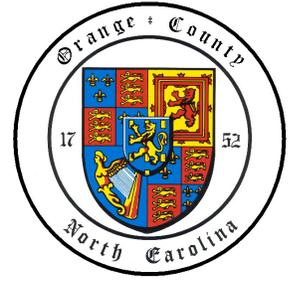


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Orange County Board of Commissioners
Post Office Box 8181
300 West Tryon Street
Hillsborough, North Carolina 27278



MEMORANDUM

From: Laura Jensen, Clerk to the Board

Date: July 19, 2021

Re: Applications for Vacancy on the Orange County Board of Commissioners

The Clerk to the Orange County Board of Commissioners received applications from the following individuals for the anticipated commissioner vacancy by the published deadline of 5 pm on Monday, July 19, 2021. The Director of Elections, Rachel Raper, confirmed that all of the applicants are eligible for appointment to the vacant seat.

- Marilyn Carter
- Rani Dasi
- Penny Rich
- Anna Richards

The applications are attached to this memorandum for review.

Orange County Board of Commissioners - Vacancy Application

Name: Marilyn Carter

Address: 100 San Sophia Dr. Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Email: marilyncarter111@gmail.com

Phone: 919-448-7406

Registered Voter? yes no

Party Affiliation: Democratic

Questions:

1. What motivates you to want to serve as an Orange County commissioner, including why are you seeking an appointment now, as opposed to running for the seat during a previous election?

I am motivated to apply for the open position on the Board of Orange County Commissioners by a promise I made to my mother, Alice, to serve my community to my fullest ability. I share this personal anecdote, because it lies at the very core of my being, and it also depicts how good healthcare, timely interventions, early childhood education and excellent public schools meant that a child with a disability, in this case me, was not left behind:

One of my earliest memories is the excruciating pain of recurrent ear infections. At three years old, I stopped talking. My pediatrician discovered a significant congenital hearing loss worsened by the congestion of the infections. I received speech therapy and attended a special preschool. My public school teachers had training and support that allowed them time to consider every child, and they made adjustments to my learning environment. I thrived in school, graduated at the top of my class, and proceeded to college to study engineering on a scholarship.

As I prepared to start college, my mother, who had overcome an impoverished background to become a nurse, told me: "You will be successful. One day, when you can, serve your community so that others are not left behind."

I did not seek to run for this seat during the previous election, as I was fully committed to serving as our county's Democratic party chair. In that role, I was focused on creating an environment where new people have been welcomed and engaged to create a stronger community for civic action. This spring, I completed my term as Chair, and endeavored to serve in new ways. I was appointed to join the Governor's Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services as a Mental Health Family Member and I took a position on our state Party's executive council. I continue to be an active member of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP. When the position for District 1 Commissioner unexpectedly opened, my initial reaction

was to think about who I could recommend for the role, as I seek to support others in their aspirations to serve.

Upon reflection, however, my skills and experiences are highly applicable in their own right, as I'll discuss in the course of the subsequent questions and answers. I humbly seek to fulfill a promise made by submitting this application and offering myself for service.

2. What do you consider to be one of the most important characteristics of a county commissioner? What in your experience demonstrates your ability to be effective as a commissioner? What is your experience in shared governance or leadership? What steps do you take in making decisions?

I believe a successful county commissioner needs to be thoughtful, dedicated, open for feedback and to have a vision for advancing our community. Above all, however, what we need now is a commissioner who has proven ability to find common ground across a broad range of stakeholders and to work collaboratively for results.

In my most recent leadership role, I demonstrated effective collaboration -- always with a mind to identify progress we could make in tackling a problem. Working closely with my leadership team, I sought input from community leaders on what work we could and should do to build a more representative organization. We took that feedback, set our aspirational objectives and implemented a plan to measure and report back on our progress. While this work continues, I am proud that we not only increased representation but also engagement of young people, people of color and those who live outside our municipalities in the more rural parts of Orange County.

In addition, I worked beyond traditional activities to build a stronger, more connected community as we faced the pandemic by focusing on our common needs as Orange County community members. In early 2020, I led our team in making a rapid, early transition to the online world. I engaged with our elected officials, community leaders, elections officials and volunteers across Orange County, to assist in disseminating information about how North Carolina and Orange County were addressing the crisis. We did this by hosting a series of online COVID Informational Town Halls with our elected officials and by sharing early information with voters on how they could safely exercise their franchise during COVID.

As a corporate operations leader, my organization served other functions such as Sales and Customer Service. Our mission was change management as we enabled new technical capabilities so those functions could do their jobs better. At the same time, we needed to optimize our investments, implement performance measures, and assess those measures on an ongoing basis. We held ourselves accountable by regularly gauging customer satisfaction. For our work to succeed, we needed the buy-in of our stakeholders, and they did not always agree with each other. We used a shared governance model that included representation from all our

major stakeholders when arriving at decisions. I and the team that I built served as a central coordinating point to facilitate decision-making.

In my corporate experience and my work as a county Party leader, the very first step in making decisions is always to gather perspectives of those with a stake in the outcome. I focus on seeking input from those who may be impacted but who may not be as vocal. I review relevant data, and if it is not available, assess what information is needed to support an objective process. I collaborate to identify common ground that enables forward progress with clear success measures. I ask how we will regularly assess these. Finally, I commit a plan for communicating all these elements as part of the decision.

These experiences have equipped me to be a high-performing contributor in supporting the work of our current Board.

3. How would your appointment enhance the diversity of the BOCC?

Diversity of life experience has shaped who I am, and I believe will help me be a better public servant.

Living with significant hearing loss has instilled in me the tenacity to overcome challenges and elevated my empathy for those who live with a disability.

In college, I met my husband, who is Kurdish-Iranian. He had emigrated to the U.S. to study engineering. It was during the Revolution, and the universities there shut down amidst social and political upheaval. When we married, I sought to learn his language. Together we cooked the foods of his homeland. We celebrated the holidays, including the Persian New Year on the first day of each Spring. I learned much about myself by learning about his culture. I learned the power of being a good role model for my children, who are proud of their dual heritage. I also learned, through the tribulations of many wonderful immigrants I have befriended, to place even higher value upon our precious right to vote and upon good government that serves with integrity.

In my professional career, I worked in some of the best managed companies in the nation, and I learned much about leadership, how to build teams and how to develop people. However, in the 90's, when I worked as an engineer prior to going into management, only one in ten engineers were female. Even fewer served in positions of leadership. For years, I was in the professional minority. This experience instilled in me grit and positive determination.

Finally, experience as the advocate of a family member who lives with mental illness provides me insight into the everyday concerns for the many members of our community who are touched by mental health challenges.

4. What do you see as the most urgent unmet needs facing Orange County. Please limit to 5 or less and prioritize these needs, particularly if listing more than 3.

While the scope of the BOCC is broad and deep, the following areas will continue to need heightened attention from the Board. They are listed in order, not necessarily by importance, but in terms of potential timing for positive impact to our Orange County community.

- **Sustainably Expanding Affordable Housing.**
 - The need in our County to sustainably deliver more affordable housing in a way that also protects our environment is acute. Projects like the recently published Environmental Assessment for the Greene Tract provide valuable data and options for public discourse. As a Commissioner, I will support facilitating that discourse, listen to stakeholders who may not agree on all aspects of a particular issue, and identify common ground and a path forward with my fellow commissioners based on shared community needs and values.
- **Providing reliable broadband access county-wide, with emphasis on underserved parts of the county.**
 - The Broadband Task Force, led by Commissioners McKee and Greene, is working to recommend a plan that will expand reliable high-speed internet services to all County residents and businesses. The pandemic has proven that this critical unmet need is making existing disparities, particularly in education, even worse. The Board recently committed Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to this task. As a commissioner with a background in engineering and an intense interest in ensuring technology is an enabler in closing our schools' achievement gap, I will lend my support to this effort in any way I can.
- **Ensuring Strong Public Schools and equitable educational outcomes**
 - In addition to Broadband access, our students need:
 - Safe, wholesome school facilities for learning, free of intimidation
 - Well-compensated public school teachers whose massive contribution to the well-being of our society are appropriately valued
- **Action to address the accelerating climate emergency**
 - I was recently in Portland, Oregon helping our daughter relocate there for her medical residency -- during the sudden mass-casualty heat wave. Historic temperatures of over 115 degrees for days served as a literal slap in the face for those in the Pacific Northwest and much of our nation, as the West prepares for what will likely be the most destructive wildfire season in recorded history. Here in North Carolina, we continue to suffer stronger hurricanes and flooding rains that inordinately impact communities of color. As a commissioner:
 - I will bring my voice to promote actions local government, our citizens and businesses can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 - I will work to better understand the direct risks posed by climate change to our communities and what additional work our county must do to protect from those impacts.
- **Continued strong support for public health, including mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services**

- As we begin to face the delta wave of the pandemic, we must continue our vigilance and invest in these areas. Furthermore, the pandemic has taken a severe toll on the mental health of our children, our elders and all who are coping with loss. The consequences of unaddressed mental health challenges have a huge and costly long-term impact on society and upon local government services. As a commissioner, I will support efforts we can take now to address these challenges proactively.

5. If you could change one thing about the current county budget, what would that be?

Orange County currently holds AAA and AA+ bond ratings. These bonds have been instrumental in enabling critical investments to fund affordable housing initiatives and also to fund general obligations for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro and Orange County School systems. In our current ultra-low interest rate environment, our county's borrowing power is a strategic asset that has served us well. As a new commissioner, I will support good fiscal practices to protect this asset so that our County is in a position to implement solutions that address our community's needs while assuring a sound county balance sheet.

6. What is your assessment of the county's funding practices with regard to the two school systems? How do you propose the BOCC meet over \$300 million in K-12 public schools capital needs?

It is crucial that our children have safe, wholesome school facilities and that we are prepared for future growth in our county. As a new commissioner, I will work with my co-commissioners and elected officials in the school boards to understand the highest priority capital needs and to determine immediate actions that can be taken in tandem to begin to address these.

7. Do you support the 1909 Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools special district tax? How should it be used?

My twin daughters both attended CH-C public schools, and as a resident homeowner in Chapel Hill, we continue to contribute to the special district tax. While they received an excellent education, which continues for many children in town, community members have rightful questions about how to achieve equitable outcomes in our system. As a new commissioner, I would seek to partner with the public school boards to understand concerns that various stakeholders have with the current uses of the special district tax and what changes they may be seeking. If stakeholder interests are not aligned, I would again partner as appropriate with the public school boards to engage public discourse on this tax.

8. What is your vision for how Orange County should grow economically?

One of the top Planning Principles in Orange County's 2030 Economic Plan states that "Growth and development within the county should occur in a pattern, location, and density that is sustainable over the long-term."

My vision for how Orange County should grow is also guided by that principal. At the same time, much has changed since the Economic Plan was adopted in 2008. If we are to address inequities in housing, education, environmental impact and job opportunities, we must elevate and reframe the Plan's Principle #7, "Promotion of Economic Prosperity and Diversity".

To do this, Orange County needs to sustainably expand its tax base in an environmentally responsible way beyond a heavy reliance on residential property taxes to a more balanced mix of revenue sources. We need to build upon prior work the board has done to leverage development structures including planned, mixed-use development, Economic Development Districts and good governance around our Commercial-Industrial Transition Activity Nodes.

Furthermore, I would advocate for continued information-sharing with other counties across the nation. so that our economic planning for Orange County benefits from both the best practices and the lessons learned of others.

9. One of the unfortunate outcomes of the pandemic is that the wealth gap has grown even greater. We anticipate what economists call a K-shaped recovery, in which pre-existing inequities are exacerbated. This disparity largely falls along lines of race. How can county commissioners ensure that prosperity in the coming years is more equitably shared?

The pandemic has indeed worsened pre-existing inequities. I would also make a case that the pandemic has raised the awareness of the problems that already existed for many years, and imparted a sense of urgency and momentum among many elected officials to take positive action. In Orange County, this disparity appears in every aspect of life, including access to affordable housing, equitable education and health outcomes. County and municipal governments are taking the opportunity with new Federal assistance to address long-standing infrastructure issues, such as access to rural broadband. I support the Commission's work-in-progress to put these funds to impactful use as wisely and expeditiously as we can.

Furthermore, I support the concept of sustainable, environmentally sensitive development within Economic Development Districts such as the Hillsborough, Eno and Buckhorn EDDs, and the work to deliver a Unified Development Ordinance to ensure consistency in development practices and economic opportunities for our citizens that arise from them. Continued thoughtful and deliberate stewardship of development in the Buckhorn, Efland and Hillsborough Commercial-Industrial Transition Activity Nodes over the intermediate and long term can provide an incentive for employers to locate in Orange County and for private broadband infrastructure development to serve growing communities.

10. What steps do you think the Board of Commissioners could take to address the chronic lack of affordable housing in the county?

In addition to steps mentioned earlier in question 4 and 9:

As a member of the Chapel-Hill Carrboro NAACP, I have deep admiration for the leadership we see in civic organizations to raise the visibility of and effectively advocate for solutions for affordable housing (and other) challenges. As a result of my affiliation with CH-C NAACP, I and other community members became more knowledgeable about specific opportunities to advocate for progress, and I wrote a letter of support to the Town of Chapel Hill for the future Weavers Grove development that adjoins my own neighborhood. The work of organizations like emPOWERment, Inc. are models for public-community partnership. Our commissioners already engage with local civic organizations, and I would support continued listening with a broad range of stakeholders to build an ever-improving understanding of how the County can best serve our community.

The Board can also continue to look beyond Orange County and North Carolina for examples and tools such as community land trusts that are being used in affordable housing development to understand what has worked and what has not in those communities.

11. What should the county government be doing to address the climate crisis?

See question 4.

12. Orange County is in the process of revising its long-term transit plan in the aftermath of the failure of the Durham-Orange light rail project. What do you believe a new plan should emphasize? What potential initiatives would you like to support?

The failure of the Durham-Orange light rail project serves as a cautionary tale for those serving in local government. Rather than weighing in at this time on what elements a new plan should address, I commit that as a new commissioner, I will be diligent in building an understanding about our short and long-term community needs for transit. I will be guided by the axiom of making good investments -- i.e., invest when you understand what it is you are investing in. To that end, I will not hesitate to ask questions to ensure that I have that understanding, so that we can continue to provide services that are crucial to our citizens today and that will enable our future growth.

13. How should the BOCC interact with other governments—i.e., town councils, NC General Assembly?

Planning structures such as the Orange County Joint Planning Agreement and the Interlocal Agreement process, such as the one used to fund the recently completed Greene Tract environmental assessment are valuable tools to facilitate interaction between the different parts of our local government. At the same time, while each body needs to manage its individual governmental charters, a coordinated, regular, strategically-oriented engagement on issues of common interest could provide significant value to all bodies.

As a new commissioner, I would be interested to explore how the NC Association of County Commissioners may provide opportunities to assess common concerns through engagement with other county leadership that can be articulated as a group with state legislators. My own observation is that our commissioners have a very good relationship with Orange County representatives in the NCGA.

Applications are due to the Orange County Clerk to the Board by 5 pm on July 19, 2021. Completed applications can be emailed to clerk@orangecountync.gov or delivered to 300 W. Tryon St., 2nd Flr., Hillsborough, NC 27278.

Orange County Board of Commissioners - Vacancy Application Applications due to the Orange County Clerk to the Board by 5 pm on July 19, 2021. Completed applications can be emailed to clerk@orangecountync.gov or delivered to 300 W. Tryon St., 2nd Flr., Hillsborough, NC 27278.

Name: Rani Dasi
Address: 8509 Balmoral PL, Carrboro NC 27516
Email: ranidasi@yahoo

Phone: 513-325-0116
Registered Voter? yes ___x_ no ___ **Party Affiliation:** Democrat

1. What motivates you to want to serve as an Orange County commissioner, including why are you seeking an appointment now, as opposed to running for the seat during a previous election?

I am interested in improving community health and wellness. Communities thrive when people have what they require to meet basic needs (jobs, education, housing, etc.). I have focused on education as a pathway to community health and as I have gotten deeper into that work, it has become more apparent that so many factors outside of schools influence overall community wellness and what happens in schools. County government has the scale and resources to provide structural supports which more broadly contribute to community health.

So, I have been interested in running for a seat on the commission for some time. When the last election took place my mother was ill and family time was prioritized. Currently, my time is more flexible and I am able to focus on other commitments.

Over the past year, the global pandemic exposed significant resource needs and as we look towards recovery, we have a unique opportunity to build on federal and state funding to invest in humanity and provide core needs to help people. I would like to work with the commissioners to make this happen.

2. What do you consider to be one of the most important characteristics of a county commissioner?

Willingness to seek and consider multiple perspectives and understand different experiences that represent the diversity of county residents to inform governance decisions.

What in your experience demonstrates your ability to be effective as a commissioner?

- My professional experience in corporate finance and strategy drives my focus on systems thinking, connecting dots to achieve broader goals, and providing insights on fiscal implications of decisions (particularly useful in constrained resource environments as county budgets are often tight and require difficult choices)
- Experience gained in elected service and working with commissioners, leading to awareness of the scope and challenges commissioners face
- Demonstrated engagement with seeking and including diverse perspectives in decision making

What is your experience in shared governance or leadership?

I've had the opportunity to observe and learn from great leaders and to build on this learning to lead in multiple areas:

- Professionally: I have 20+ years of leadership experience, successfully building and guiding teams to deliver shared goals in environments from manufacturing products to developing growth strategies and collaborating with key stakeholders to deliver our objectives.
- I have also had the opportunity to lead in other areas:
 - Served as Chair/Vice Chair of the board of The Walking Classroom (a national award-winning education non-profit organization that provides students and teachers with an innovative way to get exercise without sacrificing instructional time)

- Elected to CHCCS board of education and served as board chair and vice chair
- North Carolina Beginning Teacher of the Year Steering Committee
- Executive board member of the North Carolina Caucus of Black School Board Members
- Served as co-director of the Northwestern University Triangle Area Alumni Admission Council, representing the university in recruiting communications and leading the potential student interview process in the Triangle area

What steps do you take in making decisions?

- Gather information and data, solicit multiple perspectives (particularly from those most affected by an issue)
- Consider context and history
- Prioritize most important issues and decision criteria
- Make decision
- Seek feedback/measure outcomes to determine if decision met the intended purpose and goals were met

3. How would your appointment enhance diversity of the BOCC?

My appointment would bring multiple perspectives to the BOCC:

- Voice of a Carrboro resident
- Perspective of a parent of school age children
- Professional experience in corporate finance and strategy – fiscal understanding
- Lived experience as a Black woman
- Lived experience of resource scarcity and what happens when individuals and families lack necessary resources. I understand what it means to need community support and how important it is for governments to invest in people

4. What do you see as the most urgent unmet needs facing Orange County. Please limit to 5 or less and prioritize these needs, particularly if listing more than 3.

- Economic Development/Broadband access/Climate action
- Mental Health and other health resources
- Education

5. If you could change one thing about the current county budget, what would that be?

Increase public clarity on how budget links to county strategy/priorities/vision and how this creates conditions for community wellness

6. What is your assessment of the county's funding practices with regard to the two school systems?

The BOCC recognizes the value of investing in education and historically has supported local education funding. The board has a funding target which directs 48.1 percent of general fund revenues to education. Unfortunately, continued state cuts to K-12 education funding has increased pressure on local budgets across the state. The BOCC has had to balance other county needs and not been able to offset the decreased investment from state funding. The county can also support schools through investment in other areas like building health resources (including mental health), housing and economic growth as well as active public advocacy to restore state funding.

How do you propose the BOCC meet over \$300 million in K-12 public schools capital needs?

- Collaborate with CHCCS and OCS to develop plans to address highest need areas, including a long-range plan for funding school capital needs, and education component to inform the public about school facility needs

- Prioritize state level advocacy to get support for state bond – work with other commissioners, etc.

7. Do you support the 1909 Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools special district tax? How should it be used?

Per pupil spending in NC is lower than the national average and does not meet the very real needs of students across the state and in our district schools. Every funding source is critical to students and I would support continuing to leverage this funding source to meet local school needs.

8. What is your vision for how Orange County should grow economically?

- The way Americans work is changing so we must focus on creating infrastructure that enables workers to participate in the changing economy and which supports potential employers seeking locations in which to operate. This includes investment in broadband, clearly defined land use policies and development criteria.
- Identify how the county can support local businesses that hire local residents including jobs that do not require a college degree
- Increase collaboration with neighboring communities (local counties, municipalities, etc.)

8. One of the unfortunate outcomes of the pandemic is that the wealth gap has grown even greater. We anticipate what economists call a K-shaped recovery, in which pre-existing inequities are exacerbated. This disparity largely falls along lines of race. How can county commissioners ensure that prosperity in the coming years is more equitably shared?

- Solicit input from community members of color on their needs and potential solutions to issues
- Invest to enable education opportunities, jobs, and housing, with specific focus on community members who historically have been denied access to resources
- Support the health of women led and black owned and other businesses of color - how do we use current resources like SBA business centers and current county resources to support and to grow those businesses

10. What steps do you think the Board of Commissioners could take to address the chronic lack of affordable housing in the county?

- Deepen collaboration with neighboring communities (local counties, municipalities, etc.) and other stakeholders
 - Developers
 - Non-profits
 - Other potential funders (lenders, etc.)
- Create accountability processes and metrics to assess progress and make necessary interventions. Set clear goals and success measures

11. What should the county government be doing to address the climate crisis?

- Create specific plans and prioritize actions
- Educate community about the urgency and actions individuals can take as well as systems – (Establish a public information plan that would encompass businesses, nonprofits, the municipalities, and schools)
- Create incentives to for residents and businesses to take action
- Invest in mitigation
- Does the county have a sustainability coordinator – learn best practices from other communities we can implement
- Incentivize and create system of accountability

12. Orange County is in the process of revising its long-term transit plan in the aftermath of the failure of the Durham-Orange light rail project. What do you believe a new plan should emphasize? What potential initiatives would you like to support?

- Clear plan that enables all Orange County residents to benefit
- Increased bus service where there is a need in rural Orange County and increase bus service between the northern and southern part of the county
- Sustainable, affordable
- Climate friendly

13. How should the BOCC interact with other governments—i.e., town councils, NC General Assembly?

- Increase collaboration by setting common goals, plans to achieve them and metrics to assess progress and make interventions as necessary
- Greater understanding of what each town is attempting to achieve and whether some practices or policies prevent those goals
- Create visibility
- Build trust and Accountability

Orange County Board of Commissioners - Vacancy Application July 15, 2021

Name: **PENNY RICH**

Address: **111 Mulberry Street #A, Carrboro, NC 27510**

Email: **pennyrich.ch@gmail.com**

Phone: **919-960-0220**

Registered Voter? **yes no**

Party Affiliation: **DEM**

1. What motivates you to want to serve as an Orange County commissioner, including why are you seeking an appointment now, as opposed to running for the seat during a previous election?

I have previously served as a county commissioner representing District 1 from 2012 to 2020. In 2020, I ran for re-election receiving 12,496 votes, but falling 7 votes shy of the re-election. Orange County residents in District 1 voted for me in that last campaign and many of those same residents are now encouraging me to submit my name for the vacant seat. I am dedicated to making Orange County a place for everyone to experience a good life by providing a sound basic education for every student; creating meaningful jobs that pay a living wage; creating housing options for our income diverse community; protecting green spaces for recreation; providing robust public transportation options so that residents can get to jobs, make doctor appointments, go to school and access our local economy; addressing urgent climate concerns; protecting civil rights, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights; rejecting bigotry in all its forms, including racism, antisemitism, anti-Asian crime and Islamophobia; and continuing the push for broadband to become a utility making it available and affordable for all of our residents, especially those in rural Orange. Orange County can be a place for "Everyone", we just need to include everyone and hear all of their voices in order to do so.

2. What do you consider to be one of the most important characteristics of a county commissioner? What in your experience demonstrates your ability to be effective as a commissioner? What is your experience in shared governance or leadership? What steps do you take in making decisions?

The most important characteristic is strong leadership dedicated to making Orange County a place for "Everyone".

Over the past 8 years as a county commissioner, including four years as either Chair or Vice-Chair, I have developed and maintained relationships in the community and with staff; remained open and accessible to the public; showed passion and compassion in creating inclusive public policy; took risks to think outside the box; engaged with local elected officials in Orange County, our surrounding counties and state; and proved that I have the drive to get things done.

However, the largest measure of my leadership came during the Covid pandemic. As the Chief Elected official in Orange County, I had to step into a leadership role that had no playbook, no policy, and, it seemed, no end in sight. In early March 2020, the mayors of the three towns and myself formed a working group for the COVID 19 pandemic and created State of Emergency orders in accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders. We had regular meetings every Tuesday and Thursday, and met when needed to make crucial decisions in concert with the OC Health Department, emergency services, law enforcement, UNC Health Care, UNC, OWASA, managers and attorneys offices, NC Department of Health and Human Services, and the Governor's Office. Looking back, I met with the mayors on a daily basis and sometimes more than once a day. I was literally on the phone or on Zoom meetings all day and well into the night. I often checked in with the health director in the morning before we had a chance to have coffee, realizing that what was happening at 7:30 in the morning could change by 9:30

when our formal group met. This shared governance began March 2020 and continued through December 2020. During this time I delivered regular updates to all members of the BOCC, our school board chairs, our state legislators and Congressman Price. I brought suggestions and questions back to our working group from the BOCC, our legislators and our congressmen. Congressman Price invited me and Health Director Quintana Stewart to a town hall to discuss OC Covid response and recovery plan where over 300 residents were present and I delivered a presentation to the Kenan Scholar Program where students and faculty engaged in conversation about the pandemic and recovery. Decisions made during Covid happened at a fast pace and I depended on and collaborated with my colleagues, the three mayors, and with legal counsel, to make the best possible decisions based on the information we were receiving at the time and the science. Because Orange County was in a state of emergency, I was able to work jointly with the mayors to move orders forward exponentially.

In general my decision-making process is:

- 1. Gather as much information as possible pertaining to the issue*
- 2. Utilize staff resources and expertise*
- 3. Connect with as many residents as possible, especially those that will be directly affected by the decision*
- 4. Talk with my colleagues on all boards to widen my knowledge about their interests and expectations*
- 5. Consider the financial impact*
- 6. Consider the social justice impact*
- 7. Consider how this vote can change or worsen our climate mitigation goals*

3. How would your appointment enhance diversity of the BOCC?

Diversity is about what makes each of us unique and it includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences and beliefs - all of the things that make us who we are. It is a combination of our differences that shape our view of the world, our perspective and our approach. If we take a look at the BOCC there are 4 members from Chapel Hill and 2 from unincorporated Orange County. We are missing a Carrboro voice. I am that voice. I am an American Jewish Woman and business owner. My background and personal experiences have allowed me to recognize prejudice, injustice, sexism, racism, bigotry and antisemitism; calling it out and demanding that as a county, we do better.

Sponsored resolutions and petitions:

- A RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO RECENT ACTS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC INTIMIDATION ON THE UNC**
- PETITION TO CHCCS TO ELIMINATE SATURDAY AS A MAKE UP DAY (JEWISH SABBATH)**
- RESOLUTION SUPPORTING NORTH CAROLINA'S WORKING PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES**
- RESOLUTION DECLARING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY (co-sponsor)**
- RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE DECRIMINALIZATION OF MARIJUANA**
- RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE REPEAL OF THE HYDE AMENDMENT AND SUPPORTING THE RIGHT OF ALL WOMEN TO SAFE AND COMPREHENSIVE HEALTHCARE**

In addition, I live with my mom who will be 92 this year. I am often challenged to view the world through her eyes and the change she has seen and the progress still yet to be made. She helps me understand and advocate for her and other seniors in Orange County. We are very fortunate to have a dedicated department on aging in OC.

4. What do you see as the most urgent unmet needs facing Orange County. Please limit to 5 or less and prioritize these needs, particularly if listing more than 3.

Although our elected leaders have been working hard on urgent unmet needs, the list has not changed much over the years due to roadblocks including funding, limits and regulations handed down from

the North Carolina General Assembly, outdated zoning policy, lack of political will, and reluctance to change. In order of priority, I see the needs as:

- 1. Housing - It is not affordable, it is not equitable, it is not available*
- 2. Climate - See question 11.*
- 3. Broadband - inequitable access to the internet has profound implications for our residents and community. I believe that broadband access will not be equitable until it is regulated as a utility, provided to anyone who wants it at a reasonable cost. This became an urgent need during the pandemic. I have worked on this my entire 8 years on the BOCC and sat on a number of advisory groups and boards including the Triangle Council of Governments, NC Technology Board, and NACO Technology and Telecommunications Committee. I have lobbied both the state and federal governments.*
- 4. Education - One of the jobs of a BOCC is to deliver a sound basic education to every student through the budgetary process. This can not be fully achieved if the NCGA continues to decrease funding thereby requiring counties to fill in the gaps while also refusing to allow counties to provide broadband to its students and residents. - See question 6 for more detail.*
- 5. Diversifying our tax base - Economic Development - See question 11.*

5. If you could change one thing about the current county budget, what would that be?

I would consider funding for diverse, unique learning settings, as every child will not attend a four year college. In 2019, the BOCC commissioned a study with the Chamber for a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro to examine the worker shortage in the skilled construction trades and the cost of a trades-craft training center. The gap analysis showed that there are minimal training opportunities for students in skilled construction trade occupations in Orange County. Orange County Schools have a Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway that is robust and includes agriculture, horticulture, business, IT, health sciences, culinary arts, and industrial courses of study. CHCCS Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools by comparison has significantly fewer options that are not offered at all schools. Hope Renovations is a non-profit focusing on training women in construction and some employers in the construction/trades business allow for on the job training through apprenticeships. Other than these three options students must seek education outside of the county through either Alamance Community College or Durham Tech Community College (the Durham Campus).

The recommendation for Orange County is to partner with Durham Tech and expand the WayMakers program to the Orange County campus working in conjunction with K-12 districts. WayMakers covers major skilled trades: construction, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, highway construction, power line maintenance, and entrepreneurship. These are well paying jobs, some paying much more than college educated professionals, and in 2019 the median pay for some of these skills ranged from 36K at the low end to nearly 90K annually.

6. What is your assessment of the county's funding practices with regard to the two school systems? How do you propose the BOCC meet over \$300 million in K-12 public schools capital needs?

Under North Carolina state law the state is responsible for funding instructional expenses while counties are responsible for funding capital expenses. Cuts to the state budget during the Great Recession have not been restored and local districts have been forced to take on a larger share of instructional expenses, including personnel, making it very difficult to balance all funding needs. As a higher wealth district, we are able to tap into our tax base to cope with inadequate state level funding, however, we still cannot mitigate the impacts of decreased state investments because we are simply plugging holes rather than building upon state support.

Orange County has consistently had the highest per pupil spending in the state in both school districts. The target of 48.1% of the county's budget is a starting point each year for school investment. While I was on the board there has never been a year where spending fell below this and in many years it is at 50% or higher of the overall county budget.

A recent study reported that a majority of U.S. public school districts need to make major building repairs in at least half of their schools, yet many districts are left on their own to pay for these repairs. The state of North Carolina does not provide funding for school construction or renovation leaving it to counties to generate support through property taxes or bonds. We can not tax our way out of this problem. The only other option is to borrow money through a bond. Likely 2 bonds spread out over a period of time. Furthermore, the General Assembly needs additional pressure from county officials to place Governor Cooper's infrastructure bond on the ballot, which would in part pay for additional funding for school buildings. Additionally, as commissioners we need to work with Congressman Price, who serves on the House Budget Committee, to receive our fair share of the \$129 billion from the American Recovery Plan dedicated to school building repairs to add to previously allocated local funding.

7. Do you support the 1909 Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools special district tax? How should it be used?

Commissioners can not create or eliminate a school district tax or any other overlay tax as it is legislated by the General Assembly. I take my lead from the residents in the CHCCS district. If they continue to feel confident that the distinct tax is beneficial to the system, I will continue to support it. I support public school/education and always want what is best for each child. I raised two boys in Chapel Hill and both attended the CHCCS K-12 system and continued onto public colleges in the UNC system.

Orange County Commissioners have a limited role on how the district tax or any other funding to the school/s is spent. In each budget year there is CIP (Capital Improvement Plan for building construction, renovations and repairs) funding and Operational funding supplied to the 2 school systems. I believe the Orange County Commissioners have always respected the school board/s role in directing funds as needed by their districts.

8. What is your vision for how Orange County should grow economically?

In 2019, I was closely involved with our efforts first hand as chair of the BOCC, and on the County's small business loan advisory board. Along with the Economic Development team, I was eager to support the diverse economic mix including a broad range of job, salary, and skill options, as well as making progress on our tax base. Those new employment opportunities helped Orange County residents seek full time jobs, at or above the living wage, and with benefits. Examples of these diverse efforts during my tenure as a commissioner and Board Chair included: Wegmans (in collaboration with Chapel Hill), the ABB expansion (in collaboration with Mebane), Medline Industries (in collaboration with Mebane), and Well Dot (in collaboration with Chapel Hill). The cumulative value of those projects totaled approximately \$125 million in taxable investment and over 1,400 new jobs. Orange County should continue to explore a variety of economic development options and various job opportunities for all segments of our community.

Also, in 2019-20 the County issued over \$1 million dollars in COVID- related emergency financial assistance grants to small businesses, with many of these grants issued to women and BIPOC-owned small businesses. These grants enable these valued locally owned businesses to recover and grow. We need to continue supporting small/homegrown businesses, local agriculture and farms, and our minority business owners. More money from these local small businesses stay in the community and those dollars circulate in ways that larger, out of town businesses simply do not.

Orange County should continue partnering with the towns to regain the momentum we had before the pandemic, collaborating efforts to assist in finding tenants for the 2 large commercial office buildings in Chapel Hill (the Gwedline at Glen Lennox, and the Parkline, located beside Wegmans) and also working with Carrboro, Hillsborough and Mebane to ensure a robust business community as the pandemic recovery continues.

Lastly we need to help our Tourism and Arts directors promote Orange County. (two of the hardest hit industries during covid) As of 2016 non-profit Arts revenue reached \$5.3 million dollars (for-profit venues such as the Cat's Cradle are not calculated in this number), and on average, tourism brings in \$1.9 million dollars a year.

9. One of the unfortunate outcomes of the pandemic is that the wealth gap has grown even greater. We anticipate what economists call a K-shaped recovery, in which pre-existing inequities are exacerbated. This disparity largely falls along lines of race. How can county commissioners ensure that prosperity in the coming years is more equitably shared?

In the fall of 2020 I delivered a speech at UNC to the Kenan Scholars Program faculty and students, focusing on this topic. I explained how, in the face of the challenges, such as COVID-19, we tend to as a society front load policy and propose changes in a hurry, but we need to ask ourselves, how are we structuring our response through a racial equity lens? I expressed the need to change the top-down approach and prioritize shared decision making as a team where accountability has to be horizontal, especially to the community. I encouraged the Scholars, as future leaders, to sit down, take your guard down, and listen, always making room for BIPOC people at the table.

I strongly support the County Commission's approach of explicitly stating how social justice applies to each issue on the agenda. I want to further advance this type of thinking to use an equity lens on each decision, and ensure that we are centering those most in need. As the county recovers, we need to examine what tools we haven't yet used to advance equity, and what tools are needed from the state level.

In spite of all the adversity that the pandemic brought, I remain optimistic about the opportunity for change. I believe it's time to think about transforming our community to be more resilient, more inclusive, more equitable and more agile. While the pandemic has changed fundamental assumptions about human behavior that may never revert back to a pre-pandemic state, I believe we should take this opportunity to create a more equitable community where such disparities do not exist and everyone can thrive.

10. What steps do you think the Board of Commissioners could take to address the chronic lack of affordable housing in the county?

Preserve, Rehabilitate, Build

Preserving an existing home is significantly less expensive than constructing new affordable housing. Restrictive land use regulations make it difficult to build affordable rental housing for very low-income families and seniors. Replacing every lost affordable apartment or home is often unrealistic. In particular, preserving affordable housing near transit corridors is important for connecting low-income families and seniors to opportunities.

Rehabilitating an existing affordable apartment or home can cost one-third less than building a new apartment. Rehabbing existing affordable housing also provides opportunities to integrate "green" technologies that make the buildings energy efficient, healthy for residents, and environmentally sustainable. "Green" technologies, such as weatherization, can be used to promote energy and water conservation, benefiting owners through lower maintenance costs and lower utility expenses for low income families and seniors.

Building - The County does not build housing, however, it can encourage conversation, planning, and innovation among those who can provide and build affordable housing while providing support through zoning and grants. While most of our affordable housing is within the towns, this needs to be a county wide effort for maximum return, especially since most of the affordable land in the county is in our unincorporated areas. The Orange County HOME Consortium has taken proactive steps to increase our housing stock and we can do more. For example, we can provide incentives to for-profit entities to produce multifamily units at a price point that households can afford. We can defer taxes and other fees for a set period of time in conjunction with federal or state tax credits to help the developer reduce construction costs and thus reduce the rental price. We can use county or town owned parcels as leverage to bring down the cost of construction or redevelopment as land is often very expensive and streamline the development and approval processes with fast-tracking programs. Housing affordability requires a partnership between government and the private sector. The more both entities bring all their tools and assets into play, the greater the likelihood of finding viable solutions.

11. What should the county government be doing to address the climate crisis?

The first step is to acknowledge there is a crisis and that it will cost money to mitigate future climate events. We are currently living through a number of climate catastrophes: heat dome, fires, flooding, and landslides. The climate crisis disproportionately affects lower income communities and women around the world, making it a social justice/environmental justice crisis as well. As a county, we have taken some steps, and we can always do more.

- ***Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community - we have done this***
- ***Set Goals, Inventory Emissions, Set targets - The CfE (Commission for the Environment) does this and provides updates on a regular basis***
- ***Encourage our community to decrease energy use - continue education campaigns***
- ***Increase the county and community use of renewable energy - we can do better***
- ***Reduce greenhouse gas emissions- we have pledged to do so***
- ***Transition to 100% carbon neutral energy county wide by 2040 - we have pledged to do so***

Orange County can continue climate mitigation by creating sustainable public transportation options, using more renewable energy at county facilities, reducing emissions through the use of electric vehicles or hybrids (including plug-in electric hybrids) in our county fleet, encouraging local food production and consumption, and promoting water conservation. We must invest in renewable energy, infrastructure updates, and help vulnerable residents. Working with the CfE (Commission for the Environment) we need to identify initiatives, quantify the impacts, prioritize and develop implementation, use established metrics to fund initiatives, create a plan for each initiative and track the progress.

12. Orange County is in the process of revising its long-term transit plan in the aftermath of the failure of the Durham-Orange light rail project. What do you believe a new plan should emphasize? What potential initiatives would you like to support?

I support a transit plan with a comprehensive approach that aligns with county and regional objectives and provides redundancy, increasing transportation resilience. Street space is a precious commodity that should be shared equitably to best provide affordable and convenient transportation options for all of our residents.

It is also key that we invest in connections to the rest of the Triangle. Congestion is predicted to worsen in the future, and the growth across our entire region means that people will continue to look across county lines to find job opportunities. If we want to keep the residents and support our businesses, we need to make sure that Orange County invests in travel options that make this possible. Without smart

regional transit investments, Orange County is at risk of becoming increasingly isolated from the rest of the Triangle. I believe a new plan should emphasize:

- *Dedicated, safe, accessible and continuous multimodal corridors, including greenways*
- *Dedicated, safe, accessible, protected and continuous bike lanes*
- *Dedicated lanes for public transit like BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)*
- *Frequent, reliable service in densely populated areas - headways (the amount of time between transit vehicles at one stop) of 10-12 minutes max*
- *Enhanced regional transit connectivity through collaborative relationships*
- *Clean, well lit, and safe stops/stations powered by solar panels*
- *Buses, heavy rail and future alternatives must have wifi connectivity*
- *Real-Time arrival information apps ie. Nextbus*
- *Continue to explore "Green" technology ie. Electric buses*
- *Marketing strategies to spread awareness and build ridership*

13. How should the BOCC interact with other governments—i.e., town councils, NC General Assembly?

As an elected official at the municipal and county level, I have had the pleasure of building relationships with many people including elected colleagues from the BOCC and the four towns (Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough, and Mebane), the two school boards, state and regional boards, Orange County boards and commissions, The Greater Chamber of Chapel Hill/Carrboro members, UNC, UNC Hospitals, UNC School of Government, and local business alliances. My philosophy for successful interaction is as follows:

Coordination - *Being flexible in organizing different elements of a complex issue to enable a healthy work atmosphere to balance positions.*

Collaboration - *Building an alliance and partnering with colleagues to work cooperatively to achieve positive outcomes.*

Communication - *The exchange of information to produce greater understanding of an issue or circumstance.*

We are so fortunate to live in a county where elected officials respect differences and can work through challenges for optimum outcomes. A good example of this was the Covid pandemic response. As the chair of the BOCC I was confronted with the huge task of leading our county during this unthinkable time. In 2020 I received four awards for my work:

WCHL Hometown Hero - *nominated by the three Mayors - Lavelle, Hemminger and Weaver - for my resolute commitment in leading the response team charged with keeping the residents of Orange County informed, educated and safe.*

The 2020 Orange County Emergency Services Award *for my involvement with the COVID-19 Response Team. This was awarded December 4th 2020 and reads - "On March 5, 2020, you were present, steady, engaged and provided invaluable leadership. While this has not been easy for any of us, you demonstrated resilience and the highest level commitment to our community and staff of Orange County. We may never be able to quantify the thousands of lives that were saved through your dedication and leadership."*

"The Challenge Coin presented to you by our department represents our collective appreciation for the compassion, care and unwavering dedication that has never faltered even under these stressful conditions. It is a symbol that you will always remain a part of an organization shrouded in honor, integrity, dedication, and service above self."

2020 Chair's Award For Leadership in Public-Private Partnership

The Chamber has presented an annual Chair's Award for Public Private Partnership to an individual or individuals whose work and community service builds bridges between the community's public and

private sectors. "Along with the 3 Mayor's we honor Penny Rich, Chair of the Board of County Commissioners. Their exceptional leadership, partnership, and service to our community during the Covid-pandemic--specifically their collaborative decision-making that strove to successfully balance public health with the needs of local employers and our local economy has helped make Orange County one of the safest places to live and do business in North Carolina. Thank you for conducting your business, during these very difficult times, in partnership with the business community and the Chamber. We are grateful for you, your leadership, and for your care and sacrifice to serve our community so well."

The Old North State Award- presented by Governor Cooper April 2021 for 20 years of service and leadership during COVID-

For dedication and service beyond exception and excellence to the Great State of North Carolina. As printed on the award, "Working together, we can make North Carolina the place of unlimited opportunity - a place where anyone who studies hard, works hard and lives a life with high values can fulfill and even exceed their potential".

I strongly align politically with the late great Senator Paul Wellstone in believing "When we all do better, we all do better". Orange County can be a place for "Everyone" we just need to include everyone and hear all of their voices.

I am available to answer any additional questions or clarify my responses given.

pennyrich.ch@gmail.com phone 919-960-0220

Orange County Board of Commissioners - Vacancy Application

Name: Anna Richards
Address: 205 Copper Beech Court
Email: penny2319@gmail.com Phone: 206 954-4273
Registered Voter? yes no Party Affiliation: Dem

Questions:

1. What motivates you to want to serve as an Orange County commissioner, including why are you seeking an appointment now, as opposed to running for the seat during a previous election?

As a life-long volunteer and social justice advocate, I work to advance opportunities for all citizens. I never saw elected office as my mechanism to serve. However, as the corona virus disproportionately impacted so many in this the wealthiest county in North Carolina, I realized that there were limits to the impact of volunteer efforts alone. It became clear that, at the local level, the county provides the basic safety net and essential services we all need. Now that we are in a different stage of the pandemic, we have the opportunity to rebuild "eyes wide open" about the disparities in technology, employment, housing, food security and health. I see this unexpected appointment as a way to add my community volunteer perspective to the process.

2. What do you consider to be one of the most important characteristics of a county commissioner? What in your experience demonstrates your ability to be effective as a commissioner? What is your experience in shared governance or leadership? What steps do you take in making decisions?

We live in a diverse county with diverse interests and needs. To be effective therefore, I believe one important commissioner characteristic is to be a collaborator. Collaboration is the art of working together with others to achieve a shared goal. As a collaborator, I enter into deliberations with a mind open to facts, data and points of view. In both my corporate experience leading large organizations and in my volunteer capacity as president of the CHC NAACP, successful outcomes depended on my ability to engage stakeholders, listen to diverse perspectives and being clear about the objectives with a goal to get a sense of fairness if not buy-in to the outcome. One example is the collaboration between Orange and Chatham NAACP branches and local law enforcement following the George Floyd murder. My 40+ years in leader roles, convince me that all leadership is shared even though accountability is personal.

3. How would your appointment enhance diversity of the BOCC?

I am not a career politician. I am a retiree. I moved to Orange County in 2013. I am a social justice advocate and a community organizer who helped expand the racial conversation in our county after building a 42 year executive career with Fortune 100 companies. I earned an MBA mid-career in my forties. I tried to start a business during the pandemic. The bulk of my work life was in finance, cost, contract and supplier management with an emphasis on process. I bring the opportunity of expanded community voice. This combination of lived experiences and training offer another perspective to the already diverse board.

Applications are due to the Orange County Clerk to the Board by 5 pm on July 19, 2021. Completed applications can be emailed to clerk@orangecountync.gov or delivered to 300 W. Tryon St., 2nd Flr., Hillsborough, NC 27278.

Orange County Board of Commissioners - Vacancy Application

4. What do you see as the most urgent unmet needs facing Orange County. Please limit to 5 or less and prioritize these needs, particularly if listing more than 3.

-Economic Development Strategy and Plan that provides clear parameters and proactive execution plan that includes small and minority owned businesses as well as larger enterprises. The recent Buc-ees episode demonstrated the need for intentional dialogue and action plans for development within each of the districts that includes the needs of the most impacted residents.

-Comprehensive Climate Action Plan for Orange County that leverages the potential of the Climate Council and the town plans.

-Full Implementation of the County Crisis Intervention Plan to include community based crisis response unit and the diversion facility.

5. If you could change one thing about the current county budget, what would that be?

Provide '21-'22 Wage increases for County employees beyond the merit pay that was resumed.

Although the '20-'21 County Budget received the "Distinguished Budget Presentation" again for the 29th year, the Financial Plan section failed for lack of long range financial plan section F8/Impact of Capital Investments on Op Budget not present section F9 and Goals and Objectives not provided. Perhaps a long range financial plan including capital investment impact analysis would allow the county to reassess wages for employees as well as clearer picture of the school capital plan.

6. What is your assessment of the county's funding practices with regard to the two school systems?

How do you propose the BOCC meet over \$300 million in K-12 public schools capital needs?

The County has moved to an equitable per pupil funding model which I support, however, I believe there should be an assessment of how the \$3.6 million for SRO's and nurses is spent. It is very commendable that there is a nurse in every middle and high school but there are still armed police but not counselors in every school. A long range financial plan with capital impacts would be a first step. Support from the state is unlikely to yield the needed funding. Finding additional revenue streams will require creativity perhaps set asides from developers for the schools or a community fund to raise private money for school capital projects. The question of how we got here lingers and should be understood as lessons learned.

7. Do you support the 1909 Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools special district tax? How should it be used?

Until 1909, Orange County schools were funded equally by the county. UNC faculty sought to enhance their staff recruitment by improving the schools in Chapel Hill with an extended school year. The legislature then approved the special tax district and today residents of Chapel Hill and Orange County pay higher real estate taxes than surrounding counties. In 1930, African American residents voted to pay the higher tax in Chapel Hill so that their children could also benefit from the education promised to all students in the district. The tax makes housing unaffordable for many and the educational gaps persist for many students. The tax should be used to close the gap.

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Orange County Board of Commissioners - Vacancy Application

8. What is your vision for how Orange County should grow economically?

My vision for OC economic growth starts with "walking the talk" of growing small and BIPOC businesses by active supplier procurement programs embedded in policies that preserve legacy businesses and include small/minority run non-profits in the process. The county would encourage local resources including sustainable agriculture incentives. Additionally, the county would tap into the green energy sector by using areas of low population density for renewable energy opportunities in light manufacturing/installation of energy efficient equipment. Partnership with local districts and Durham Tech, the county would be a center for green tech training. Fewer entry barriers would result in an enhanced perception of OC as a great place to do business.

9. One of the unfortunate outcomes of the pandemic is that the wealth gap has grown even greater. We anticipate what economists call a K-shaped recovery, in which pre-existing inequities are exacerbated. This disparity largely falls along lines of race. How can county commissioners ensure that prosperity in the coming years is more equitably shared?

Having witnessed the pandemic, we must first understand the impact by doing a thorough analysis of who and how people were affected by looking at the data to gain insight. Although the impact was disproportionate to the racial composition, there will not be one size fits all solutions. Listening to those affected and seeking to transition some of the interim programs into longterm solutions will lay the foundation. As priorities are being set, departments and commissioners will need to ask how does this decision or this program help or hurt the whole community. This mindful approach will help avoid unintended consequences. The disparities laid bare by the pandemic were there prior and got worse. Intentionality will be the key.

10. What steps do you think the Board of Commissioners could take to address the chronic lack of affordable housing in the county?

In coordination with data we have on hand and impacted citizen input, update needs assessment to address the most critical sector. The affordable housing conversation has been going on for the entire time I've lived in Orange County but solutions are elusive. Other suggestions;

Utilize available county owned land for development of affordable housing and mobile housing parks

Enforce, strengthen and incentivize developer affordable housing participation

Subsidize/incentivize landlords to support affordable rents

Convert empty buildings into low cost private sector housing

Orange County Board of Commissioners - Vacancy Application

11. What should the county government be doing to address the climate crisis?

CH and C both have clean air and renewable energy plans. Hillsborough is working on a plan as well. The county should develop a County Climate Action Plan integrating the municipal plans as well as creating opportunities that cross boundaries. The county does have the ability to adopt electric vehicles and implement a charging station plan (school transportation could also be part of the plan). The county can incentivize home owners to transition to energy efficient homes and work with developers as new projects are being proposed. Provide public ride share programs in lower populated areas. Develop a mid to long range solution for solid waste that doesn't bring our waste to less poor counties in the state. The county plan also include shared county climate goals

12. Orange County is in the process of revising its long-term transit plan in the aftermath of the failure of the Durham-Orange light rail project. What do you believe a new plan should emphasize? What potential initiatives would you like to support?

The half cent tax passed to support light rail is still in place so Orange County has a revenue stream with no plan. The planning responsibility is integral to the future role of Orange County in the growing RTP region and urgent. The new plan must be comprehensive meeting the needs of the high traffic centers as well as future development /population centers. Fundamental to the plan will be clear understanding/agreement on "Who" Orange County plans to be in the future. The integration with major employers and community is essential. Initiatives I support are expanded rapid bus transit, commuter rail between major employment centers.

13. How should the BOCC interact with other governments—i.e., town councils, NC General Assembly?

The BOCC must to continue to actively work to build coalitions across the state in an effort to get better outcomes from the General Assembly. The state surplus could be used to support our teachers and schools, medicaid expansion would provide healthcare to the uninsured. Likewise the interaction with other governments within the county is also critical to meeting the needs of our citizens. A great example of this working together is the Partnership Against Homelessness. Therefore the interaction should be active and focused on creative solutions to our shared challenges