

The following members of the Durham Racial Equity Commission met via Zoom on April 17, 2024, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Attendees:**

Nisha Williams

Tiffany Foster

Atrayus Goode

Del Ruff

Elena Snavely

David Williams

Ramya Krishna

DeDreana Freeman

Ernest Smith

Jadda Richardson

**Absent**

Sheila Mullen

Delvin Davis

Kedrick Lowery

Krista Kenney

Commissioner, Brenda Howerton

**Guests**

n/a

**Staff**

Dr. Brent Lewis, Durham County

Ms. Sharon Williams, City of Durham

## Meeting called to order and facilitated by Nisha Williams

### 1. Approval/Edits of March Meeting Minutes

- Tiffany Foster made a motion to approve March's meeting
- Atrayus Good seconded the motion
- All in favor, no nays; motion carried

### 2. Public Comment

- Atrayus Goode
  - Working with Mayor's office to build out the Durham youth mentoring Alliance
  - Working with several different agencies to put on listening sessions to later present the results at their symposium October 12 at the Durham Convention Center. The theme is building relationships through collaboration and play – exploring the role of play in youth adult relationships and why that's important and also sharing updates about our listening sessions.
- David Williams
  - UNC has pulled back on DEI; curious to see how this will impact folks in their jobs and our state as a whole as we join the State of Georgia with DEI opportunities going forward
  - Comments/Responses
    - Sharon Williams “We are city county government, so it doesn't affect us, but it does affect our state. So, it affected a lot of our colleagues today. The decision is very massive for a great number of our colleagues. It doesn't affect us directly, because we are governed at the city and at the city level and the county level.”
    - Del Ruff – UNC has ratified and succeeded which gives UNC staff gives them parameters to which how to operate on campus. (minutes are under the Governor's page under “minutes”). This gives a look at the criteria of the 8 things to ensure equity is in the UNC systems and what opportunity there is for each campus. Each campus will address how they define equity based on the definition provided by the system.
      - “i.e. The Chancellor or the Director of Student Affairs or an officer deemed by the Chancellor will write a report to address those 7 criteria, which is everything from compelled speech. Institutional neutrality. How you're dealing with affirmative action, and within paying and pay for employees and for students, etc, all the way down to student success and wellbeing. and within that space one of the the things that really our caveat, is the opportunity to reduce your force on campuses. So, a reduction in force is within section 8, and within that reduction also is the savings that come in

that reduction, and how each campus is applying that savings to student success and wellness, that was voted upon, and that will be then vote upon again in May. So, it was presented today and vote upon in May. We have not officially made the change which you're getting my best institutional neutrality piece right now.” An update will be given in the May meeting.

### 3. **Housing, Poverty, and Wealth Committee Presentation**

- Introduction of Subcommittee Members, why on the commission and why is this topic is important
  - Tiffany Foster
    - passion is health, housing and education. Have always been astounded by the lack of resources for people in times of need
    - Military family so grew up across the nation and housing looks different in each place – there is not enough, and it is not affordable
  - Jadda Richardson
    - FT job in tech
    - Have dealt with racism and not seeing other Black people in the field; was the only one in team of 20. When previous company was bought out by a larger company, he was the first person whose position was terminated, and he was offered a reduction in position payment. Afterwards, he decided to do what he could to bring Black people into tech and housing.
  - Ernest Smith
    - The inequities in our country based on race is our biggest sin
    - What has been done to people based on the color of their skin has been entrenched within the U.S. Government and particularly housing.
    - Housing discrimination has been happening for so long it has made it impossible to for people who have been discriminated against to build wealth through housing and have the “American Dream”.
  - Elena Snaveley
    - Has a passion for this work.
    - Chose the housing subcommittee because in 2012 paid \$80K for 3bd within walking distance to downtown. “Today, that price would be ridiculous.”
    - Has looked at the changing demographics and know who’s being sacrificed for growth.
    - Feels the city is at an inflection point and does not want this to mess up the housing of Durham
  - David Williams
    - Just finished MBA at NCCU
    - Moved to Durham in 2018 – wanted to move here because it was a Black city and have seen changes when moved in 1998
    - Bought first home in 2020 when the pandemic hit and if they were to purchase the same home now, it would not be affordable.
    - Wanted to join like-minded people and learn from others that know more about the city and how to improve it

- Why Wealth and Housing Matters
  - The “American Dream” (in part based on home ownership) has affected wealth in our nation
  - We are seeing that the wealth gap is increasing
    - The middle class is shrinking
    - People are not able to buy homes any longer
  - The Fair Housing Act in April 1968
    - Up until that point, society could limit you on where you could purchase a house or where you could rent
  - The racial equity commission will address inequities that face the citizens of Durham and at the heart of it is housing.
  - Article from the Guardian shows people are beginning to give up on homeownership
    - Over the last 12 months 60% of Americans saw increased cost however, the cost of living is not increasing with it.
  - It is becoming more difficult to be able to live and housing is a crux of it
  - Owning a home can help build wealth but in order to afford a home a family has to have wealth in the first place
  - CNBC states only 14 states have homes to purchase for families making less than \$75K – North Carolina is not one of those states
    - Median income to afford a home in the US is \$110K/year (up from \$76K in 2020 – up 27%)
  - 70% of white people are homeowners whereas African Americans are 45%
    - Asian and Black renters are more likely to say rent is their largest financial struggle
  - Durham Population
    - Old East Durham Housing (county at large)
      - African American population in 2010 – 56.8% (County 37.1%); in 2021 – 38.9% (County 34.8%)
      - Hispanic/Latino Population in 2010 – 35.4% (County 13.5%); in 2021 – 41.3% (County 13.7%)
      - White population in 2010 – 7% (County 43.1%); in 2021 – 11.2% (County 42.6%)
    - Old East Durham Median Household Income (county at large)
      - African American household in 2011 – \$20K (County \$37K); in 2022 – \$29K (County \$56K)
      - Hispanic/Latino household in 2010 – \$30K (County \$39K); in 2022 – \$41K (County \$57K)
      - White household in 2010 – \$33K (County \$64K); in 2022 – \$57K (County \$86K)
    - Old East Durham Cost of rent
      - In 2011 - \$716 (County \$817); in 2021 \$841 (County \$1,162)
    - Old East Durham Median Sale Price
      - 2010 - \$39,750 (County \$190K); 2022 \$167,750 (County \$290,500)
    - Old East Durham Median Sale Price per square foot
      - 2010 - \$37 (county \$102); 2022 - \$141 (county \$150)

- In 2010, the neighborhood was considered “blighted”. Since then, “displacement” has been the “word of the day”.
- We have a lack of concern attitude about letting the market decide what is right, we need to challenge the gov to do better, supply affordable housing in the Durham community and affordable rent.
  - The market will not fix affordable housing
- Status of Data Today
  - City of Durham has a dashboard with 5 goals (for FY24-26)
    - Goal 1: Shared Economic Prosperity
    - Goal 2: Creating a Safer Community Together
    - Goal 3: Connected, Engaged, and Inclusive Communities
    - Goal 4: Innovative and High Performing Organization
    - Goal 5: Thriving and Vibrant Environment
  - We are publicly sharing data and there is racial equity aligned initiatives but there are areas of improvement
    - Racial breakdown is not shared
    - No year over year trends
    - Difficult to navigate
  - Community Indicators are also on the County’s website
  - County Goals:
    - Goal 1: Community Empowerment and Enrichment
    - Goal 2: Health and Well-Being for All
    - Goal 3: Safe Community
    - Goal 4: Environment
    - Goal 5: Visionary Government
  - County Results:
    - A plus: A lot of the objectives can be aligned to racial equity
    - Opportunity for improvement: all of the dashboards are not available (has polar bears instead of dashboards)
      - We need to ask that the county makes data available
    - Dr. Brent Lewis: The county is working on a new strategic plan to roll out August 2024. Dr. Lewis will pass on the information to the Strategic Initiatives department and share comments
  - Neither the county nor city has sufficient information
    - Ernest Smith: On the city website, the information is outdated, i.e. city council and community members who are no longer active. There seems to be gaps and no progress.
    - DeDreana Freeman: Let the clerk know since they do the updates
    - Sharon Williams: Recommends the taskforce presents this same information and share it when presenting in regard to wanting to see the aggregated data, website updates, etc...
    - Elena Snaveley: Reached out to the person on the website to make recommendations
- Housing
  - Tenant Demographics (by apartment types)
    - 508 Sq. Ft. Studio \$1,289/mo
    - 742 Sq. Ft. One Bd \$1,358/mo
    - 1053 Sq. Ft. \$1,596/mo

- 1336 Sq. Ft. \$1,953/mo
- Durham has a very diverse population
- It has an uptick in home ownership, the majority of renters are POC
- The question to ask: Is the cost of rent helping the current residents improve their living residents or is it to help incoming residents (given the uptick of residents out of state coming in).
- Compared to other cities in NC, Durham average rent costs \$1,555 which is on par
  - Average household income \$91,960/yr; medium household income is \$66,623/yr
  - Residents ages 25 – 44 y.o. earn \$71,766; Residents ages 45 – 64 y.o. medium wage of \$80k
  - The income rule is to spend about 30% of your income rate and the remaining is to help you reach a healthy balance between comfort and availability
    - POC in Durham based off of wages cannot afford rent so how can we talk to them about homeownership?
- Eviction Filings
  - Racial distribution of Durham population (Race, # of evictions, % of all evictions)
    - Asian, 69, .26% (racial distribution: 5.3%)
    - Black, 20,192, 75.79% (racial distribution: 37%)
    - Hispanic, 1012, 3.80% (racial distribution: 47%)
    - Indigenous, 50, .19% (racial distribution: .36%)
    - More than one race, 401, 1.51%
    - Other race, 282, 1.06%
    - White, 3,287, 12.34% (racial distribution: 47%)
    - Unknown, 1,348, 5.06%
  - Without a home, it exposes people to violence, repeated forced displacement by police, and private security, and malnourishment
  - There is a clear disproportion to tenants who identify as POC, especially Black women
    - Black tenants are 43.5% of Durham renting population and 75.8% of tenants facing eviction
    - From 2016 – 2020, Black tenants experience 4.75 times the rate of white tenants; 77% of evicted tenants live in a community that is majority POC who were evicted in a majority white census block
    - In 202, there were 69 evictions filings against Black tenants for every 1000 Black tenants in Durham – In 2016, 194 evictions for every 1000
- What can we do to help these people? This is the question to ask.
- Report on DHA
  - Sept. 2022, DHA was awarded a \$40M Choice Neighborhoods Implementation
    - This supports the redevelopment of 519 E. Main and Liberty St. Apartments
      - ✓ 214 public housing units

- ✓ 555 mixed-income apartments
  - ✓ 331 affordable housing
  - ✓ 224 market-rate units
  - ✓ Includes a one-acre playground
- Four phases
  - ✓ Phase 1: Elizabeth St Apartments
    - ❖ Existing buildings demolished and construction began in May 2023
    - ❖ Estimated completion Feb 2025
    - ❖ 72 apt for indiv. and family
    - ❖ 9% LIHTC (47.8M)
    - ❖ \$4M from City of Durham
  - ✓ Phase 2: Commerce St Apartments
    - ❖ Demolition complete Dec 2023
    - ❖ Two new buildings (88-unit senior building; 84-unit family building)
    - ❖ Construction is expected to be complete early 2026
    - ❖ \$56.4M: 4% LIHTC (\$16.9M)
    - ❖ \$8M from City of Durham
  - ✓ Phase 3: Dillard St. Apartments
    - ❖ Will include 146 family units
    - ❖ Estimated Completion Q4 2025
    - ❖ \$54M (est. cost)
    - ❖ \$3M from City of Durham
  - ✓ Phase 4: Main Street Apartments
    - ❖ 165 apartments for ind. And families
    - ❖ Retail and commercial space on ground floor
    - ❖ Construction to begin in 2025
- Housing Resources
  - Stop Evictions Network
  - Legal Aid of NC
  - Legal Aid Eviction aversion program
  - Duke Civil Justice Center
  - Housing for New Hope
  - NC Housing Coalition
  - Durham Housing Authority
  - Fair Housing Project of Legal Aid NC
  - National Low Income Housing Coalition
- Wealth
  - Salary Analysis
    - As of 2022 per capita income was \$43,945 for the county of data
    - 33.6% of worker are in healthcare and social service/social assistance works as of 2018
    - 9.5% of workers are in the arts, entertainment, and accommodation & food service as of 2019
  - Other factors to consider

- When thinking about the job market and salary analysis you think about education
- In 2023, our highest industry is healthcare within Durham (16 and older)
  - Highest education attainment 55.4% with higher degrees (bachelor's and higher)
  - 32.6% only have attained a HS diploma 13% no HS diploma
  - Medium income averaged \$110 in order to buy a home
- In Durham, 2022 median income was \$74K in Durham overall
  - Black households -- \$55K
  - LatinX households -- \$56K
  - White households -- \$86K
- Feb 2024 unemployment rate was 3.2 (drop from March 2021 where unemployment was at a high of 4.6%)
- Be mindful, even with median income, minimum wage is \$7.25 – this is solely salary and employment; these numbers do not factor in under employment
- At this rate, those who are making minimum wage are not able to afford to live in Durham.
- Who are our biggest employers? (keep in mind as we move forward)
  - Duke University and Duke Health Systems
  - Walmart
  - Chapel Hill
  - Food Lion
- Durham City/County Projects
  - Sept. 2020 Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (funded by Jack Dorsey, co-founder of Twitter)
    - Total Cost: \$800,000
    - # of participants: 115; received \$500/mo (\$6K over length of pilot) March 15, 2022 – February 15, 2023
    - Pop. Focus: individuals returning from prison to Durham or County address
    - Final evaluation is ongoing with results expected Aug. 2024
    - Does not seem to move the needle anywhere in Durham
  - Results for America – Organization to help organize, targeting training for disadvantaged youth throughout the community. They provide employment opportunities in specific areas
    - Coupled with apprenticeships
    - Mayor announced the launch of the Bull City of Durham program
      - ✓ City of Durham is partnering with the Durham Workforce Development Board to launch different opportunities i.e. apprenticeships that will “upskill workers and provide non college track individuals with sustainable employment in public sector careers as well as in skilled trade.”
    - This program makes more sense when looking for diff projects and groups to work with

- Dr. Brent Lewis: The county has a guaranteed income program called “Counties for guaranteed income” and is centered around families with low income (different from the city’s programming)
  - Need a combination of multiple things; the focus on re-entering society that the Mayor’s for Guaranteed Income provides has benefits... small number of participants but
  - You need multiple things when there is historical and root issues and equity challenges for people. There will not be only one fix that addresses the inequities that Durham communities face – especially those with double marginalizations
  - We have to be innovative and communicate with community. Have to be open with different ways of supporting this and different perspectives

**9-minute break was held at 7:51 p.m.**

- Unhoused
  - At one time, there was a 10-year plan to end homelessness that the city was involved in that is no longer happening. There has been an increasing challenge to deal with those who are unhoused
  - It is a division between the “haves and the have nots.”
    - Service/economy folks who work will never be able to afford a home and they are at the whims of the people who they rent homes from
  - When people can no longer live where they have traditionally lived is a problem. Some people get resources and others don’t
    - If we do not work towards solutions, we will have a greater crisis on our hands
  - At the root of some of the inequity within Durham, wealth and housing is at the root of it.
  - Need solutions to for ending some of the racialized wealth and housing gap in Durham
  - Not everyone is under the poverty line but is still struggling; that needs to also be acknowledged
- Recommendations
  - Provide mortgage and public rent relief
  - Create universal right to council for those facing eviction, by allocating more money to legal aids eviction diversion program
  - Easily accessible data around housing and development
    - Resources were found in various sources outside the city and county government
  - Asking for transparency and intentionality and leaders to cultivate an environment where open communication
  - Once information is presented to the City and County, feedback should be received within 6 months and the hope is that every 6 months we will discuss this, and it will not stay dormant.

#### **4. Feedback/Comments**

- Sharon and Dr. Lewis will continue to push committees to go even further
  - Prioritization,

- Recommendations,
- What are the things you need to get in front of them, tell the stories, and how to do that?
- Acknowledging both city and county should be more transparent
- The committee's job is to take this data and recommendations and ensure the committee will know and understand what is possible.
- Sub Committees should continue to meet and not stop
- In June, it will be time to compile all of the information in one PowerPoint presentation within 45 minutes... Will have June and July to prep
  - May will be the last presentation – Delvin and Nisha to lead the presentation
- Reminder that this is an opportunity to present to community either in person or via Zoom
  - Decide what you want to share with community
    - why do you want to share with them
    - what do you want the community to do and how
    - How do you want to interact with the community
- Elena Snavelly: Can we invite some of the stewards of the data that the city and county is responsible for? Is that something that we could still do as part of the commission in the next few months?
  - Sharon Williams: Yes. Tell us what it is you're looking for in terms of what you want to see, so that we can pass that on, and they can prepare.
- Elena Snavelly: Does the city and county have a data strategy?
  - Sharon Williams: We have people who work on data and with data. Sharon to identify who the person is within the city.
  - Brent Lewis: The person is Bethany; she works with both the city and county
- Dr. Lewis: will work with Delvin and Nisha to see how long of a presentation they have in May and possibly bring Bethany

#### 5. Meeting adjourned

- Ernest Smith motioned to adjourn
  - Elena Snavelly seconded
- All in favor