

## **PA PAC Questionnaire for Durham City Council Ward Seats and Durham Mayor – 2021**

Please return the completed form along with your resume or biographical statement describing education, work history, community service, and prior political experience as soon as possible, but by Friday August 20 at 5pm, at the latest.

Please e-mail your responses to the PAC Board at [papacboard@googlegroups.com](mailto:papacboard@googlegroups.com) by August 20 at 5pm.

Please note that following the Friday August 20 at 5pm deadline, the People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.

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. Do not use colors or shading. Please try to confine your responses to no more than 300 words unless another word limit is indicated. Do not feel obliged to exhaust the limit for each question.

If you use words or ideas from another person, please attribute your source. Thank you for

completing this questionnaire and your willingness to serve the people of Durham.

Candidate's name: Rebecca Harvard Barnes

Address: 2504 B Chapel Hill Rd. Durham, NC 27707

E-mail Address: rebarocks3@gmail.com

Phone: 919-801-3095

Website: rebeccaharvardbarnes.com

Question from Rochelle.

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

1. Of all the issues confronting Durham County, which single issue is most important to you and why? What would you do about it if you were elected? *My #1 issue of concern and importance is our community's need for climate justice and reducing our carbon footprint for the sake of our planet. There must be a sense of urgency, that we are currently not seeing, among the residents of Durham with creative and collaborative passing of state and local laws which will help bring in many more renewable energy sources. I answer this with respect to the fact that I know that residents are dying in our streets and neighborhoods daily because of gun violence in Durham. My fear is that as this type of microaggression and violence toward individuals continues, killing and destroying the lives of many in our community, without the urgent focus on global warming and reducing our use of fossil fuels, we will no longer have a planet to sustain us and all of the issues we are here to address will be inconsequential.*

## Education

2. Do you think it's appropriate to use the city's zoning/annexation/utility extension powers to hold charter schools accountable? If so, how would you do that? *If local charter schools are refusing to be responsible stewards in the community then they should face punitive consequences. The power of the City Council lies with zoning/annexation/utility and land use and so if using these means is necessary then I support it.*
3. How will you ensure that school facilities are incorporated into the long-range comprehensive planning process so that schools will serve as focal points for communities and neighborhoods? *Long range comprehensive planning that fails to take into consideration the impact of educational facilities, in regards to helping mitigate root causes that plague our city, and understanding of the fundamentals of reorganizing systems that are broken. Land development, zoning and care of existing structures would be prioritized.*
4. How should the City Council use public dollars to ensure that youth in Durham have equitable access, including transportation, to affordable extracurricular and job training opportunities? *A viable, stable and affordable mass transit system, which allows free movement of all Durham residents to and from opportunities, will lead to stabilization of the lives of youth in Durham. Youth programs which provide opportunity will be supported through collaboration with agencies working already on these issues and they will be supported monetarily. Equitable access to these opportunities requires a concerted effort of addressing the root issues that lend toward leading a healthy life. This means addressing the issues of affordable housing, healthy food, health care, education and sense of purpose for all of Durham's residents.*
5. What ideas do you have for Parks and Recreation to improve specialized programming options for different populations? (For example, disabled or religiously adherent members of our communities.) *A continued emphasis on special programs with Durham's Parks and Recreation with creative and thoughtful additional opportunities. Additional focus on opportunities for the senior citizens of Durham needs to be funded with urgency.*

## Racial Equity

6. How does race equity play into your view of governance? Will you ensure that race equity is a part of your leadership/governance? If so, how? *The narratives must be rewritten and as part of my governance of Durham I will work tirelessly to ensure that the history is told, accurately, and that everyone begins to understand the reasons why racial inequality negatively impacts our entire city. I will work alongside the Durham Racial Equity Task Force and others in Durham who have made it their mission to build a stronger, more equitable Durham to ensure we are*

*supporting the efforts through funding and the examination of all the root causes and how to lift out of them for future generations.*

7. What is your position on the county/city of Durham establishing a dedicated Race Equity Fund? Please explain. *It is imperative and must be sustainable, accountable to community oversight, and ambitious enough to effectively address racial inequities in areas of housing, economy, criminal legal, healthcare, education, and public history.*
8. How, if at all, should Durham utilize the 2020 Durham Racial Equity Taskforce Report? *The work of the RETF acknowledges its limits in regards to the work they have done over the past 20+ months and the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the Durham community in regards to the potential responses to the recommendations that the Taskforce has made. If anything, the pandemic has only deepened the divide in many ways making the work of the city in regards to racial equity all the more necessary.*

#### **Housing and Transportation**

9. How will you ensure that new housing development serves the Durham community equitably, including households with income less than \$15/hour? *With the continuation of initiatives set forth thanks to the Affordable Housing investment plan. Also, continued work with Durham employers to provide a living wage.*
10. Would you support adding a city policy to the Comprehensive Plan which favors the inclusion of at least 20% small dwelling units in new residential developments? If such a policy were adopted, under what circumstances would you let it guide your vote on zoning/annexation/utility extension cases? Under what circumstances would you make an exception to such a policy? ES(Note: 'Small' in this context would mean smaller than 1,200 sf in single-family units, whether attached or detached, and smaller than 1,000 sf in two bedroom apartments in multifamily buildings.) *Yes... in order to create more housing stock in an area in which we have a shortage.*
11. How will you make the development process transparent to neighborhoods and ensure they have a seat at the table with planning staff and developers? Would you support Durham neighborhoods in creating small area plans? *I would address these issues in correspondence with the city and develop opportunities for all voices to be heard in the decision making process.*
12. How will you expand bus service, so riders can connect across Durham? What transportation infrastructure is most pressing to fund and expand? *While working to assess zoning and land use, keeping the bus services accessible to all Durham residents will become increasingly important as we move out into areas of Durham that currently do not possess access to this infrastructure. We will have to have covered bench stops at all transit stops in Durham. And The transportation infrastructure must support a light rail system that is efficient and environmentally friendly with more busses that run with alternative power*

*sources.*

13. Black communities in Durham are being threatened by displacement due to private investment. What resources and support can the City and County deploy to help longtime residents resist the negative impact of these developments and facilitate self-determined visions for the future of each community? *Continued work on the Affordable Housing investment plan and our five-year housing plan is the best chance we have at stemming some of the gentrification. One of our most important goals is neighborhood stabilization in the most swiftly gentrifying neighborhoods. We must also look at root causes and move the work and economic development forward in Durham to keep current Durham residents here and where they are living now.*
14. Energy affordability is an underappreciated aspect of housing affordability. What steps can the City take to ensure high electricity bills do not force residents out of their homes? *Implementation of the City of Durham's roadmap to sustainability is crucial in this effort. I would continue to work toward obtaining a partnership with Duke Energy and the state of NC with Duke Energy's Green Source Advantage Program.*
15. How would you act to ensure that development in Durham is done in an equitable way that benefits long-time residents as well as new arrivals? *Utilizing the resources from the approved housing bond that Durham voted on in 2019 in conjunction with continued work with Expanding Housing Choice in Durham. We must continue an aggressive commitment from the city in creative thinking and funding in regards to our land-use policies. Our public interventions require that we allow for an environment where we can increase current housing supply. Only our zoning practices will allow for more variety in the housing stock and more creative thinking is needed in regards to what we allow builders and designers to build.*

#### **Environment and Climate**

16. What do you see as the most critical environmental and climate justice issues facing Durham, and what do you believe the city should do about them? Specifically, what opportunities do you see at the intersection of climate action, environmental justice, and Durham's economic development strategy? *There is proven inequality in climate justice in Durham. Less impervious land use and zoning and more green space will be necessary to begin the process of lessening that divide. The problem is systemic and the problem is a global crisis so there must be a much greater sense of urgency in Durham (and the entire state of North Carolina) in regard to these concerns.*
17. American city government officials have the unique power of regulating real estate through zoning. Will you accept donations to your campaign from major real estate interests? Please explain your position. *Fair Housing laws, land use and zoning are all ways in which careful planning of Durham must be considered. Local Real*

*Estate interests are better served in a community that is equitable and fair for all of Durham residents. I would accept contributions from major real estate interests because collaboration is imperative in regards to this important city development and perception of a Mayor who is not interested in working with high stakes real estate interests and investments is missing an opportunity to help make Durham the best place it can be.*

#### **City Finances, Incentive, and Services**

18. What is the most important thing that is not currently being funded by the City? Would you be willing to raise taxes to fund this item? *I would be willing to raise taxes to help fund the need for justice and an effective and healthy law enforcement system.*
19. What is your position on providing public incentives to private firms to promote economic development in Durham? *I am pro incentivising them, if they are in the best interest of all of Durham's residents. The legislature would need to be less restrictive in allowing the city to do this.*

#### **Justice and Law Enforcement**

20. The newly elected Council will have to decide whether to transfer fifteen frozen positions by the current Council from the Durham Police Department to the newly created Community Safety Department. What is your position regarding the new Department, and would you support the transfer? If the Department's pilot programs are successful, what other resources would you be willing to commit to it, and where would they come from? *Yes I would absolutely support transferring these frozen positions AND hiring many more new officers to respond to the appropriate calls of crisis. Resources would be needed at every aspect of the process of communicating the need for the police and assessment of which departments would be best to respond will need to be enhanced. I believe working in collaboration with DPS, the Department of Public Health, the County, the Judicial system and local leaders of the vibrant Faith community of Durham would be needed to commit to working with the city to help reduce violent crime, have healthy law enforcement tactics and to create a system of justice.*
21. Are you satisfied with the Durham Police Department, including its administrative, law enforcement, and security functions? Should the City government increase or decrease resources allocated to the Police Department? Please explain your answer. *I believe the Durham Police Department has work to do in order to be the most effective and efficient it can be. I look forward to helping in the process of selecting Durham's next Chief of Police and am thrilled that Durham has established the Durham Community Safety & Wellness Task Force. Durham police are forced to be reactive to the crime in Durham, generally reacting in response to the crisis instead of being proactive concerning public safety. I would absolutely support the DPD's Crisis Intervention team and increase funding to ensure adequate policing positions to address issues in the community that would be better served by mental health professionals than by the police. I would support increased spending through*

*relocation of funds to better support our police system.*

## **Political**

22. For whom did you vote for in the 2016 and 2020 presidential and gubernatorial elections? For whom did you vote in the 2020 U. S. Senate election? *Please limit your answer to the names of your selections. In 2016 I voted for Hillary Clinton, Deborah Ross and George Butterfield. In 2020 I voted for Joe Biden, Roy Cooper, Cal Cunningham and David Price.*

*Thank you for completing this questionnaire.*

*Please do not forget to provide us with your resume or biographical statement.*

*I'm Rebecca Harvard Barnes. I'm a mother, a daughter, a sister, an aunt. I'm a minister, a business woman and a committed public servant. Durham has been my home since 1980. I have seen Durham go through a lot of changes over these many years. I am a proud alumni of the Durham Public School system having attended HopeValley Elementary school, Githens Jr. High and Jordan Sr. High. I grew up attending a downtown by 'history and by choice', church on the corner of Roxboro and Main St.... First Presbyterian Church where my Father, the Rev. Joe Harvard was pastor for 33 years. It was at church then, and now as I minister to residents of Durham at another Presbyterian Church, that I learned to embody hospitality and welcome of individuals of every age, race, nationality, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and economic circumstance. My family and faith helped instill in me a passion for social justice and loving my neighbor. Durham is where I grew up and grew into being the person I am now, ready to do my civic duty as your next Mayor of Durham.*

*The past 17 months have been unprecedented. The Covid 19 pandemic has forever changed the lives, in one way or another of every citizen of Durham. Like in the past when our community has been faced with challenges, we have shown each other that when our neighbors are in need, we are absolutely able to respond appropriately. Having said that, we are still dealing with this crisis and for many the threat of losing even more than they already have is imminent. As a community I implore us to rise up again and help one another.*

*I am running for mayor of Durham because I believe Durham is a beautiful city and an amazing place to live for some, but not yet, for all.*

*I want to help in the process of continuing to develop and lead Durham toward inspired inclusion and equity with strategic plans for public health, safety and education for all of the residents of our great city. If elected Mayor I would focus on continuing to seek reform in the city's efforts concerning the environment. Working in partnership with Duke Power's Green Source Advantage Program and pushing for a new City of Durham Energy Report to showcase where we currently stand and what must be done going forward to reduce our carbon footprint and tackle global*

warming. I would work with continued focus on public safety, collaborating with our new Chief of Police, upon their arrival, and supporting the further development of programs such as the Crisis Intervention Team. Violent crimes and gun violence in Durham, like many places in the nation, are increasing. With restrictions on municipalities by the state legislature concerning gun control, we will have to think creatively and act assertively to be a city that has less violent crime to respond to. It is unacceptable that people in Durham live in fear of gun violence and suffer the tragic loss of life as a result of it. I would continue the excellent work that the city has been implementing thanks to the Affordable Housing Investment Plan. I would act with urgent focus on the needs of Durham residents adversely affected by the eventual lifting of the federal eviction moratorium on renters and continue to think creatively concerning city land use and zoning in regards to providing more housing opportunities for all.

I have enormous experience with community building, relationship building, teaching, learning, living by example. I know how to spot a job that needs to be done, and I know how to make it happen. I bring people together and help build bridges as opposed to walls. I will help lead Durham, as Mayor, with thoughtful dedication, tenacity and sincerity.