier areas of Chapel Hill have much larger parks. But the report doesn't match what the Council wants, so out it goes and the march is now on to sell off substantial parts of the Legion property for development. It's only a matter of time before the Council again asks for a community meeting and report on yet another project, residents spend hundreds of hours helping produce recommendations, and the Council then disregards the input. No wonder many residents are fed up with the current process!

2. Support affordable housing. If we stop delaying and start building, we can quickly create at least 210 units of affordable housing with projects already in process. New innovation with partners like UNC can create even more units. We can move forward with our affordable housing efforts while also preserving our amazing forests and beautiful open spaces. For example, our failure to move for years on rebuilding the closed Trinity Park apartments is a case in point. This is land right next to downtown and a great park and it is only in this election year that finally there is some life to the discussions to rebuild. Second, we need to move on the Jay Street project, which is again close to downtown and can provide even more homes. Finally, we have delays in our 2200 project we need to overcome to move more quickly there. Let's focus on actually building housing for people who need it instead of selling off our public forests and open spaces. In addition, we need to build on our history of collaborating with UNC, our town's largest employer, to create more housing for UNC staff in areas like housekeeping, food service, and facility services along with young faculty members. I will use my long connections with UNC to begin discussion of how we can create more great sliding scale rent housing for UNC affiliated folks, helping people have great places to live and freeing up more space in other housing options for everyone in our town.

## **2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

The rural buffer is one part of our long-term land use plan adopted by Orange County, Chapel Hill and Carrboro back in the 1980s. It has been a successful tool to prevent the sprawl that surrounds some of our neighbors like Cary and North Raleigh by delineating where we should extend water and sewer services. Unfortunately, some folks use the rural buffer to argue that we in Chapel Hill must approve all new development proposals that come before the town – no matter if that means town residents must give up our goals of great parks and any preservation of our remaining public forests and open spaces. Indeed, in recent years, some Council members seem to vote “yes” on every single development proposal. However, so many people I've talked to during this campaign have told me the importance of our woodland trails, our public spaces and

our parks as critical to their desire to live in Chapel Hill. They want our town to have successful businesses, a great library, a solid police and fire department, and yes, more development. But they want that development to include more housing like townhomes, duplexes and housing for residents of all incomes, all built in a manner where people are eager to buy and live in these neighborhoods. And our woods and trails are a critical part of this vision. Everyone in our town, regardless of their income, deserves to be able to enjoy a walk on our public land, in our public's forest, by our public greenways and creeks – this is the very essence of what it means to live in Chapel Hill and exactly why people want to live here. Finally, folks outside of town in Orange County have the same concerns as Chapel Hill residents. Orange County residents recently organized to successfully defeat a proposed 100 pump gas station that would have been built in rural Orange County. The project was defeated because of community concerns about traffic, environmental damage, stormwater, and other impacts – similar issues that Chapel Hill residents raise about development. In a time of worsening heat, drenching storms and after an awful pandemic we should all have a better appreciation of the importance of our public forests, trees and other green spaces – these are important whether you live outside or inside of Chapel Hill's town limits. The rural buffer is a critical land use tool that works in concert with our other land use policies. It should be used to improve our community and not as a political cudgel to force bad policies – whether within or outside our town limits.

### **3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

The active railroad track bringing coal to burn in UNC's power plant is has been long closed and turned into a beautiful greenway that connects the northern parts of Chapel Hill with downtowns in both Carrboro and Chapel Hill and provides access for everyone to amazing trails on the Greene Forest Park, Chapel Hill's largest forest park, along with connections to the remaining green space in Carolina North after UNC's expansion. Key projects in our town bicycle and mobility plan are implemented and we have more protected bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, walking paths and greenways that allow people to move around town. A new greenway using OWASA easements is developed to allow eastern neighborhoods an off-road access to downtown and bicycle climbing lanes are installed on hills like Raleigh Road to enable even more access, including for electric bikes. Our North/South bus rapid transit system is in place with additional bicycle carrying capacity and enables quick and easy movement from the north and south of town to come to downtown offices, businesses and the university.

#### **4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

Climate change response urgently requires systematic action on the state, federal, and international level but, as a town, Chapel Hill can do its part as well: 1. Chapel Hill's budget reflects its priorities, and with 23% of the budget devoted to public transit, our free bus and related transit system is the single largest line item we spend money on as a community. Continuing this investment to make sure our bus system is efficient, comfortable (including decent shelters) and highly used is critical to our climate efforts to reduce automobile use. In addition, moving along construction of our North/South corridor bus rapid transit route is critical during the next Council term to improve our system even more. 2. We also need to complete more of the planned greenways and other connectors in the town's bicycle and mobility plan in order to provide multiple, safer ways for residents and families to use bicycles and other alternative forms of transportation to get to grocery stores, school and work. We have a long priority list of projects for connectivity in that plan and we should continue to implement these improvements as funding allows and as we begin work on priorities like the Estes side path. 3. Finally, deforestation should be at the top of our list of concerns. As development pressures result in more and more building on privately-owned land in town, our town must better prioritize preservation of our forests and trees, with a special duty to property that the town owns already. With more and more research showing the beneficial effects of forests and tree cover for the mental and physical health of residents we should also strive so that all our residents, regardless of income, have access to our cooling forests and beautiful streams and trails. Unfortunately, our largest tracts of park-designated and protected forests are currently largely in higher income areas of our community. And some recently-approved large developments are next to streams like Booker Creek where acres of town-owned trails and trees are now designated for removal in the service of flood mitigation projects without regard to other options that don't require extensive clear cutting of the public's forest. (This policy is on hold in an election year, but the stormwater issues behind it have not gone away.) Especially after the pandemic, itself arguably another manifestation of climate failures, we need to better conserve the public natural resources we have left here in Chapel Hill. Climate change impacts our lower income communities significantly in Chapel Hill. Our largest protected green spaces and protected forest land – which have significant cooling effects in a warming world -- are mostly surrounded by Chapel Hill's higher income communities. We need to develop and protect more parks and open spaces near our lowest income communities and development of a forest park in the public Greene Tract Forest and a full-size protected park at Legion Road can help. More frequent and heavier rainstorms as a result of climate change are also causing more

flooding – and have a high impact on our lower income neighbors that live closest to our creeks in rental housing like Camelot Apartments. We need to protect our watersheds and prepare for much more stormwater by protecting our public forests and insisting on building that takes into account this new normal.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

I've outlined my basic affordable housing proposals above. In addition, we are experiencing a "gold rush" in Chapel Hill – only now the prize isn't gold but the right to build cheap, easily erected four or five story wood-framed apartment buildings containing hundreds of units in each complex. Right now there are nearly 40 development projects in process, proposed, or on the drawing board for various areas in our town. Developers want desperately to build here in town and are clearly making very large profits. This gives us leverage to require higher percentages of affordable housing, especially for folks between 30% and 80% AMI. For folks below 30% AMI we need to look to projects like our long-overdue Trinity Park redevelopment.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

Chapel Hill cannot bridge this gap alone. We have made significant progress in providing more affordable housing with an affordable bond issue almost half the size of Greensboro's – a city five times bigger. We have worked with UNC to improve and build more housing and will collaborate on other projects. These efforts can bridge part of this gap. But Chapel Hill is part of a state that refuses to expand Medicaid, eliminated the state earned income tax credit, refuses to act on raising the minimum wage, and puts a fraction of what it used to into state housing programs. We need to work on pressuring the legislature to act on these issues and we need to also work to let Congress know the substantial positive financial impact of the new federal child tax credit on low-income families.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I will reach out and listen. I will not hire expensive consultants to filter community member meetings through long, complex reports. Already during my campaign, I have hiked and walked with many constituents around multiple areas of Chapel Hill, hearing

their concerns and dreams for our town. I hope to continue this practice if I am elected to the Council. I've also always been someone who believes in getting to know the work of others. Whether sitting down and talking, riding along on a bus or police car, or spending the day with our parks service folks, I am a firm believer that actually seeing and doing is the best way to learn.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**\*Camille Berry- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Chapel Hill Town Council  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

Affordable Housing and Economic Development

**2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

The Rural Buffer was created to contain the development and protect our farmland and other green space in the more rural area of Orange County. That, of course, meant that development is intended to have greater density inside of the perimeter. I would advocate and support land use policies that continue to honor these two premises of the Rural Buffer.

**3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

Multi-modal transit corridors that allow for buses and bikes to have restricted lanes as well sidewalks. Increased public transportation within Chapel Hill and to nearby communities. Additionally, greenway trails that are connected so that pedestrians and bikers can travel safely across town without having to come into contact with vehicular traffic (or minimally so).

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

Requiring development and improvements to meet standards set forth by the town. Grants and loans (forgivable and/or to be paid upon the sale of a property) should be made available -- I have seen communities of color in Chapel Hill struggle to meet the demands that already exist. The Duke Energy Northside Energy Savers program is an example of how a private-public partnership can help advance efforts on mitigating climate change. However, it starts with planning -- planning that is informed by communities of color and other community stakeholders.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

Be creative in providing diverse housing options that are more affordable than what is being offered today (e.g., greater density, mixed use developments, smaller dwellings, etc.). Reduce the planning and permitting process by articulating in greater detail what types of development are being sought for areas throughout the town. Developers and town staff could save time if the requirements were clear from the onset, and that determination is made by the Council and Mayor. We will need to bolster our economic development in tandem with increasing our housing supply. Commercial growth is happening in Chapel Hill, and it needs to continue. The arrival of Wegman's shows us that big box stores can exist in Chapel Hill, add significantly to our economy, and complement the smaller businesses. Along with size, we should incorporate more diversity in the types of businesses and their ownership. We ALL aspire to occupy housing that we can afford, including those of us at 30%AMI and lower. How do I know? Because I was in that population with two teenagers and another away at college for several years. Chapel Hill needs to create housing options for those under 30%AMI all the way to the missing middle (often represented by our young professionals). None of what I have suggested here will happen organically. We have to be intentional and strategic about our housing growth. I aim to keep the need for housing that's affordable to much lower incomes at the forefront as we make decisions.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

Create significantly more housing that's affordable to lower income households; that includes housing that is energy-efficient, durable/sustainable, and close to amenities (e.g., public transportation, grocery stores, other retail, and greenways). Support and advocate for partnerships, including UNC and the County, to foster entrepreneurship and living wages. Also, bolster and promote the small business grants and services that already exist.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I will continue to do what I have been doing before seeking to serve as a council member. I will ask. I will seek out the input of town workers as they are our specialists and can share their insights. I would seek out input from the residents often. I would remain curious with both groups as they are chief advisors for the work I wish to do.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**Robert Beasley**

**Running for Chapel Hill Town Council  
Not Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

Fundamentally, I think the way the Town Government is running and making decisions is the biggest underlying issue. The Town's mode of operation is driving a set of policies and behaviors that is not prioritizing the needs of our residents over developers and outside investors. The Town's approach is actually undermining the priorities for Affordable Housing, Adequate Infrastructure for our current and future needs, and Conservation and Climate Change. I want to make changes so that we truly align Town Policies, Ordinances, and Plans with our residents' principles, values, and goals as we address our challenges of Affordable Housing and living, land use and conservation, and health and safety. I want to change our Town Government's operational procedures

to improve and ensure transparency and informed data and fact-based decision. I want to ensure our Town Government really listens to and responds to residents' concerns, including those who are members of our marginalized communities, and act in accordance with community needs and values in an equitable manner. I want to ensure we are prioritizing the needs of residents--not developers – and that we are investing in Chapel Hill's infrastructure sufficiently for Our Town's Future.

**2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

For me, it's a matter of accepting the reality of the Rural Buffer and what it means for Chapel Hill. The Town is roughly 21 square miles of land, and that is all there is, and all there will likely be. So we have to have a clear vision for how we want to use that land space, with some guiding principles. And then we must define our plans and select and approve our projects with fact based decision making that follows the plan, and delivers the vision.

**3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

It would look greener, with more options for walking, biking, and public transportation that are safe and viable, given the realities of where people live, where they work, and what the weather brings day to day in Chapel Hill.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

The Town needs to define the requirements for land use and facility improvements that are necessary for achieving our Climate Action and Response Plan. These need to be assessed by the Town Government, Town Stakeholders – which must include representatives of Chapel Hill's Communities of Color, and third party experts for potential negative impacts, and impact mitigations must be put into place for any negative impacts that are identified.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

I support increasing the Conditional Zoning requirements to 25% for Affordable Housing. Additionally, I am an advocate for acquiring existing housing and offering it as



affordable housing. In my opinion, the Town's current strategy is overly dependent on new development. New development takes a long time to come to fruition. Even in cases where the Town or non-profits already own the site, new development takes years. Funding programs for the Town and the Town's Affordable Housing Partners to acquire existing housing, recondition it, and offer it as Affordable Housing – both under rental and ownership models – will help deliver affordable housing inventory much faster. As to what I think appropriate AMI levels are, I believe the Town's definition of Affordable Housing should be 80% AMI and below. The Town also needs a clear definition of 'the missing middle', which I believe should be between 80% and 120% AMI. Furthermore the Town needs to clarify what constitutes 'spending of 30% of income on housing costs.' Housing costs are more than 'just rent' or 'just mortgage', and I do not think we have a clear definition for this in Chapel Hill. We need one to ensure we have clarity on expectations and criteria for developers and development proposals and plans.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

First, I think the Town needs to truly make Affordable Housing a priority. Chapel Hill has got to start thinking about affordable housing strategically, with an understanding on the implications inadequate affordable housing will have on local town business, services, and Chapel Hill's identity and values. Otherwise it seems we face a future where fewer and fewer local businesses will be able to afford to operate in Chapel Hill. And the University (including its medical operations), Town Public Services, and the retail, hospitality, and restaurant business (that you can find in Anywhere, North Carolina) will have to pay more for workers who will inevitably be daily commuters that live in Orange, Chatham, Alamance, and Durham Counties. Second, I think that Chapel Hill needs to focus on locally owned business development with a focus on equitable opportunities. There is much discussion and focus on bringing more jobs and businesses into Chapel Hill, and I think we need to increase our focus on cultivating and prioritizing locally owned businesses that deliver jobs in Chapel Hill – especially ones that are consistent with Chapel Hill's identity, and ones that deliver products or services that are consistent with Chapel Hill's priorities of affordable housing and green infrastructure.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I will listen to the people of Chapel Hill. I will seek answers from the developers and planners to adequately address the questions our citizens are raising. I will work to

validate that those answers are comprehensive and satisfactory through transparent public processes. I will encourage productive public discussion that ensures every voice is heard, and given proper respect and thoughtful consideration.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**Jeffrey C. Hoagland**

**Running for Chapel Hill Town Council**

**Not A Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Chapel Hill? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

Downtown parking efficiency, lowering parking rate to help fix this. Getting a train from chapel hill to the north Carolina zoo, I'll reach out to Pittsboro and Asheboro to help get local funding, and to then reallocate the federal grant that Durham voted to not have to finish federal funding which will trigger the state grant funding to finish it.

**2. Describe how the Rural Buffer informs your land use policies? \***

I don't know

**3. What would Chapel Hill look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

It would have connected modern rail system

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

I don't know

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners) \***

Getting a mass transit system in place that will make rentals have to compete with rural rental prices to equal out prices

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Chapel Hill between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

Making local policies that would counter tax code 469 which would force commercial rental prices to drop as rich land owners could no longer use over priced unrented properties as a tax deduction

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I go to local venues and interact with owners and patrons

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

Hillsborough Mayor and Town Commissioner

**\*Jenn Weaver- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Hillsborough Mayor  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Hillsborough? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

- Completing and Executing the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan, which includes our Climate Action Plan. This plan will be the guiding document for Hillsborough for many years, being written and updated with an eye toward sustainability and the era of

climate change we have squarely entered. The town board approved a 2 cent property tax this past summer to go toward the implementation of that plan. For it to be successful, in addition to funding it will be essential for me as the mayor and other elected officials to help the public understand we will have to start doing some things differently in a way some may find uncomfortable given what many of our broad cultural norms and practices are (such as ending our love affair with single family homes, ending our default of building communities for cars). - Approving and executing a plan for addressing the \$36-42 million in water/wastewater system repairs and upgrades that are needed. Our water/wastewater customer base is small and our rates are high. We must pursue to the greatest extent possible funding options that do not place additional burden on our W/WW customers, especially when we are prohibited from differentiating rates based on ability to pay. We are already planning to allocate our ARP funds to leverage for some of these needed repairs, and are certainly very much hoping the infrastructure bill and reconciliation bill pass Congress, as they would likely have viable grant opportunities. - Continuing to pursue creative solutions for adding more units of affordable housing in Hillsborough. Housing has gotten very expensive, as it is throughout the Triangle, and shows no signs of slowing down, especially with thousands of new Apple employees coming to RTP, where many Hillsborough residents already commute. Because we do not have capacity to have our own housing department, we must always work with partners in the nonprofit sector or, as we have with our \$600,000 HOPE grant secured by Hillsborough but administered through the County's housing department, work with the County. I am interested in the possibility of a .25 or .50 property tax increase to create a consistent funding stream to put toward AH efforts, but we would need to be very deliberate and careful about doing that, as we may end up pricing people out anyway by trying to fund effort to help them.

Added through email: Following through with the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety.

This task force formed in the wake of the George Floyd murder as part of a resolution passed by the town board. The task force was charged with taking a dive into Hillsborough policing practices and policies and making recommendations for how to re-imagine public safety and eliminate the racial disparities in who gets caught up in the local criminal justice system. This time-limited group was also charged with making a recommendation for what a standing advisory board might look like. The task force recommendations were community driven, with the mayor (me) facilitating the process. Those are just now wrapping up and will soon be submitted to the town board, town manager, police chief, and town attorney. Following through on this commitment to the community is of paramount importance.

## **2. What would Hillsborough look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

First let me say that the implementation of my transportation vision for Hillsborough is unlikely to be fulfilled in the next twenty years without significant changes to how the NC DOT funds transportation projects in our state and thinks about transportation, generally. That is a cold, hard fact. I am using my position as mayor and as a member of the Durham-Chapel-Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (and current vice chair) to advocate for changing that process. In order to have multi-modal, not car dependent communities that are equitable and putting minimal (preferably zero) carbon into the atmosphere, the prioritization by NCDOT of single vehicular travel on highways and interstates must change. That said, given the tools with which to execute my vision - which is shared by the board of commissioners - for Hillsborough twenty years into the future, we would see: - Our Community Connectivity Plan fully implemented. Every neighborhoods would be able to walk or bike safely within the neighborhood and throughout town. - Multi use paths would be viewed and used not just primarily as recreation, but as a critical venue for transportation. - clear evidence that housing had adapted to be more transportation and climate friendly. We would have more dense infill, so that fewer cars/driving trips are necessary. Hillsborough's town limits are small enough that given safe conditions, those who are physically able could walk and bike to meet many of their daily needs, getting cars off the road. - Bus service expanded via Orange Public Transit, Chapel Hill Transit, and Triangle Transit to enable bus travel both within town and between Hillsborough and major job, healthcare, and entertainment centers in other nearby municipalities. - Our future train station, built and operating as both an Amtrak stop and a commuter rail stop, connected to bus service and accessible by bicycle and pedestrian travel. Good transportation systems, while largely funded by the state, begin with good local visioning and planning, responding to local values and needs. We have a history of good plans in Hillsborough, and are currently updating them through the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan process and by funding our own feasibility studies for additional needed greenways/multi use paths and sidewalk facilities.

## **3. What is your opinion on advisory board members with known association and support for white supremacist groups? \***

It is my expectation that everyone applying to serve on any Hillsborough advisory board would be committed to carrying out the vision, mission, and values expressed by the town. Membership in a white supremacist group or any other hate group would be antithetical to the implementation and expression of the vision, mission, and values.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

I will be advocating for the town adopting a comprehensive sustainability plan that encourages infill, du/tri/quad plex housing, and sets us up for integrating transportation oriented development as soon as the opportunities present themselves. These are the same policies needed to make our community more affordable to more people. The primary risk to communities of color is gentrification. The more we make our neighborhoods more bike/ped friendly, the more attractive they will be for others to move in. We are seeing that already. To be frank, the town has very little ability to mitigate gentrification. As long as housing is based more on capitalism and property rights rather than as a human right, we will continue to see this tension because Hillsborough is a desirable place to live. We have a prime opportunity in how we develop the property around the future train station to include affordable housing, market rate multifamily housing, and commercial/retail. We already have a stated goal and formulated plan for that area to be connected to transit, including safe bike/ped facilities. As stated previously, any increase in our community's already significant tax and water/sewer rate burden runs the risk of pricing people out, and our Black and other non-white communities are most likely to be disproportionately impacted, so we have to think through very carefully any time we choose to raise taxes/rates. This thought process is reflected in the fact that when we approved the 2 cent tax increase to fund implementation of the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan during the most recent budget cycle, it was the first time in 9 years we had raised municipal property taxes. Staff is currently working on drafting the CSP which includes the Climate Action Plan and I look forward to seeing the plan, discussing priorities and approaches that help us meet our climate goals. One more note, though we certainly have the same stormwater runoff issues being experienced by other communities due to the intense, water-heavy storms amplified by climate change, we do not have communities of color or low-income neighborhoods/apartments being impacted by flooding like some of our neighboring jurisdictions are having.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners)**

It is the practice of the Hillsborough Board of Commissioners (at least over the last 10-12 years) in consideration of any large developments that come before us to ask that they include affordable housing units in the development or provide a payment in lieu. This practice has resulted in the Magnolia Place Habitat homes in Waterstone (attached

units and geared to aging in place, a first of its kind for Habitat); 80 units of affordable housing reserved for veterans, an identified need and to be constructed by CASA (to add context to the number, based on population figures at the time this would be the equivalent of 800 units in Chapel Hill); and a pot of funds we have used to help people with rental and utilities assistance. I will say that we should continue this practice into the future, but there are likely to be few new developments of significant size in the near future based on the lack of available land. The town owns 20 acres around the future train station site, and I support using part of that acreage to build affordable housing. Based on housing studies I have seen in recent years, there is need at every level of AMI, but the most need is for the lowest incomes. I think it would be great to target those lowest AMI levels if we can find a partner with whom to make that work (Hillsborough is very dependent on non-profit partners for affordable housing efforts, as we do not have the capacity for housing staff/department). Hillsborough was fortunate to receive a HOPE Covid relief grant for \$600,000. As mentioned above re: capacity, we could never have administered this grant on our own. We secured the grant and are partnering with the housing folks at the County to administer. These funds are going to Hillsborough residents for rental and utilities assistance. We did the similar with the direct payment we received earlier in the pandemic for about \$100,000, dividing those funds evenly for direct assistance for food, housing, and utilities, working with community partners to administer. It will be important for us to follow how this partnership with the county for HOPE grant works (for the county, the town, and the recipients). If all goes well, it would be worth exploring a continued partnership for future grants opportunities or the collection of a quarter or half-cent increase on the property tax to accrue funds for this assistance.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Hillsborough between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

Given the tools available to us at this time, one of the biggest impacts we can have is creating and implementing a Comprehensive Sustainability Plan (in progress) that manifests housing and transportation priorities that leave people spending less money on those areas. That is very much a long game. The town also is living wage certified and offers paid family leave to our employees - important in its own right but also sets an example for the business and non profit community.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I'll begin by saying that it is important for elected officials to be mindful of staff protocols that exist between the board, town manager, and town employees, unless there is a powerful reason to go around them. When those protocols are ignored, it can leave staff feeling very confused about where their direction is coming from. That said, as mayor I make a point to check in with the manager to see if there is support they or the staff need from the mayor/board, if they are feeling clear in the direction and purpose they are receiving from us and have the time to manage their directives. I periodically hold open "office hours" where I plant myself in a public place like a park or coffeeshop and invite the public to come by and talk/ask questions. I generally try to get out in the community (covid-safely) to talk to folks, attend events, etc. During the first several months of the pandemic, I held weekly Facebook live sessions to try to share information, collect and answer questions. I do respond to social media queries but generally encourage people to contact me through my official hillsborough.gov email for public records transparency. The town also conducts periodic employee and community surveys which help illuminate where we are doing well and where we need to dig in and do work.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**\*Kathleen Ferguson- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Hillsborough Commissioner  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Hillsborough? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

1) Completing our comprehensive sustainability plan, which will lay out our roadmap for Town priorities aligned with Town values, resiliency, and sustainability. I will continue to support allocating resources and staff time needed to complete the plan, will vote to adopt it, and will support it as providing guiding principles for priorities and decisions. 2) Repair and upgrade water, sewer, and public works infrastructure before we have overflows/fines or service failures and doing so aligned with our clean energy resolution (which I introduced and led adoption of) and without debt service or tax burden. I will continue to seek funding sources available and collaborating with colleagues and staff to determine if / when to pursue bond revenue, which I am hopeful will also provide



funds that will help us also achieve some affordable housing, connectivity, and public spaces projects we currently lack funding for.

**2. What would Hillsborough look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

A community where where folks can get anywhere safely and conveniently in town without having to drive and where “thru” traffic has been diverted to 70/85 connector, Lawrence Road, Orange Grove Road/ Mayo Street/86 connector (which has been realigned) and Waterstone drive; where we would have integrated affordable housing, community gardens, bee hotels, and little libraries in every neighborhood thru partnerships with our nonprofit partners, where Exchange Park is now a Town park and the skate park has been created and is being used by kids across the Town, where the old detention center has been transformed into shops that attract people after 5pm, along with an arts center and and offices; where the Highway 70 corridor has been redeveloped with local businesses and features a walking path from Holiday Park / Lake Shore to Corbinton Commons, where every neighborhood has a corner market and gathering spot; where our train station has been built and being used by commuters, shoppers, and day trippers, where Town property has been developed featuring a small hotel, more shops, an arts venue and center, and commercial office space. In 20 years, we will have maxxed out the population we can support, so our urban footprint is contained. We have achieved our clean energy resolution and are a model town for planning and executing resilience and sustainability. All along we have maintained and continue to live out our values of inclusivity, connection, stewardship of living beings, as a place that is safe, welcoming to all, where the arts flourish, and we are governed by a town government that is transparent, high-functioning, and true to our budget mantra of safety and mandates first, maintain what we have next, invest wisely for our future, minimize tax burdens on our residents whenever possible.

**3. What is your opinion on advisory board members with known association and support for white supremacist groups? \***

Support of or membership in supremacy , hate, and terrorist groups are incompatible with town values. Any association would need to be in the footsteps of Daryl Davis (an African American musician who has changed hearts and converted over 200 klucker leaders) or as confidential informants aiding local /state / fed authorities.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

Maintaining our water / sewer boundaries and focusing on infill development is the most environmentally responsible approach to development, and the biggest threat to our communities of color is to have board members who are disconnected from our communities of color or who never have bothered to become involved with those communities on an ongoing basis. One of the reasons I am running for reelection is to ensure that as we repair and upgrade our water, sewer, and public works infrastructure in ways that support achieving our clean energy resolution and which utilize as few chemicals as possible, and which allow for adoption of dark sky wherever safety or insurance ratings are not at risk. Another reason is to fulfill the vision of the Fairview Community and the Cornelius Street/Highway70 corridor redevelopment plan, and prevent the temptation to concentrate development of businesses frequently associated with minority or low income neighborhoods north of the Historic District or around Oakdale. As a longstanding member of Fairview Community Watch and someone who lives where there are 7 Habitat and Empowerment homes behind or beside me, I am adamant that the 70 Corridor reflects Their vision, which in some cases differs from the vision that folks outside of Fairview have in mind.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners)**

I still want Hillsborough to have a dedicated revenue stream for affordable housing. I was outvoted this year but if reelected will push to allocate a penny of tax so that we can better support our affordable housing nonprofits, invest in property banking, and other tools that come available to us. This is in addition to my current advocacy and efforts which resulted in Collins Ridge dedicating 88 affordable units instead of their initial offer of 44, collaborating with Habitat to secure board support for Odie Street, personally intervening and saving three homes in inventory by for Empowerment, and securing board support for establishing a rental assistance fund. I will continue to push our board to allocate funding that closes gaps in our homelessness services / prevention system. Additionally, as chair of Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness and member of the OC Housing Collaborative, I have helped ensure our area receives the maximum possible of available funds for affordable rentals and affordable home ownership and will continue to do so if reelected. So while I personally wish the official AMI definition was calculated for Orange County alone or Hillsborough alone, it isn't. It is calculated based on AMI for Orange/Durham/Chatham counties. We sorely need permanent supportive housing, whose residents frequently have only SSI/DI income. (I now have a woman who survived a .357 to her face stay with me every time she has doc appts, which is every other week, because I have yet to find her

housing. The rest of the time she couch surfs. ), We sorely need housing in the 30-80% AMI range, which is the range of teacher, first responder, and service worker salaries. We even need housing in the 80-120% range. As for the definitions of affordable being rent/mortgage + utilities = 30% of gross income, I personally think that the state & fed definition 30% is too high but again, with the overwhelming percentage of affordable housing funding coming from state and federal funds, the 30% is what our decisions as electeds, must be based on.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Hillsborough between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

I would love a magic wand that gave me power to slash CEO pay, up teacher, first responder, and worker pay, free education, apprenticeships, and internships, implement universal health insurance, paid childcare, parental leave, and paid sick and vacay leave. However, the primary lever I have as a NC municipal elected official have are development ordinances and approvals and influencing public safety policies that favor community policing and criminal justice diversion. Implementing the Cornelius Street /Highway 70 corridor plan is critical to ensuring Fairview residents have access to quality, healthy /affordable live /work /play opportunities as other parts of town. Fostering a business community and commercial approvals that include employment opportunities across the income continuum is critical to providing opportunities for people looking for that next step up. The other area where I have been able to make headway towards bridging the gap is in my role as an officer and chair of the Triangle J Council of Governments and a representative of the Triangle J Council of Governments at the state level. In this capacity, I helped develop NCGA support for starting to loosen the barriers that currently prevent 100% affordable access to highspeed broad band. Having collaborated with HPD for over 15 years, I have supported and fostered the policing culture that gave rise to Fairview Live, basketball camps, tutoring, community garden help, Latino summits, community summits, all initiated and funded thru HPD. These programs, along with others, body cameras and deescalation policies all predated the Ferguson murder. Hboro, unlike Chapel Hill and Carrboro, had already purged homelessness-as-a-crime statutes years ago. I look forward to hearing what the mayor's task force recommendations are.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

Having been a community watch leader for over 15 years, I have built and maintained relationships across our neighborhoods, HPD, and Town employees and staff. I

continue to nurture these relationships and use their insights to inform my thought process. Having engaged and continue to engage literally hundreds of residents through community events and activities, door knocking, outreach, I am able to ascertain community perspectives. I augment by hearing thoughts and perspectives from other electeds locally and regionally, and I augment with personal experience and research. I have always been a connector and one who builds and maintains a large, diverse network of folks which is helpful on a myriad of levels.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**Anna Linvill**

**Running for Hillsborough Commissioner  
Not A Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Hillsborough? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

My top priorities for Hillsborough are: 1) Building a clear vision for Hillsborough's future growth and development that prioritizes affordable, people centered, quality housing for residents at all socio-economic levels. No one should have to commute 30-60 minutes to work whether they are teachers or hospitality workers. If we do not know how we want our community to look, feel, and function socially, but sit back and wait for developers to push proposals our way, we will end up with development that benefits developers and not our community. Hillsborough has many valuable assets that make our town a desirable place to live: our ethnically and socioeconomically diverse population, our rich history and culture, our environment, and our optimistic, creative spirit. People want to live here and developers and businesses want to build here. We can incentivize the kind of development we want, prioritizing developers and plans that align with the long term vision that we, as a community have envisioned together. 2) Working with other agencies (DoT, county) to update and improve our transportation system, with more frequent bus routes, intercity commuter trains, well times traffic lights, and safe walking and biking paths to schools and essential businesses and institutions like grocery stores and hospitals. Having more reliable and frequent public transportation and pedestrian friendly development is better for the environment and

increases economic and social opportunities for everyone, especially those who cannot afford to own and maintain a car. Every day, I see people walking on the shoulder of highway 70 to Walgreens and Food Lion, and on Old NC 86 toward the hospital. Every year, we hear of high school kids being hit by cars walking to or from school. This affects minority and low income white kids more than those with parents with flexible schedules who can ferry their kids around. Kids should not have to be driven a few blocks to school, nor should they have to endure a 2 hour bus ride to a school that is only a couple of miles from home. I would work hard to build relationships with Orange County and neighboring towns to align our vision for a better transportation environment for the Triangle.

**2. What would Hillsborough look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

All neighborhoods would be interconnected with sidewalks, greenways, and biking paths. We would have a bypass on Lawrence Rd to minimize commuter traffic through neighborhoods and downtown. Intercity greenways, bikepaths, and light rail would connect towns and cities to others in the Triangle and to main train stations so that longer distance travelers and commuters would be more inclined to use passenger train service. The top levels of parking garages would have covered parking with living roofs and solar panels, powering electric vehicle charging stations throughout the building. Pedestrian friendly traffic circles would replace traffic lights wherever possible, minimizing idling and reducing pollution. More crosswalks, warning lights, and on demand signals would make it easier for people to cross busy streets. Buses would be clean and comfortable, would run more frequently, and have schedules that are consistent and easy to understand. Bus shelters would be conveniently located to every neighborhood and school, be easy to find and adequately protect people from the elements. I would love to see the public transportation system service both the general public and middle and high school students as it does in places like Germany that have high ridership on public transportation systems. If buses and trains run frequently and reliably, more people use public transportation, it is safer for everyone, including young people. (My kids both rode to school on a German public bus from 5th-8th grades when we were stationed there with the Army)

**3. What is your opinion on advisory board members with known association and support for white supremacist groups? \***

If a board member publicly espouses violence or discrimination against anyone because of their socioeconomic status, religion, sex, lifestyle, or skin color, the Town Board absolutely has a responsibility to examine the appropriateness of their tenure on the

board. I try not to presume to know people's political or personal beliefs based on their casual or even personal associations (family, old friends, patrons, clients). We as a community should foster a generosity of spirit that does not automatically assume the worst about people. We should seek to address and diffuse people's fears rather than to shun and ostracize them when we don't agree with their views. Often, especially in the most controversial political issues, there are knotty quandaries that resist resolution by simple, tribal, party line prescriptions. People are more complex, their views more nuanced than the 24 hour news cycle and social media feeds would have us believe. I believe in building bridges between communities, actively working to breaking down barriers, and undermining anachronistic views not by shoving new ideas down their throats by force, but by working to enrich and expand the culture. My work bringing diversity to Arts Council events is case in point. Conservative business owners and tourism board members once hostile to our events are now enthusiastic supporters and hosts of African American spoken word poetry. All it required was an invitation to participate and a commitment to consider the impact on local businesses when we design events. In the end, their resistance had nothing to do with race or ideology. It was economics. If we push people to seek safety in their own little bubbles, we are not going to build the open and dynamic society we hope to build. We have to give people opportunities, space, and time to adapt to changing attitudes and socio-cultural realities. It helps to keep in mind not just how far we have yet to go, but how far we have already come.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

I have addressed some of this question already, but let me see if I can elaborate further. Besides better public transport and designing our community to reduce the number of cars on the road, we should be planning for human scaled, thoughtfully planned, walkable communities at appropriate, real world price points for the people who live and work here. I would like to see more mixed use zoning in developed commercial areas, and the redevelopment of strip malls as vibrant, diverse, walkable mini villages with retail, and housing for people at all ages, stages, and socio economic levels. Such development would reduce reliance on cars and beautify our environment, lessening our impact on the environment. Some of our well-intentioned efforts to preserve our town's character and architectural history may be having the opposite effect, leaving us with little socioeconomic diversity, inefficient, decaying buildings, and empty storefronts. Some of our regulations are inhibiting the evolution of buildings and commercial infrastructure to meet today's realities, needs, and long term priorities. We need to initiate a collaborative community process to come up with a long term vision for how

we want Hillsborough to grow. Once we know what we want, our regulations and standards can be designed to be reasonable and flexible, our processes simple and respectful of people's time and limited resources. Developers do not have to be the enemy. If we know what we want, we can control the process, seek bids, and work to build positive, public-private partnerships. Personally, I would like to see single story sprawling retail morph into human scale mixed use development centered on public squares with beautiful, climate appropriate, pollinator friendly landscaping, and solar powered parking garages pushed discreetly to the back rather than front and center. Rooftop gardens, low maintenance, long lived green roofs topped with solar panels on all flat roofed commercial buildings would reduce urban heat, provide pollinator habitat, and generate reliable power and revenues or reduce costs for developers, property owners, and renters in our sunny climate.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners)**

AMI may be too crude an instrument to measure true affordability or the range of housing prices that we need to serve the people to live and work here. 80% AMI of an economy where homes average price is approaching \$500K and rents start at 1K per month for a 1 bedroom apartment is still more than many people can afford. We need to make sure we have a vibrant economy and an education system that produces a population that is skillful and well trained in a variety of trades and professions. Where entrepreneurship is alive and well, and wages and cost of living are in good alignment. Hillsborough could do a better job planning our environment to meet the long term economic, social, and environmental the needs of residents from all income levels. Community groups should be involved in building a long term vision for their neighborhood's development. In my view NIMBYism occurs when people are asked to rubber stamp developments that are already far along in the process, or when developers and planners fail to see and understand what makes that neighborhood or community special. It is far better and less expensive to get people involved in building a long term vision for growth, THEN seek developers to bring that vision to life, not the other way around. Rezoning already developed commercial areas for mixed use development is my preference over developing woodland or greenspace. Homeowners with large lots should be not only allowed, but encouraged to build accessory dwellings on their properties, allowing multiple generations to live together and increasing the stock of rental property available to lower income residents. Restrictions on building accessory dwellings and outbuildings within 15-20 feet of a property line are unreasonable, preventing those with smaller lots from taking advantage of this economic opportunity/social good. The policy should be reexamined and revised.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Hillsborough between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

First of all, we should treat historically diverse communities as cultural assets to be protected, much like we do for significant buildings and the environment. Communities die when they are not supported by an economic infrastructure that reflects and serves their specific needs. Empty lots and strip malls in or near neighborhoods that do not currently have a public gathering space with walkable retail, services, and dining should be considered for mixed use development in accordance with the long term development goals and vision of the people who live there. Schools should be walkable, community centers and affordable senior housing should be located within the neighborhoods they serve, so that all generations needs are being met. Many homes in the Historic District and West End are more than 50 years old, but not are not architecturally rare or connected to historically significant events. These homes should not be subject to the same onerous permitting processes as a home with documented historic or cultural value. Onerous and expensive design standards and processes that require homeowners to provide detailed drawings and narratives even for simple, everyday necessities such as window and door replacement, fences, home gardens, and garden sheds are unreasonable, intimidating, expensive, and slow, often involving multiple trips before the Historic District Commission. This process prevents many property owners (even white, well to do ones) from necessary maintenance, or making improvements that would boost the value, condition, and energy efficiency of their properties. The installation of affordable, modern, energy efficient windows and doors should be allowed in non-contributing buildings within Historic Districts. Guidelines should be specific and clear, and homeowners seeking minor works permits should be able to submit a simple form online to be reviewed by staff, not HDC volunteers.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

While we should encourage citizens to participate in the process of creating a long term vision for greater Hillsborough that includes plans and processes for incorporating currently unincorporated areas. While citizens should be invited to sit on advisory boards, they should not be given quasi-judicial or decision making authority. Elected officials, accountable to citizens, supported by trained and highly qualified staff should be charged with making all zoning, appropriateness, and permitting decisions. This will ensure that permitting is more fair, less biased, and aligns with the communities' long term development plans and goals, not arbitrary whims, tastes, and connections of



committee members. We want to maintain and protect the special feeling and sense of place, not turn our town into a museum for tourists or an exhibition of changing elite tastes,

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**\*Robb English- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Hillsborough Commissioner  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Hillsborough? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

Climate Action and Community Connectivity. Climate action is critical for Hillsborough to continue to advance our sustainability and resiliency of the Town. I will continue to strongly support the Town's development of the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan, encourage public engagement throughout the process and work hard to implement the plan that will guide future development decisions and the Town's goal of reaching the transition to 100% clean energy. Community Connectivity is paramount to the Town of Hillsborough's goal of remaining a vibrant town with a strong sense of community. I will advocate to increase pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in and around the Town of Hillsborough, connecting existing neighborhoods via bicycle and pedestrian paths, and connecting downtown with the southern and northern parts of Hillsborough. In addition, I believe there are opportunities to expand the Town's internet access in our public parks, facilities and open spaces and possibly partner with the County to expand internet access in the Downtown area.

**2. What would Hillsborough look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed? \***

Hillsborough would have many more sidewalks and bike paths throughout town, it would have bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and complete streets that would connect the southern and northern parts of town to downtown, there would be some round-a-bouts

where we have traffic lights, traffic would flow better and we would have more people walking and biking to get around. South Churton St would have sidewalks from Waterstone to 70-A, the ramps at Churton/I-40 and Churton/I-85 would be improved, and we'd have a pedestrian bridge across I-85 connecting Becketts Ridge and Collins Ridge.

**3. What is your opinion on advisory board members with known association and support for white supremacist groups? \***

I would not support any advisory board appointments of members with known associations or support for white supremacist groups. I do believe we need to continue to work harder to diversify our advisory boards and have them better reflect the demographics of our communities.

**4. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color? \***

The Town of Hillsborough's Comprehensive Sustainability Plan is intended to guide future development decisions and land use management to assist in mitigating climate change. The Town of Hillsborough is working hard to increase community engagement and to utilize creative and flexible ways to reach out to our marginalized communities to get their input regarding sustainability, connectivity, racial and social justice. We need to physically go into our communities of color and engage with those community leaders regarding their concerns about land use, facility and infrastructure improvements.

**5. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners)**

I will continue to advocate working with our non-profit housing partners Habitat for Humanity Orange County and CASA for all future residential developmental decisions, and increasing housing options for families, veterans, people with disabilities and low wage workers in Hillsborough. In addition, I will advocate for mixed-use and mixed-income medium and high density developments that are on bus lines, walkable and bikeable. I would target households below 50% AMI for renters and in areas experiencing significant price appreciation.

**6. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in Hillsborough between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members? \***

I will advocate for our local non-profit Orange County Living Wage and encourage our local businesses to voluntarily certify because fair compensation is good for all employees and our local economy. I will advocate for mixed-income developments that include people and families of all incomes.

**7. How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from town workers and residents? \***

I will continue to encourage our residents and workers to participate on our Town advisory boards and for continued diversification of our town boards. I will engage with our local businesses and residents and listen to better their issues and concerns to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the needs of our workers and residents.

**8. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

Mebane Mayor and City Council

**\*Montreena W. Hadley- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Mebane City Council  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities for Mebane? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them?**

My top two policy priorities for Mebane are 1) Growth and 2) Transportation. Both are important because they are lifelines for city development and connectivity. My plan for addressing each is to utilize the Mebane By Design Comprehensive Land Development

Plan and the City of Mebane Comprehensive Transportation Plan that I participated in developing with the citizens of Mebane and was adopted by the City Council on 05/01/2017 prior to my retirement in May 2020.

**2. What would Mebane look like in twenty years if your transportation policies and vision were executed?**

In twenty years, Mebane would look like a vibrant, well-planned city with smart growth and an adequate transportation network connecting roads, streets, sidewalks, etc., for friendly pedestrian mobility, biking, walking, rail, and driving.

**3. What policies on land use and facility improvements would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change? How can we ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color?**

The Mebane By Design Comprehensive Land Development Plan would help the city contribute to mitigating climate change. The plan is a tool used to help guide sustainable land uses. We can ensure the implementation of these policies will not negatively impact communities of color by abiding by the plan. When developed, the plan intentionally addressed concerns of communities living in the affected areas.

**4. What plans do you have for securing affordable housing in future development? What do you think are appropriate AMI levels to target for affordable housing? (For both renters and homeowners)**

As the council is doing now, and has done over the years, is to continue to make sure that there is an equal balance for affordable housing. I know from a zoning standpoint as an employee, we have that leverage we can use to make sure that, as developers come in, the plans are something that can benefit the residents of Mebane and that it's affordable for all. As a NC Certified Zoning Official, I plan to apply the appropriate zoning rules and regulations to secure affordable housing in future development. I think the market should determine what the appropriate AMI levels to target affordable housing for both renters and homeowners should be. Typically, when developers come in with their product, they give you a background of the research that they have done to show what is actually needed in Mebane. If the statistics show that's what's needed at that time, then at that point, as a council, when the developers come before you with the product that they're trying to bring to Mebane that research can be discussed. If it's beneficial at that time, and looking at the area that they're talking about building or developing in, you have to look at those things.

**5. What plans do you have for bridging the economic gap in the Mebane between people of color/people with low incomes and more affluent white community members?**

As I have already indicated, I plan to rely on the Mebane By Design Comprehensive Land Development Plan and the City of Mebane Comprehensive Transportation Plan as the cornerstone for my work on the City Council, including in my efforts to bridge the economic gap.

**6 How will you seek input to inform your role as a council member from city workers and residents?**

I will seek input by participating in public candidate forums, knocking on doors, attending city events, and continuing existing relationships with former and current city employees.

**7. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

Chapel Hill/Carrboro Board of Education

**\*Mike Sharp- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Chapel Hill/Carrboro Board of Ed  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

I'd say my top two priorities for our district should be (1) working to remove the "opportunity gap", and (2) establishing a better system for implementing and tracking the success of district initiatives. To clarify, the "opportunity gap" represents the difference in grades, test scores, opportunities for advancement, discipline referrals, and more(!) between white students and students of color in our district. I've been told by the district every year (since I started teaching here in 2002) that we are "working on

it". I've seen programs come and go fairly often, all promising to make a difference but we know the numbers are just as bad as they were when schools were first desegregated! Our solution needs to be multi-faceted. First, we need to make more conscious efforts to hire and retain staff at every level who represent and approximate the diversity of our community. Second, we need to implement racial equity training in every school (and among administration) that helps staff to understand the ways in which our systems are failing our students of color. This training has begun, in my experience, many many times but fizzled out within a year. Hence the need, as I mentioned earlier (priority 2) for accountability and data to track our efforts. We also need to ensure that trainings continue even when staff starts to feel uncomfortable, as we recognize that's an important part of how we grow and learn about such emotional subjects. Third, we need to use that newfound training to examine our current (and especially our long-established) practices and throw out whatever doesn't bring us closer.

## **2. How can the budgeting process be improved? \***

I've always been troubled by the ongoing relationship between our district and the county in terms of budgets. I can recall numerous times that we "needed" a grassroots effort from parents and community members to ask for Orange County to continue funding our efforts. We should not need to plead every few years for funding in order to keep our budget afloat. We need to either formalize some arrangement for what seems equitable for funding both county and city schools, or else we need to compose our budgets assuming we will not receive such funding.

## **3. What policies or facility improvements would help the school system contribute to mitigating climate change? \***

Our sustainability director, Dan Schnitzer, has done a great job in reducing our carbon footprint and educating our staff and students about our responsibility to fight climate change. We need to continue these efforts, especially continued education on resource use and composting. We can also agree to consistently employ eco-friendly construction methods like we utilized at Northside. I'd also be interested in encouraging carpooling efforts among staff and families, once we're clear of COVID concerns, and pursuing the viability of alternative fuel sources for our buses.

## **4. What plans do you have for bridging the achievement gap in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools between minority and white community members? \***

I mentioned this in my priority number 1 above.

**5. What is your position on School Resource officers? \***

I have worked with many SROs and they're all fine people and well-intentioned; I don't mean to cast aspersions on any of their efforts in schools. But I question the effectiveness of their presence in our schools, and I'm afraid it's doing more harm than good for our students of color. In the reality of America today, police officers are at the center of many highly-publicized acts of racism and inequity. Many of our students have experienced frustration and anger about the unfairness they see in media and in their personal lives and the lives of their families and friends. When you've seen and felt this oppression coming from police officers, that level of fear and distrust cannot be erased by a few examples that officers can be friendly in school. Using SROs for discipline matters contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline and goes contrary to our efforts toward restorative practices. Our counselors, social workers, and other staff can do the job, without the overhanging anxiety of an armed officer in our schools.

**6. How do you plan to allocate BOE funding from Orange County to balance the needs of refurbishing buildings against the cost of educational programs? \***

I think this balance is best achieved with an overarching set of mission priorities and goal setting, so that we can weigh the outcomes from each expenditure

**7. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**\*George Griffin- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Chapel Hill/Carrboro Board of Ed  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

My top two policy priorities are: 1) Eliminate the racial opportunity gap. The school board has a legal, ethical, and moral commitment to ALL students. It is incumbent on the board to develop and adopt a collective belief related to addressing this decades old

inequity. Systemic changes are needed in identification of “above average” students resulting in de facto tracking, under-identification in programs for students identified as Academically/Intellectually Gifted (AIG) and resultant lowered performance expectations for black and brown students. Disciplinary practices and the over-use of out-of-school suspensions need to be revisited and revised to address this long-standing reality. 2) Focus, support, and strengthen our general education program Pre-K through Grade 12. Another way of putting it is, “first things first.” Ensuring that high quality learning opportunities are available to all students in every grade-level, classroom, and school in our district is the primary mission of the board. A purposeful effort is needed to monitor, evaluate, and support effective teaching and learning. A focus on classroom learning environments that foster the critical thinking skills of each student is fundamental and needs ongoing development.

## **2. How can the budgeting process be improved? \***

We are a resource-rich district, with many programs and services. Most recently the district used a zero-based budgeting process which calls for each program and service area to generate its proposed budget from a “fresh-start” viewpoint, rather than continuing what’s currently in place and simply adding to it. The unstated assumption is that each program is equally effective and needed. The metrics used to assess effectiveness vary widely and are not consistently reviewed. The entire process can be improved by having the board prioritize funding approval based on board priorities and collectively generated values and beliefs. When viewed in isolation, almost every school program and service appears valuable and helpful. However, there is not always useful data to support this belief. Additionally, some budgeted areas address specific goals of the district more directly than others. Therefore, budgeting priorities need to be developed up-front by the board, so that each existing program is not in competition with others.

## **3. What policies or facility improvements would help the school system contribute to mitigating climate change? \***

It is incumbent on the board to not only address current capital improvement needs, but to plan for the future. The board has several policies in place that address environmental issues: “... conserves environmental resources... are energy efficient...” (Policy Code: 9020 Facility Design). Another (Policy Code: 9040 High Performance Building Design Criteria) includes: “...High Performance Schools (HPS) are designed to improve the learning environment while saving energy, materials and natural resources... develop in an appropriate and environmentally sensitive manner... reduce the use of water... use materials that conserve raw resources... In order to accomplish the desired outcomes, design standards established by the Leadership in Energy and



Environmental Design (LEED) will be employed...” Building on the design criteria above, I would support efforts to encourage walking/biking to school wherever possible. School start and stop times may be modified to reduce long bus rides, as well as long car drop-off and pick-up lines.

#### **4. What plans do you have for bridging the achievement gap in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools between minority and white community members? \***

The achievement gap, now better described as the opportunity gap, requires significant systemic changes. This is a departure from viewing the problem and solution as a deficit problem related to black students. Recent data reveals that racial disparities persist in the identification and participation rates in programs and services for academically gifted students. Disparities in out-of-school suspension rates remain unacceptably high, and in fact are increasing. To me this is a “kitchen on fire” situation. The school board needs to step-up and lead the way to some systemic changes. The 2015 report titled “Excellence with Equity: The Schools Our Children Deserve” (compiled by the Campaign for Racial Equity In Our Schools) needs to be revisited. This report contains excellent anecdotal insights and data highlighting similarities and differences in perceptions of white and non-white students, parents, and teachers. It also contains eight Equity Goals that remain highly relevant. The Campaign for Racial Equity in Our Schools has developed a new year-long series titled, “Ending School Racism; What Can White Parents Do?” I look forward to participating in these sessions as there is much to be learned.

#### **5. What is your position on School Resource officers? \***

School Resource Officers are not needed in all schools. The broader issue is best described as school safety. First and foremost, schools must be safe learning environments. Safe includes both physical and emotional safety. Without a truly safe environment, teaching and learning is significantly diminished. School safety issues and how to best address them require a total team commitment from all the adults in any school. Beginning with the principal and administrative team, a successful school safety plan requires the participation of the entire faculty, staff and supporting agencies. A School Resource Officer (SRO) may be a vital and important part of the plan; however, this is not automatic. The key ingredient to success is that each adult has a role to play and collectively every school may develop a truly safe learning environment for all. Additionally, black students report higher rates of undesirable interactions with SROs. It is incumbent of school administrators to act on this reality, rather than simply acknowledge it. The current review of the role of the SRO in our schools should occur in the context of the overall safety plan at each school. The SRO may play a vital role;

however, it needs to be as part of the overall team, and not done in an isolated manner. I have seen many situations nationwide where the administration and/or staff abdicate some of their responsibilities for school safety because there is an SRO in the building. SROs have no place in handling routine student discipline issues. That is the job of the school administration and faculty. So, the common question of, “Should we have SROs in our schools?” is better framed as “How can an SRO assist in our overall safety plan?” and then go from there to make decisions on a school-by-school basis.

**6. How do you plan allocate BOE funding from Orange County to balance the needs of refurbishing buildings against the cost of educational programs? \***

Budgeting for capital needs projects in the schools is often a contentious process. Most funds are categorical and may only be used for specific purposes. The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) allocates both operational funds and capital outlay funds. At present, the BoCC has approved approximately \$30 million dollars (both systems) in capital improvement funds, however, the CHCCS deferred using some of these funds for one year. Discussion among commissioners and board members needs to be ongoing, and direct, and not through social media outlets. Within the constraints of my role as a school board member I would work directly with the BoCC to develop some common understandings, and a degree of trust in order to better address the balance between refurbishing buildings and the cost of educational programs.

**7. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**\*Riza Jenkins- Endorsed by PDOC**

**Running for Chapel Hill/Carrboro Board of Ed  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

The top two (2) priorities that I would address are: 1. Increasing the intentional work around diversity and equity 2. Ensuring transparency and accountability of the CHCCS

district to its stakeholders. These priorities are important because they impact all decisions that the CHCCS district will make for our students, staff, and schools. I will address these by making this priorities required information for the staff to provide for any decision the board is presented to make decisions or provide guidance.

## **2. How can the budgeting process could be improved? \***

The budget process can be improved by doing more outreach to community on the budget needs of the district both short term and long term and the impact on students, staff, and community. The budget needs of the schools are great and investing in our schools will impact the students and the greater community.

## **3. What policies or facility improvements would help the school system contribute to mitigating climate change? \***

Many of the schools in the district are older, inefficient, and are having a negative impacting the environment. By renovating and updating our older facilities, we can reduce our negative impact on the environment, but this requires funding to make these repairs or renovations. The district currently has initiative in place that support climate change initiatives such as gardens at schools which provide food to members of our community, composting at all schools, and discussions have occurred to add solar to some of our buildings.

## **4. What plans do you have for bridging the achievement gap in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools between minority and white community members? \***

The work around bridging the achievement/opportunity gap will take intentional work around decision making and ensuring we are meeting the needs of all students. As a district, we state we use the Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) toolkit and we should ensure we are utilizing it to inform our decision making. Additionally, we need to look at existing policies, programs, and curriculum and see if it is satisfying the areas of our strategic plan that address the achievement gap. If we have programs that are making the impact we intended, we should continue those programs and look at strategies to expand/replicate those programs. If we have programs/policies that are not working to close the achievement gap/strategic plan, then we will need to have some conversations about whether we will continue or need to make changes to those programs/policies.

## **5. What is your position on School Resource officers? \***

I currently serve on the Safety Task Force, formerly the SRO Task Force, which was formed in the CHCCS district to look at School Resource officers in our schools. I, along with other committee members, have worked to help reframe the discussion to focus on safety, how we define safety, how decisions around safety can impact how students of various groups, and what our safety plan looks going forward. By getting the stakeholders to have honest conversations about these areas, we hope that this will uncover that School Resource Officers may have been hired with one purpose in mind, but the actual impact has had a negative impact on students/community members of color. At the end of the day, schools are a place of learning that we want safe. We should not have any person or position at our schools who make any individual or groups of individuals feel unsafe.

**6. How do you plan allocate BOE funding from Orange County to balance the needs of refurbishing buildings against the cost of educational programs? \***

The funding for capital improvements and educational programs should not be an either or since both needs are equally important. The funding from the county is separated by operating and capital funds. Our current challenge is getting the county and state to fund budget requests. The district has been taking additional steps to scrutinize our current spending, so that we are spending our funds on educational programs that are ensuring all students educational needs. There are some capital projects that have been addressed, but with over \$200-\$300 million of unfunded capital improvements, we will need the fiscal support from the county and state.

**7. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes

---

**Tim Sookram**

**Running for Chapel Hill/Carrboro Board of Ed  
Registered Democrat**

**1. What are your top two policy priorities? Why are they important? What are your plans/strategies for addressing them? \***

Covid and infrastructure. I think we need a broad plan to make up for the time the students have lost

## **2. How can the budgeting process could be improved? \***

I'm new to the process, but I see the school board fund short-term decisions that cost more money in the long run. At my kid's elementary school, the water pipes carry dangerous amounts of lead. This was discovered in March. Water fountains can't be used. The chefs in the cafeteria can't cook with the tap water. The district's reaction was to buy a bunch of bottled water, rather than fix the underlying problem with the pipes. So they've created a bunch of plastic waste and made a stopgap solution into what appears to be a permanent solution.

## **3. What policies or facility improvements would help the school system contribute to mitigating climate change? \***

This is a big question that involves a lot of long-term decisions, which I barely see the current school board think about. As far as mitigation, we need to look at our carbon footprint. We need to change in-district zoning that sends children to a school on the other side of town. We need to look at our pick-up and drop-off policies that let cars unnecessarily sit in line idling and pumping pollution into our atmosphere. We need to find a way to employ zero emissions or hybrid buses. I think we also need to look at how climate change puts our schools at risk. We need to audit our district's properties to see if, for example, they are put at risk of increased flooding.

## **4. What plans do you have for bridging the achievement gap in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools between minority and white community members? \***

I think one major thing we can do is expand our Pre-K programs. Researchers have known for 20 years that the earlier we begin with quality education, the bigger the improvements.

## **5. What is your position on School Resource officers? \***

I think that schools have no need for dedicated police officers in the building. I respect the police, but when schools need the police, they can call the Chapel Hill or Carrboro Police Department. I do not think police mitigate danger in schools, I think they end up acting like a hammer in search of nails. There were SROs in my middle and high school growing up. The primary effect on children was intimidation.

**6. How do you plan allocate BOE funding from Orange County to balance the needs of refurbishing buildings against the cost of educational programs? \***

I think our facilities will cost us more in the long run if we don't fix the fundamental problems now. It's possible we may get funding from the federal government to fix this basic structural problems so we don't have to pull money away from other priorities

**7. If we endorse you we are asking for a promise that you will continue to meet with us, and address our concerns when they arise. Are you willing to make that promise? \***

Yes