

## **PA-PAC Questionnaire for Mayor and City Council Candidates - 2015**

*When answering this questionnaire, please repeat the questions in your response document with each question numbered and organized as it appears here. Type your responses in italics, bold, or a different font to distinguish your responses from the questions. Please do not use colors.*

**Please return completed form along with your resume describing education, work history, community service, and prior political experience as soon as possible, but by July 30, 2015, at the latest.**

**You may e-mail your responses to Tom Miller at [tom-miller1@nc.rr.com](mailto:tom-miller1@nc.rr.com) or you may send a printed copy of your responses to Durham PA-PAC c/o Tom Miller 1110 Virginia Avenue, Durham, NC 27705-3262**

**Please note that following the July 30 deadline, the Durham People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.**

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire and your willingness to serve the people of Durham.**

Candidate's name: **Ricky L. Hart**

Office for which you have filled for election (circle one): Mayor / **At-large City Council**

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### **Government and the Public Good**

1. Of all the issues confronting city government, which single issue is most important to you and why? What would you do about it if elected?

**Response:** Equality of Life in Durham. To me it encompasses a realm of a healthy over all environments. The ability to get a good decent paying job, have a safe neighborhood and access to the entertainment amenities for a good life style.

2. What are the greatest employment needs of Durham's residents? How can city government use its authority and its resources to direct jobs to those who most need them? Be specific.

**Response:** Living wage jobs, the opportunity to work and the ability to have a decent life style.

**Response:** Try and work with businesses that want to come to Durham that will provide steady jobs at a living wage. Also keep the citizens informed of what they need to do to prepare for the types of jobs that the city is looking to bring into Durham.

3. How can the City Council act to lift the wages of the lowest paid workers in Durham and reduce growing income inequality in our community? **Response:** I think that you have some kind of control of the businesses coming into Durham. I don't think it's a good practice to let businesses come in and price range an amenity out of the common citizen's affordability range of their pay. Example, bring in hotels, restaurants, that services and products are way outside the range of the citizens of the city. Let's say a French restaurant locates downtown Durham, but there menu average items is \$18-\$20 for entrees, and the meals average \$40-\$100. That would deny the average wage worker making \$8 to \$10 hourly; totally put them out of that product range which would create a exclusivity environment.

4. Describe your interest in and commitment to public amenities such as playing fields, open space, and walking and biking trails. Are you willing to raise property taxes to provide for and maintain these amenities? **Response:** Public amenities are a good thing when they are placed in the correct locations. Example, this summer is very hot, but there are recreational centers with pools. I would propose putting open outdoor pools like the old Duke Park pool in the following locations. Northern Durham at Latta and Infinity rd. Area, East Durham at Cheek Rd Merritt Moore area, West Durham at Garrett rd. area, and South Durham at Hwy 55 & 54 area. Walking and biking trail are good but should have solar lighting and emergency call boxes along the routes.

I would not impose raising taxes on the people to build or maintain these amenities. I would look at shifting funds after other projects have been completed or if there are programs that have died. I would look to grants from the federal government of use block grant funding.

## Housing, City Planning, and Neighborhoods

5. What does “gentrification” mean to you? Where is it happening? What, if anything, should be done about it? **Response:** To me it’s the buying and renovating of low income houses and stores in low income areas urban neighborhoods by corporations and wealthier individuals, that go in build expensive buildings or residence which the average person can’t afford. This causes poor people have to move out of their homes and communities.

It is happening in the low income areas of Durham such as the east central and south central Durham.

What should be done about it, see what can be done to revitalize those areas with federal grant money. We have to also watch the cities use and misuse of eminent domain for the purpose of helping businesses.

6. In 2012, the city completed a project to convert the Ninth Street Compact Neighborhood Tier into a design district. Do you support the planning department’s current initiative to create new compact neighborhood tiers and to convert compact neighborhood tiers into design districts? What is good about the initiative and what is bad about it? What should be done to fix what is bad? **Response:** Good about it is that they can direct new growth to an area. Bad is that they may target an area that not ready for their design. The issue is that the planning department plans the areas or neighborhoods according to whose idea of what it should look like. They need to consult with the citizens.

7. In 2014, the city council adopted a resolution calling for affordable housing near planned transit stations. Do you support the resolution? Would you change it? Should the city grant developer requests for rezonings near transit areas without commitments for affordable housing? Please explain your answers. **Response:** Do you support the resolution? I don’t see an issue with that.

Would you change it? At this particular time, nothing.

Should the city grant developers request for rezoning near transit areas without commitments for affordable housing? NO

8. What geographic area(s) in Durham need special attention from city government? In those areas, what are the problems and what action should the city take? **Response:** North Durham Bragtown, East Durham Wellons Village, Angier Avenue, South Central Hwy 55

In those areas, what are the problems and what actions should the city take.

**Response:** Lack of after school activities, economical loss of revenue, and violence.

9. Under what circumstances would you vote to downzone a piece of property? By “downzone,” we mean a rezoning action that would reduce the market value of the land being rezoned.

**Response:** They could be many options, chemical contamination, and areas of blight.

### **City Finances, Capital Improvements, Transportation, and City Services**

10. The city manager recently gave city council members a list of potential capital improvement projects to prioritize. Of these, what are your top four priorities for capital expenditures? Is there something that you would include in your top four that was not on the manager’s list? Would you be willing to raise property taxes to accomplish your priority projects? **Response:**

1. Culture and Recreation
2. Downtown Revitalization
3. Transportation
4. Water

No I would not be willing to raise property taxes.

11. The city council recently voted to provide \$11.25 million in public financial support to two private development projects in the downtown area. Did the council make the correct decisions in those cases? Are the projects equally deserving? As a council member, what philosophy will guide you in deciding whether to provide public financial support to private development enterprises? ?

**Response:** No

Are the projects equally deserving? **Response:** No

As a council member, what philosophy will guide you in deciding whether to provide public financial support to provide development enterprises?

**Response:** The needs of the community. The biggest concerns are always Jobs and security.

When developers comes knocking to sell the wears, I will ask myself will it bring decent wages and health care, and will this impact the safety of the area and community as a whole.

12. Under what circumstances would you vote to raise bus fares? Is the city's public transportation system being managed effectively? Is it serving the population which needs it the most? Please comment on your philosophy concerning Durham's public transportation system. ? **Response:** when the maintenance and gas prices go up so much that it affects the operational flow of service. Is the city's public transportation system being managed effectively? **Response:** At this particular moment it is.

13. The City Council recently voted to approve a "road diet" for Highway 15-501 between University Drive and Chapel Hill Road. Did the council make a wise decision? In general, do you support or oppose reducing vehicular travel lanes to promote traffic-calming, parking, and bicycle and pedestrian travel? **Response:** Yes at this time traffic flows ok. In general do you support or oppose reducing vehicular travel lanes to promote traffic calming, parking, and bicycle and pedestrian travel. **Response:** I support opening more lanes it helps traffic flow and irate drivers.

14. In general, do you support public funding of city programs and services through property taxes or user fees? Please explain your answer. **Response:** This a catch 22 question. If you raise property taxes to provide quality service to your citizens, does everyone get use that or is it to a specific area. If I was to favor raising a property tax it would be for something everyone could benefit from.

## Law Enforcement

15. Is there a trust problem between the people of Durham and the police department? Are you satisfied with the department's responses to issues of use of force, racial profiling, searches, and communication with the public? **Response:** Yes there is. Are you satisfied with the department response to issues of use of force, racial profiling, searches, and communications with the public? **Response:** No

16. Is the Civilian Police Review Board an effective tool for police oversight? If you perceive problems with oversight of the police department, what should be done to correct them? **Response:** No

If you perceive problems with oversight of the police department, what should be done to correct them.? **Response:** The oversight board should have the power to investigate and discipline.

17. Should the enforcement of laws criminalizing marijuana use be among the police department's lowest priorities? ? **Response:** That is up to the chief of police. We should not get into the business of telling the police what to do by priority, just as they should not attempt to tell city council how to govern.

### **Civil Rights**

18. Would you support legislation designed to protect gay, lesbian, and transgender people from discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodation, and access to government benefits and services? ? **Response:** If I'm not mistaken there are laws already on the books in reference to discrimination against the above. I think when you start getting into specifics of certain groups getting certain right then you're a slippery slope.

This has nothing to do with city council, and if legislation passes a law stating this is law then so be it. Last I check city council members don't pass legislation.

### **Personal and Political**

19. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offence other than a minor traffic offense? Have you ever been charged with a felony (without regard to the disposition of the charge)? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, please describe the charge or charges, the circumstances, and the outcome. **Response:** No

Have you ever been charged with a felony (without regard to disposition of the charge)?

**Response:** No

20. Is there currently a judgment of debt outstanding against you? If so, please explain the circumstances. **Response:** Yes

Roof replacement and didn't have all the money so had to get a loan and its being paid off now, the company use it as a 2<sup>nd</sup> mortgage/judgement.

21. How are you currently registered to vote? Have you ever changed your registration with regard to party status? If so, when, and why? ? **Response:** Registered voter, I think your real question is what party affiliation are you with....Democrat.

Have you ever change your registration with regard to party status? **Response:** Yes when I first got into politics I started as an independent then found out you couldn't vote in certain elections as an independent, and when I went to change it I marked republican by mistake and couldn't fix it until after the election cycle. That was in 92 some were around there. I was just out the military.

22. For whom did you vote for in the 2008 and 2012 presidential and gubernatorial elections? For whom did you vote in the 2014 U. S. Senate election? **Response:** Presidential Obama and governor Bev Purdue 2008 and 2012 Walter Dalton.

US Senate race 2014 I didn't vote for anyone no one impressed me, to earn my vote.