

## **PA-PAC Questionnaire for Mayor and City Council Candidates – 2017**

*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 try to confine your responses within the word limits set for each question. They should be generous. Do not feel obliged to exhaust the limit for each question.*

**Please return the completed form along with your resume describing education, work history, community service, and prior political experience as soon as possible, but by July 30, 2017, 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: \_\_Dolly Reaves\_\_ Ward 2

Office for which you have filed for election (circle one): City Council Ward 1 **2** 3

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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? *Please limit your answer to 300 words.*

*Of the issues confronting local government today, the most important one, to me, is the growing income inequality. With so many new investors coming into town, we are attracting wealthier families, driving prices up and making the cost of living out of reach for many individuals and families who already struggle. While median income is on the rise, poverty rates continue to increase. One way I hope to address this is to slow gentrification and shift the focus back into investing in our communities by revitalizing areas from within. We need to come up with ways for our citizens to invest in their own communities instead of just handing them over to outside investors.*

2. What can the city do to lift the wages of the lowest paid workers in Durham and reduce growing income inequality in our community? Where in our community do you see opportunities for city government to address the racial wealth gap? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*In addressing the growing income inequality in Durham, there are many parts to create a sustainable solution. One part is to bring jobs into other areas of Durham, like Wellons Village. Wellons Village is a prime example of the consequences of racial income inequality and the negative effects of gentrification, as I will talk about more in question 6. Unlike downtown and other areas where gentrification has occurred, the jobs that need to be created are ones that benefit the vulnerable populations. I would like to implement green energy projects as one way to create jobs. Reviewing zoning plans and studying how*

*they hurt and help businesses in certain areas is also important. We need to make sure we are protecting local businesses outside of the downtown area, namely along Alston Avenue and Old East Durham. While raising wages is crucial to help those who work in downtown to live close to work, many cities are unable to raise the minimum wage without the state reversing it. This means the City of Durham needs to work closely with business owners in finding ways to incentivize them to raise wages on their own. Presenting business owners with the growing list of benefits for raising wages, such as company loyalty and high employee retention rate, at business workshops can help open the dialogue. Another part of fighting income inequality is to secure affordable childcare. Only 30% of children aged 0-5 are in childcare and 18% of our low-income families stated not being able to secure childcare as a reason for not being able to work. Expanding our funds for programs like, Subsidized Early Education for Kids (SEEK) and in our own local nonprofits, to help families find childcare and afford it so they can get back to work, is critical in addressing wealth inequality. Lastly, when looking for solutions in addressing the needs of those in poverty, the best people to talk to are those living in poverty. Too often, people think they know what is best for someone else, while I offered some ideas based on my personal experience living in poverty, I think it is crucial that we become better listeners. If elected, my primary objective is to be the representative voice of our vulnerable population by addressing their needs and concerns.*

3. Describe your interest in and commitment to public amenities such as playing fields, open space, street trees, traffic calming, and walking and biking facilities. Are you willing to raise property taxes to provide for and maintain these amenities? Are public amenities allocated to neighborhoods of different wealth and income levels equitably? Please explain and cite examples. *Please limit your answer to 500 words. Public amenities provide a space for communities to come together. These items are needed to retain the small town feel that holds our growing city together. Forrest Hills has the most impressive trees in the area, and they are enjoyed by everyone. Our city parks provide children a space to roam and imagine, regardless of family income or living situations. Walking and biking facilities encourage health habits and create a safe means to walk or bike to and from schools and work. As for raising property taxes, I believe our major cost burden should prioritize affordable housing and addressing poverty. However, this year's budget allocates nearly \$3 million dedicated to maintaining and creating our park structures. I believe it is crucial to make sure every area of Durham has nice parks with a bountiful tree canopy and wide variation of play equipment. The differences in parks across wealth and income equitably can be seen, at times, in how dense the tree canopy is. One example of this is the difference in Piney Wood park, by Woodcroft, and Solite, off Fayetteville Rd. While both parks have nice things to offer, shade on the actual playground is something that is mostly found in established, wealthier communities. Another difference that can be found is in the variation and age of playground equipment and cleanliness. Garrett Rd park, offers limited play equipment, trash is often spotted there, and, while it has a lot of potential, it looks like a forgotten area. In contrast, just 5 miles away, nestled in a quiet community off Wade Rd, is Cornwallis Rd. Park, which offers a wide variety of play equipment, disk golf, and a walking trail. My husband and I have three kids and upon visiting this park, the first thing my husband said was, "this is a nice park, but looking at where it's located, that's no surprise". This is the kind of statement that I don't want people to make. Children should have a wonderful place to play, regardless of what side of town they are on. The funds we already allocate for could be prioritized in improving these parks.*

4. How should the city measure the benefits and costs of incentives to promote development especially as those benefits and costs affect low-income residents of Durham? How would you use these measurements when deciding to vote for or against a proposed incentive? *Please limit your answer to 400 words. When looking at the benefits and costs of proposed incentives, I measure my decision based on, who will it benefit and, who will it hurt. For example, if a tax increase would help a family living in poverty save hundreds down the road, that is a measure I can accept. Conversely, if a tax decrease may save mere pennies in taxes but limit services to those in poverty, I must vote against it. The cost-benefit measure also requires looking at the long-term effects of a bill, not just the immediate ones. This is a simple concept that can be utilized for every proposal to ensure we are looking out for the interest of our communities and those in poverty before corporations.*

5. What actions should the city take to expand job creation and job quality? In your answer, please comment on the city's potential involvement in entrepreneurship, worker-owned cooperatives, and union organizing. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*When looking for ways to expand job creation and job quality, we need to invest in jobs that promote livelihood in communities. We need to focus on strategically zoning areas that will not drive residents out of their homes while also creating commercial zones where businesses can flourish nearby. Job creation within walking distance from affordable housing is also a priority. The city's potential involvement in entrepreneurship includes continuing to offer grants to small business owners. If a business is failing due to being in an impoverished area, the city may also offer help with rent to keep businesses open in that area.*

## **Housing, City Planning, and Neighborhoods**

6. What does "gentrification" mean to you? What, if anything, should be done about it? How, if at all, is the issue of gentrification implicated in the Planning Department's current review of zoning in East Durham, the proposed creation of an Alston Avenue Design District, and the redevelopment of the former Fayette Place property? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*Gentrification to me means the direct and exclusionary displacement of our most vulnerable members of the community. Despite our beautification projects and efforts to transform Durham into a must-visit, with world class restaurants and tech start-up companies, poverty has continued to grow by over 4% since 2000, leaving over 40,000 residents behind in all the growth. Gentrification in Durham has essentially led to brushing away our most vulnerable residents into pocket areas in Durham, like Wellons Village, where poverty has more than doubled since 2000. These pockets are out of sight and forgotten by the wealthier communities that have taken over many areas in Durham. These gentrification efforts have also forced many people away from central Durham, raising the cost of living to astronomical levels, forcing those who work downtown to move further away from their jobs. When redeveloping Fayette Place, we must make sure we secure affordable housing. With any rezoning projects, we need to be sure to protect the residents from rising living cost while promoting a thriving business area. One way to do that is to work closely with developers and not allow the construction of high-rise apartment homes that would create an influx of population in those areas, once again, pushing our lower-class population. Many residents fear that the city wants to upgrade these areas for a bigger agenda, we need to make sure the only agenda is creating quality jobs for residents who already live there.*

7. What should the city seek to accomplish through its power to stimulate and regulate growth? What principles and considerations will guide your decisions in zoning cases and other development issues? Illustrate your answer with a recent controversial zoning case. Did the city decide the case correctly? *Please limit your answer to 500 words.*

*I address this question on zoning in number 9. There are areas of Durham that are affected by the current zoning plans. As mentioned in question 9, the Angier Drive area is one of those. With vacant commercial zoning lots, it is evident that businesses cannot survive where they are currently zoned because they don't receive enough shoppers. Recently, the city decided to conduct a study to see whether rezoning would benefit the area. This raised questioned from residents in the area, fearful that the city has an agenda to build apartments there when the light-rail project is complete. The city has stated that they have no agenda, but rather, have wanted to improve the area for a while and now have the means to do it. Making areas walkable and accessible for bikes, improving public transportation, and safekeeping affordable housing near thriving commercial areas is a way to stimulate and regulate growth without spreading the effects of gentrification.*

8. Does the city adequately fund its affordable housing plan? If no, what funding are you willing to fight for in the next budget for affordable homes for lower income Durham renters, homebuyers and homeowners? Where will the money come from? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*I am pleased that our penny for housing program has been expanded to two pennies, to over \$5 million in our efforts to fund affordable housing. This expanded budget will allow us to contribute more to DHA and the local nonprofits, such as Habitat, to expand their reach throughout communities. We need to make it a*

goal to end eviction. With 1 in 28 people being evicted from their homes, we need to make it a priority to keep residents under their roof and this expanded budget can help. Next year will give us a better idea of how far this new budget can reach. If more is needed, I'm willing to fight to add another penny or more. Without increasing cost burden to taxpayers, that money will come from the decrease in the policing budget after body cams and take home cars are purchased, if possible.

9. Under what circumstances would you vote to approve a rezoning that does not include commitments to meet the city's affordable housing goal? If you answered yes, how would you ensure that the city meet its goal? Please illustrate your answer with a recent case. *Please limit your answer to 500 words.*

*I believe this question is asking at what point would I support rezoning that is not residential or not intending to be residential. There are many examples of areas that need to be rezoned within East Durham, specifically along both, Alston Avenue and Fayetteville Rd (near Riddle road and beyond). In both locations, there are commercial and industrial sites that are vacant due to poor location. By rezoning to strategically place businesses in locations that will improve sales, we move jobs to certain areas of town and bring more income into communities. Indy just published a piece titled "Is Zoning Holding Old East Durham Back?" that illustrates the recent example I am referring to at the Angier Drive area. There are concerns by residents that rezoning will displace them elsewhere, so the objective should be to keep living cost in the area low while slowly growing a steady economy there. The future light-rail project will be going through there so, if planned right, the city could create the perfect conditions for current residents there and future businesses while having reliable transportation to boot. But again, the city needs to ensure that high rise apartments do not take over the area, as they fear, increasing the cost of living that is already hard to obtain in the area.*

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

10. If the city needs more revenue for a basic public service, do you, in general, favor a new or increased user fee or a property tax increase? Residential trash pickup is an example of a basic service. *Please limit your answer to 250 words.*

*Basic public services, such as trash pickup and storm water facilities, are ways in which we invest in keeping Durham a clean place to call home. While fees may sound like a nuisance, they are necessary in making sure everyone can benefit from these services. We should take care to keep costs low, but if increases are needed to ensure quality services to every citizen of Durham, generally I will support it after careful evaluation of cost burden to low-income families and individuals. Determining to use a fee or property tax increase may be subjective to the service. The current property front storm water fee puts homeowners in different brackets depending on property size. This kind of progressive example is what I think should generally be accepted but each case requires careful thought. The potential to raise our commercial tax should also be explored.*

11. Do you support or oppose Durham's plans for rail-based transit? If federal funding for the project is denied, what must Durham do about transportation, urban planning, housing, taxes, and infrastructure? *Please limit your answer to 500 words.*

*The plans for rail-based transit is something I am pleased to see moving into action. Not only is rail-based transportation a cost-effective means of travelling around the area, but it also decongests our roads and supports our pursuit to be a greener city. But one major reason I am pleased about the rail-based transit is because it has the potential to bring a faster way to travel to the potential affordable housing options in Fayette Place. If Fayette Place is transformed in the way we hope in terms of affordable housing, the mix of having rail-based transit would be a powerful combination in urban planning. If federal funding is denied, Durham must continue prioritizing these projects by allocating all available funds as these projects are key to catapulting our efforts in reducing poverty and creating an equitable Durham.*

12. Has the city's investment in bus transportation reached the population which needs it most? What else can be done to improve bus transportation access and affordability? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*While our bus transportation is truly remarkable, there is still a lot of room for improvement. One area for improvement is for more lighting and shelters at bus stops. Many stops are without any lights at all, making them unsafe for riders who work early morning or late evening. Another unsafe factor is that there are several stops that don't have cross walks and traffic lights so commuters can safely cross over highways, such as Martin Luther King and Bay Point Rd, where the apartments and assisted living homes are situated. A lack of shelter at bus stops also poses a problem by forcing our riders to face harsh weather elements while waiting. While the capacity of seats for bus riders is feasible, ensuring buses run on time is more difficult and poses challenges for the population which needs it the most, being the riders who depend on the bus to get to and from work and school. A major key is in the planning and making sure bus stops are placed where low income housing is to connect those areas with transportation to their workplaces and to services.*

13. Would you support a property tax relief program, for example, a circuit breaker, to reduce the tax burden on homeowners with limited resources and help them stay in their homes? If your answer is yes, please describe the program or programs you would support. If your answer is no, please explain. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*I would support a property tax relief program as I believe keeping people in their homes is cost saving for the city as well as the homeowner. Evicting people from their homes only hurts their ability to rent and purchase other homes, and this does not benefit the city. The Department of Social Services, Durham Housing Authority, and several nonprofits work to provide emergency funding to help pay rent, the mortgage, and bills as needed. I will continue to support these programs through funds allocated in the community development section of the city's budget.*

### **Policing and Public Safety**

14. 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, deployment of personnel, searches, and communication with the public? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*I addressed certain points, that I will briefly state again, in question 17, but yes, there is a trust problem between the police and people of Durham. I hear of personal stories of victims not wanting to call the police because they are more scared of them than their abusive partners or because they are afraid they, too, will be arrested if they ask for help. People of color fear interacting with the police with so many incidences of police brutality occurring across the country. In the days of a Trump presidency, no one knows what to expect except the worse. Traffic stops have been terrifying our immigrants in the area, causing panic and fear in, not just the adults, but also their children who attend school here. I mentioned in question 17, an example of racial profiling I just recently witnessed. As for the deployment of personnel, our police have an average response time of a little over 6 minutes for priority 1 calls, 1 minute longer than the target. By the time officers arrive, perpetrators are well on their way and the damage has been done. As for communications with the public, the police have a great network using the Nextdoor social site that connects with residents of managed neighborhoods. However, an abundant number of residents are not part of that resource and therefore, do not have that same communication privilege.*

15. To what degree, if any, should the city cooperate with U.S. Department of Immigration & Customs Enforcement? Should the city become a sanctuary city? If your answer is yes, for whom should the city provide sanctuary and by what means should sanctuary be provided? If your answer is no, please explain your reasons. In either case, please be specific. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*As a member for Durham for All, I believe in a Durham that is inclusive to everyone, regardless of citizenship. If people choose to work and live in Durham, so long as they are following local laws, I see no reason to waste resources tracking them down and turning immigrants over. The harsh actions of tearing apart families over their immigration status has led to broken homes and students who are unable to learn due to immense fear of being deported. Let peaceful members, regardless of where they come from, remain in our community. We house refugees here in the area and we need to continue showing our support for what Durham stands for as we resist this current presidential administration. As for what means we should provide, some examples are, extending loans to start businesses and buy homes, tutoring services for public school attendees, extra resources for teachers to address the dynamic needs*

of any student, and community events that focus on diversity of cultures to continue encouraging tolerance.

16. Should the city allocate more, less, or about the same money to policing? Please explain your answer. If your answer is less, would you allocate more money to other services to improve public safety? Again, please explain. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*In the latest budget presented by City Council, policing saw a 4.5% increase in the budget. This increase was granted to fund "take home" police cars to help encourage community policing, and body cameras, which I believe are important for transparency and accountability. While I am a believer in a multi-faceted solution for public safety, I believe the budget should not change much over the next coming years until we establish a strong corps of community leaders in the police force. However, we need to address how those funds are used. We must continue to support the needs of what is required to move towards effective community policing, including "coffee with cops" events in our most needed precincts, keeping the same officers in the same areas to establish trust and connections with community members, and efficient BLET programs that stress the importance of building relationships. According to recent studies, Durham has already exhausted two solutions towards crime, which are, increasing the number of police officers, and utilizing COMPSTAT to collect and analyze crime data. Major studies show these two things reduce crime by 10%, after that, other solutions should be sought. After we have reached our objectives in vacancy rates, take home cars, and body cams, we should see a slight decrease in the policing budget to allocate elsewhere. My recommendation would be to utilize funds in ways that fight the poverty cycle in our most impoverished communities and focus on solutions to the "school to prison" pipeline.*

### **Civil Rights**

17. Name one issue in Durham that directly impacts, or is directly impacted by, race inequity and how can the city incorporate a race equity framework in addressing this issue? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*One issue that is directly impacted by race is police brutality and racial profiling. Just from what I recently witnessed, 3 Hispanic teens were walking along University Dr. around 9:00 am. They were not carrying anything and seemed to be engaged in a good conversation as they were all smiling and laughing. I noticed a police officer driving in the opposite direction pass them, turn on his lights, and did a U-turn to confront them. I thought to myself, "what did they do to have an officer stop and question them? Had that been three white teens, would the officers had done the same thing? Of course, I don't know the whole story and perhaps they "fit a description", however, too often do the wrong suspect descriptions get mixed up, becoming a racial generalization. Aside from this experience, I hear from the African American community that when an officer comes on the scene, women are quickly disrespected and called things like "bitch" by the police and treated with hostility. To make matters worse, those women are often the ones who called on the police. I believe we are all aware of the tragic brutality that occurs. According to the NAACP, "African Americans are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of whites". This is saddening and embarrassing. We have to do better. I believe Durham's recent investment in working to encourage community policing by allowing officers to take home patrol cars is a start but more can, and should be done. Police training that emphasizes community policing and dispatching officers that live locally in communities are two important areas. When an officer is aware of their precinct and know who is who, they can identify more precisely when there is a real threat. We have just over 500 sworn officers that can be divided into smaller areas of the community. Working towards this framework of community policing is critical to build trusting relationships between law enforcement and community members.*

18. If the city could adopt an ordinance concerning the civil rights of members of the LGBTQ community, what provisions should that ordinance contain? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*If the city could adopt an ordinance on civil rights for the LGBTQ community, it should contain protection from workplace harassment (and hold businesses accountable on this), equal pay (again, accountability is dire), protection from bathroom discrimination, LGBTQ education and support in local schools, and abuse services specifically for them. Everyone should feel protected and supported in Durham regardless of how they identify and who they love. We need to make sure we are doing everything we can to build resistance from the current presidential administration. Equal rights are always a top priority.*

## **Personal and Political**

19. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence other than a minor traffic offense? If your answer to this question is yes, please describe the charge or charges, the circumstances, and the outcome.

*Please limit your answer to 250 words.*

*No*

20. For whom did you vote in the 2012 and 2016 presidential and gubernatorial elections? For whom did you vote in the 2014 U. S. Senate election? *Please limit your answer to 100 words.*

*In the 2012 elections, I voted with a straight democrat ticket. In 2014, I had a conflict with not being able to vote since I worked and went to school in another county 45 minutes away from where I lived and could not get time off or be excused from classes. This was a major conflict being a single mom at the time. In 2016, I voted for Clinton and did another democratic ticket for other races.*