

**Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People
Political Action Committee (PAC) Candidate Questionnaire for Mayor and City
Council Candidates**

Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People (DCABP) PAC has spent the past six months engaging our constituents to better understand the issues that are most important to them. Overwhelmingly, we found that our community's greatest concerns are housing, economic development, crime and public safety. Thus, our questionnaire seeks to gauge your alignment with our community's concerns.

Candidates wishing to be considered for an endorsement by DCABP PAC must complete and submit the questionnaire by the stated deadline and participate in the interview process. This questionnaire is due no later than Friday, August 9, 2019 at 11:59pm. Please email your completed questionnaire to pac.dcabp@gmail.com.

1. Housing

- a. Do you support the proposed Housing Bond? Please answer with yes or no and explain why? Please include the advantages and disadvantages of the bond. Also, if you support the bond, please explain how you would mitigate any disadvantages of the housing bond for Black people.

Yes, I enthusiastically support the \$95M housing bond to fund the city's five-year affordable housing plan, and will be encouraging all Durham residents to vote for the bond this fall. This bond proposal is a bold and necessary step toward providing affordable homes for thousands of Durhamites in the context of rapidly-increasing rents and home prices. We lack the regulatory tools that many other cities have used (i.e. inclusionary zoning, rent stabilization, progressive property taxation, etc.) to generate funds for affordable homes, so the bond is the best way for us to have an impact on our housing crisis. Bond funds will support several strategies to ensure that everyone has access to a safe and affordable home - the creation of new multi-family rental housing, preservation of existing multi-family rental housing, eviction & homelessness diversion programs, repairs and weatherization programs, and home ownership programs. It will also come with a significant economic development program that will provide good construction jobs that pay living wages to DHA residents.

The primary advantage of a bond issue is that it will allow us to put a significant amount of capital into our housing plan in a much shorter timeframe and at a critical moment for the city. The longer we take to act, the more the market appreciates, renters are displaced, and owners face pressure to sell. The city has about \$11.6M a year in local and federal funds to dedicate to affordable housing, and that's just not enough to meet our community's needs. By issuing a bond, we can spread the cost of this development out over 30 years and use a small (1-2 cent) tax increase to fund it, rather than trying to meet our housing needs with direct tax dollars.

The primary disadvantage of the bond is that it will take up a chunk of our borrowing capacity for a long period of time, limiting what we might be able to do in the future. We have many other priorities - parks and recreation services, including a new aquatics plan, economic development, transportation, etc. I believe that due to the scale and severity of our housing crisis, that this choice is the right one.

Though not specifically related to the source of funds (bond or direct tax dollars), a concern of DHA residents in particular about the redevelopment of their communities is around displacement. In some communities, residents will be able to remain on-site while redevelopment happens, but in others, residents will be relocated to other DHA housing communities and will have the right to return to the renovated communities. Due to a long history of lies and racism in public housing programs, residents are understandably concerned that these commitments will not be kept. However, RAD is the first housing program of this type to legally require 1:1 replacement of public housing units and a guaranteed right to return for tenants. The DHA has publicly committed to respecting both of these rules as they redevelop our public housing communities. As the council liaison to the DHA board, I'll be in a good position to ensure that these commitments are respected. There's no way to guarantee that residents will choose to return, and in other cities many residents have chosen not to do so. But I commit to making sure that they have the opportunity to do so and to removing as many barriers as possible.

- b. Gentrification of historically black communities is a major concern for DCABP constituents. How will you help implement policies that support community stabilization and the transference of generational wealth for Black people in Durham?

Gentrification has a severe impact on historically Black neighborhoods as a result of the many decades of disinvestment and racist policy decisions that created extremely undervalued land in urban centers. To the extent that gentrification is caused by city and other public investment, I think we should be very selective about the sort of development we support with public money and mitigate the harmful impacts of those decisions. I support implementing an equitable development scorecard that would ask for commitments to living wages, local hiring, minority subcontracting, hiring justice-involved residents, and other community benefits. These agreements would help ensure that public/private partnership benefit Durham residents, particularly the residents who live in gentrifying neighborhoods. For city projects such as the Beltline, I support implementing an equitable engagement program which will ensure that local residents are at the table when important decisions are being made and that the development will benefit their communities.

The City can also play a major role in stabilizing neighborhoods by helping non-profit organizations build new affordable rental housing, helping low-income homeowners make repairs, providing tax relief, and providing home ownership opportunities. Funding for all of these efforts is programmed into the bond proposal. In addition, by allowing denser housing to be built in the urban tier through "Expanding Housing Choices," and building more housing in downtown in partnership with Durham Housing Authority, we can alleviate some of the pressure on historically Black neighborhoods.

2. Crime & Public Safety

- a. Black People are both over-policed and under-policed at the same time. What are your solutions regarding this statement?

Policing and incarceration have always significantly harmed the Black community, from the earliest slave patrols and chain gangs to today's racial disparities, police violence, and mass incarceration. Policing and incarceration are also the primary tools we use to manage violence and violent crime, which also disproportionately cause harm to Black people. This contradiction is at the root of the conversation about policing in the Black community, and it's one we are constantly forced to face. I believe that we need to explore and implement public safety solutions that reduce community violence without expanding policing and reinforcing its harms. We should be increasing our investments in violence prevention, violence intervention, re-entry services, and quality of life initiatives to reduce the circumstances that lead to violence. We should develop on-call crisis support services outside of the police department staffed by professionals who are trained to handle situations where residents need assistance and the use of force is unlikely to be necessary. We should create new diversion programs and expand existing ones, keeping people out of the court system and providing meaningful alternative paths to a productive life.

I do not believe that a transition to a holistic and restorative system of community safety and justice will be easy or quick, but I do believe that it is necessary. The 25 years that we have spent increasing our reliance on policing and incarceration to keep us safe has created a strong belief, even in the communities most harmed by mass incarceration, that policing is the only way to create safety. Yet study after study shows that prevention, intervention, and increasing access to community resources are far more effective public safety measures. I look forward to working with community members to develop and implement community safety strategies outside of policing and working to reduce our reliance on police to create community safety over time.

- b. With Durham's growing population and increased murder rate, do/ did you support the request from Chief C.J. Davis for additional police officers? Why or why not?

I voted to remove funding for new officers from this year's budget because of a lack of evidence that Durham needs more officers. More policing does not result in less crime. Police response times and calls for service are both down. Despite a spike in violent crime when compared to last year, which had one of the lowest crime rates recorded, overall crime in Durham is on a long-term downward trend. Right now, overall crime is actually down slightly when compared to last year in District 4, the district in which the police expansion was proposed. While increased policing has not been shown to have a long-term impact on community safety, providing more resources to crime prevention and intervention, as well as to meet basic community needs does. Put simply, the safest communities don't have the most cops, they have the most resources.

- c. What is your role in holding Durham Police Department accountable when they harm the community? What processes can you implement to strengthen accountability? Are you willing to take badges when police violate community trust?

The City Council does not have a direct oversight responsibility over individual police officers or even the police chief. The City Council hires the city manager, who hires the police chief, who is ultimately responsible for accountability for officers. As council members, we can and will hold the city manager accountable for the performance of the police chief and make our positions on these issues clear to the city manager. If we determined that the police chief was not implementing proper accountability measures for officers, we would demand that the police chief be replaced.

I support the accountability procedures we have in place, including mandatory leave for officers after a shooting, investigations of shootings being handled by the SBI rather than the police department, and public release of the results of these investigations as soon as possible. However, I believe the most effective police accountability measures are those that give direct oversight authority to residents through civilian police review bodies. Though the City of Durham has a Civilian Police Review Board, it has very little real power. Unfortunately, state law prevents our CPRB's from having subpoena authority, but I believe the city should lobby for a change in this law in our legislative agenda. In order to be effective, the CPRB should be able to make their own decisions about appropriate discipline for officers, overturning the department's ruling if they feel it's appropriate to do so. We have also already asked for a change in the laws regarding the release of body camera footage in our legislative agenda, because the current restrictions on footage release makes it difficult for body cameras to be used as an accountability tool.

3. Economic Development

- a. How will you ensure racial equity and equality in job growth/stability and employment? What policies would you implement to increase the skill set of our community in order to match the jobs of today?

The City promotes job growth and stability through jobs incentives and workforce development programs. With regard to jobs incentives, I support implementing a scorecard for all applications to ensure that developers have fair and equitable hiring practices. Employers should be willing to commit to hiring locally and hiring people who are justice involved in addition to paying fair wages and benefits. With regard to workforce development, the city targets support to communities that have the most economically disadvantaged. Of course, these communities - justice-involved people, the long-term unemployed, people without college degrees, etc. - are disproportionately Black as well, due to the impacts of racism.

The City has recently created a Department of Equity and Inclusion in order to institutionalize and advance our work on racial equity. This department will spend the next year working on a race equity action plan for all city departments. I also spearheaded the creation of a Race Equity Task Force last year, which will be presenting their recommendations to the City Council later this year. I look forward to implementing any additional recommendations with regard to how the City can better use a race equity lens with regard to job creation.

- b. What policies will you pursue and or support that will intentionally ensure an equitable distribution of city contracts, grants, development incentives and land acquisition? Please be detailed in your response.

With regard to city contracts, we use the results of a 2014 disparity study to set participation goals for contracting to minority-owned and women-owned firms. Departments and contractors are strongly encouraged to meet those goals, but unfortunately we are prohibited by law from requiring anything more than a “good faith effort” to meet them. We also strongly encourage all our contractors to hire a diverse workforce and to partner with and recruit from local HBCU’s.

With regard to grants, a new evaluation policy has recently been implemented for festival grants that considers diversity and underrepresented art and artists as part of the evaluation for funding. This is a great change which I enthusiastically support. As we implement a city-wide race equity evaluation tool, we’ll be able to see whether other grant programs, such as neighborhood matching grants, economic development grants, and others are meeting our race equity goals and make changes if they are not.

With regard to development incentives, I support implementing an equitable development scorecard that would allow us to prioritize small local minority-owned businesses that pay living wages, hire locally, provide jobs to people who are formerly incarcerated, provide training and advancement potential, and provide culturally relevant services to our communities.

- c. For years, the City of Durham has worked closely with Duke University on economic development projects. What strategies and policies should be implemented between the City of Durham and North Carolina Central University to promote economic development in low-income Black communities?

When the City has worked with Duke University on economic development projects, the DPAC, Bull City Connector (BCC), and the upcoming Willard Street Apartments for example, Duke has served as a contributing partner to the development project. Duke is contributing \$2.5M to the development of Willard Street, contributed a third of the operating revenue for the BCC, and gave millions to the DPAC project. Given that NCCU is a smaller, state-funded, historically Black (and therefore historically underfunded and under-appreciated institution), I don’t think it’s fair or equitable to ask NCCU to contribute to these initiatives in the way that Duke has. I do think it would be great to have more partnerships with NCCU students and professors for internships and research. A number of NCCU

students served as budget delegates for our first participatory budgeting process and the partnership was fabulous and greatly appreciated.

4. About You

- a. What would you like the DCABP to know about you that is not identified in your responses?

Please see my online bio at www.jillianjohnson.net

- b. How have you collaborated with or contributed to the mission of the DCABP over the past five years? What does the DCABP mean to you?

My primary collaboration with DCABP has been via inviting leaders from the DCABP to co-create and consult on policy priorities and implementation for new initiatives that I have championed for the city. I invited Henry McKoy & Joy Mickle to join a local organization, Cooperation Durham, that co-created proposals and developed strategies for the city to support worker cooperative development and the city's participatory budgeting process. I also invited Tia Hall to participate in the City's Race Equity Task Force, the recommendations from which will be implemented over the next few years by the recently established Department of Equity and Inclusion.

- c. If elected, how will you collaborate with the DCABP? Give specific examples.

I will continue to invite DCABP leaders to serve as co-creators and consultants for new policy initiatives. In particular, as a plan to create a community task force to make recommendations for how to improve public safety outside of policing takes shape, I would welcome participation of DCABP leaders in developing recommendations.