



**Chapel Hill - Carrboro NAACP
2019 Council/Alderman Candidate Questionnaire**

Please type out your responses in full below; take as much space as you need to answer the question in full. We thank you in advance for your participation.

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| Full Name: | Michael Parker |
| Age/Race/Gender (with preferred pronouns): | Age: 69; Gender: Male; Pronouns: He/his |
| Occupation/Title/Retired: | Semi-retired Health Care and Life Sciences Consultant |
| Position sought: | Chapel Hill Town Council |

Headshot Photograph
(published with your
questionnaire responses):



Background

1. Please provide an overview of your local civic leadership/organizational affiliations. What specific insights into our local community have you garnered from this service work?

When I returned to Chapel Hill over nine years ago (having attended graduate school at UNC years before) I decided to use the skills I had developed as a healthcare and life sciences consultant to try to serve the Town. I started with membership on the Transportation Advisory Board (later becoming its chair), served as a co-chair of the Central West Steering Committee,

and as a member of the Planning Commission. I also served as a member of the boards of the ArtsCenter, the Friends of the Downtown, and the Chamber of Commerce. Then, nearly four years ago, the residents of our Town entrusted me with the honor and responsibility of helping to govern the special place that is Chapel Hill. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life because it has allowed me to meet people and confront issues that I almost certainly would not have had I not served on the Council. For example, there is a level of silent racism in our community that manifests itself when we discuss affordable housing, transit, or land use. that is enormously disturbing and must be addressed

But I have also come to appreciate our broad commitment to social justice, the tremendously high level of volunteerism and willingness to donate, and the willingness of many residents, to support affordable housing, transit, among other things, that other communities our size simply don't address.

2. What has motivated you to run for the office you seek?

Over the past three and one-half years, since I was first elected my colleagues and I have accomplished a great deal:

- Securing approval for a \$10 million bond to support affordable housing
- Moving forward with the North-South Bus Rapid Transit project to improve local transit, improve service and access, and reduce congestion
- Helping to bring new retail and office space options to our Town
- Taking an early and public stand against HB2

As proud as I am of our accomplishments, I recognize that there is much more we need to do. I want to continue to work with my colleagues, old and new, to:

- Meet the existential challenge of our time by developing a comprehensive and integrated Climate Action Plan
- Ensure that the funds from the Affordable Housing Bond are spent wisely so that we provide the most help for our residents as possible
- Continue to work toward regional transit solutions while strengthening and expanding Chapel Hill Transit
- Address an imbalance between our revenues and expenses to ensure that our Town is on a firm and sustainable financial footing

3. Have you attended the Racial Equity Institute (REI) training or any other racial equity trainings in the past three years? (Note: This training is not the same as diversity or cultural competence training.)

- If you have, what was the most impactful aspect of the experience?
- If you have not, if elected, do you commit to register and attend this type of training?
- Describe instances or situations in which you have applied racial equity frameworks in your work.

I attended the REI training in December of 2014. It was hugely impactful (and painful) for me. It was the first time that I appreciated the prevalence and impact of systemic racism and implicit bias. It has affected me in both my public and private lives., The two learnings were most meaningful were my understanding the many ways in which I had benefitted from white privilege and hearing about “the talk” that so many African-American teens, particularly males, have routinely as part of their coming of age.

This training, as well as my working with many people in our community, has led me to begin applying racial equity frameworks to my decision-making on Council. I have come to appreciate that policy conversations that we have had about affordable housing, transit, and land use cannot

be productive without understanding the history of racism and inequity that have existed since the founding of Chapel Hill. Going forward, as we discuss climate change and what we will do about it, I have learned that environmental problems disproportionately affect people of color and that we also must ensure that our solutions – better transit, more green spaces, etc., do not inadvertently gentrify areas and that any benefits of these actions are applied equitably.

Housing Affordability and Local Taxation

4. What strategies do you support for increasing the supply of affordable housing in Chapel Hill/Carrboro?

The unpleasant fact is that increasing the supply of affordable housing is an extremely difficult problem, one that no municipality has successfully solved, although some have been more successful than others. The Orange County Affordable Housing Coalition recently reported that in our county we have a deficit of some 12,000 affordable housing units. Further, North Carolina has laws that impede rather than facilitate providing affordable housing, the most prominent of which is an absolute statutory prohibition of rent control.

That said, there are things that Chapel Hill and our partners are doing that have made us recognized as a regional leader. In that regard, there are really two parallel approaches that need to be taken. The first, is using our development review process to secure affordable housing when new projects come before the Council. When the project is a for sale project, we can apply our Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance that requires developers to commit, in most cases, 15 percent of the units to affordable housing. This has been only moderately successful due to the facts that we are seeing relatively little for sale housing being built and the recent rise in construction costs have made the underlying economics challenging for both developers and the Town.

When rental projects come before us, although we have a policy that requires a similar level of affordable housing as for sale, the above-mentioned state statute means that we have to negotiate with developers for units or payments in lieu. In my mind, the results we have gotten are disappointing. In that regard, we are doing some things to try to improve the situation. First, based on a petition that I submitted, our staff and the Housing Advisory Board are working to develop a formula for determining what amounts payments in lieu should be so as to increase the amount of funds collected by the Town and at the same time provide predictability for developers. Second, we are increasingly requiring developers to open their books when they claim that they cannot provide affordable housing so that we can assess the veracity of their claims.

At the end of the day, however, the numbers of units that we will directly or indirectly obtain from new development projects will never be adequate. This leads to our second major approach – making affordable housing a shared responsibility and using Town resources. Chapel Hill currently owns 336 affordable housing units (although the units in one of our neighborhoods are closed pending renovation) making us the largest affordable housing provider in Chapel Hill. Through means such as our “penny for affordable housing,” land donations, and the issuance of revenue bonds, we are working with our affordable housing partners to leverage our resources to maximize the number of units we obtain. Our collaboration with DHIC on Greenfield Place and Greenfield Commons allowed us to obtain 149 affordable housing units at an average Town subsidy of about \$25,000 per unit (inclusive of cash and donated land), well below the \$150,000 or more it would have cost us to construct units on our own. Going forward to we need to leverage our \$10 million affordable housing bond in this way to maximize the units we obtain.

Finally, there is another approach that we are beginning to explore. This is working with developers, either non-profit or for-profit, to build mixed income communities wherein market rate housing helps to subsidize affordable housing while creating vibrant communities for all. We are testing this approach out on Town owned land on Homestead Rd.

The key takeaway from all of this is that addressing housing affordability is difficult and that there are no easy solutions. We will need to keep being creative and using any and all tools at our disposal.

5. Do you have specific ideas on how to make affordable housing, both rental and owned (and especially housing accessible to transit) available to people who work and provide essential services in our town?

Most of my suggestions are covered in my answer to Question 4. There is one important, additional strategy that needs to be highlighted and this involving UNC and UNC Healthcare in the solution to this problem.

UNC and UNC Healthcare are among the major creators of our affordable/workforce housing problem. Far too many of their employees do not make enough to afford to live in Chapel Hill. From my consulting experience I have learned that most universities and health care organizations in urban settings provide subsidized housing to their employees. UNC and UNC Healthcare do not. As a town government we have few levers for getting them to do so. However, the Town and UNC Healthcare are now negotiating a master plan for a new medical campus that UNC Healthcare wishes to build at Eastowne. The negotiating committee, of which I am a member, has been very clear that affordable housing for their employees (and perhaps others) needs to be a part of their plan. I am encouraged by our discussions to date that this, will in fact, occur. It certainly won't solve the problem, but it will be a start and, more importantly, will set a very valuable precedent.

6. How can we better engage residents of public housing in municipal governance?

Chapel Hill strives to be inclusive and ensure that all residents can be part of our governance. In terms of public housing, Chapel Hill recently appointed a new Director of Public Housing who, working with our Housing and Community staff is taking action to provide more opportunities for participation in governance. The resident councils, one for each public housing neighborhood, are being revived, although there have been some challenges in securing enough resident volunteers to participate, Chapel Hill has also started a Peoples Academy, which is a 5-week, 10-class opportunity to learn, connect and lead. Participants gather at Town or Town partner facilities to learn more about services, connect with their fellow community members, and gain valuable knowledge and understanding to lead in the Chapel Hill community. The goal is for individuals who have not traditionally been engaged with Town governance to develop the knowledge and connections to do so. We recruit for participation at our public housing neighborhoods. Results to date have been positive, with a number of graduates of our first Academy applying for and securing positions on Town advisory boards. Hopefully, some of these individuals will choose to run for Town office.

7. What initiatives or changes in existing policy would you support to make it possible for seniors to "age in place"? How can the town support more affordable assisted-living options?

Social services in Chapel Hill, such as those needed for aging in place, are largely the purview of the County government. In that regard, every five years the County's Department on Aging

develops its Master Aging Plan (MAP). The current one covers the period from 2017 to 2022. This plan includes eight key goals, almost all of which are intended to help our seniors age in place when they can and have needed resources when they can't. The eight goals are: Transportation; Outdoor Spaces and Buildings; Community Support and Health Services; Communication and Information; Housing; Civic Participation and Employment; Respect and Social Inclusion; and Social Participation. Chapel Hill actively participated in the development of this plan. It can be seen in full at <https://www.co.orange.nc.us/DocumentCenter/View/386/Orange-Countys-2017-2022-Master-Aging-Plan-PDF?bidId=>

True assisted living such as is provided at facilities such as Carol Woods are regulated by the State and new ones cannot be built and existing ones cannot be expanded without securing a Certificate of Need. Other options are not similarly regulated. For example, facilities like the Chapel Hill Retirement Residence, currently under construction on Estes Drive provide a range of services, such as meals and social activities, in addition to housing. I voted for the approval of this facility and would support others. The challenge, however, is that these facilities are beyond the means of lower income individuals. To date, the Town has been unable to devise a means for securing affordable units as we do with regular apartments due to the complication posed by how to account for the cost of services beyond basic rent. This is something we will need to address if these kinds of needed facilities are to be able to serve all in our Town.

Chapel Hill has also contributed to the development of 69 units of affordable housing at Greenfield Commons on Legion Rd. through its donation of land and cash and I would expect that as these opportunities present themselves, the Town will continue to support these developments.

Finally, through grants administered by our Human Services Advisory Board, the Town provides support to organizations such as Meals on Wheels.

8. In what ways would you like to see our town's tax base diversified? How should we move towards that?

As is well known, Chapel Hill's real estate tax base is very heavily skewed toward residential – about 86/14, depending on how one counts various building types. That is problematic. We need more commercial building, both office and retail. Chapel Hill went about eight years with no new office space being built. That is unsustainable. Accordingly, the Council has adopted an economic incentive policy to encourage the location of new commercial buildings, when can then house the jobs that we also need to create, and new retail establishments.

To date, the Councils on which I serve have granted three incentives – one to the new Wegmans, to Carraway Village, and to Glen Lennox. The Wegman's incentives are tied to both new construction and the creation of new jobs. The Caraway incentive was for road improvements that will then allow them to attract commercial/retail tenants, and the Glen Lennox incentive is explicitly tied to their constructing almost 500,000 square feet of badly needed office space. The Council also created an enterprise zone on Millhouse Rd. that is designed to make it easier to construct new commercial space (including R&D and light industrial) and does not allow residential construction at all.

Finally, the Town has doubled its support for the LAUNCH business accelerator downtown so as to support the creation of the new businesses that can then occupy the office spaces that we are helping developers to build.

9. How should the town address future possible displacement of residents of mobile home parks?

This is a critical problem. The Town is working on its own and with the County to address this problem, but we have yet to develop a comprehensive solution. I believe that if we are to truly address this problem, we need to recognize that the Town will need to work with our affordable housing partners and commit financial resources to secure land and build new housing for the affected individuals. In doing so, we need to recognize the sense of community our mobile home residents experience, their need to maintain proximity to jobs and transit; and the need for stability for their children in terms of schools.

One possible approach would be for the Town to purchase land for the construction of new homes, work with affordable housing partners to construct new residences, and organize the new communities as co-ops that would, over a period of perhaps 20 years give the residents ownership/equity and pay back to the Town/County some of the funds expended. There are likely other approaches, as well. The County has also developed an emergency response program for meeting short-term needs.

10. What is your position on the Rosemary Street Vision and its impact on the Northside neighborhood?

11.

The West Rosemary Street Development Guidelines that were approved by the Council a few years ago lay out an admirable vision for this part of Town and, I think, did a very good job of balancing (or trying to balance) the very real needs of the Northside community and the desire to continue development on Rosemary St. and make it a more integral and vibrant part of the Downtown. However, as I stated at the time of its approval, it makes promises that we as a Town are unlikely to be able to keep. And the guidelines tacitly recognized this by stating that achieving all of the goals articulated would require some form of subsidy without stating where those subsidies would come from.

I think that this became clearer during the Amity Station negotiation process. We heard from our Northside neighbors that the project was not fulfilling do's and don'ts that were expressed in the guidelines and we heard from the developer and the financial analyst that the Town retained that meeting all of those goals would render the project financially infeasible. As it happens, Amity Station will not be moving forward (which in my opinion is entirely appropriate), but the underlying conflicts remain. They will need to be resolved.

12. How can the town address the pressures of rising regional population growth, increased student population, and rising land prices in ways that do not disproportionately negatively impact communities of color and low-income neighborhoods?

This is an ongoing challenge for Chapel Hill and many other towns. As I have come to appreciate, institutional racism, as reflected in years-ago zoning and development decisions leaves our communities of color and low-income neighborhoods vulnerable. For example, Downtown Franklin St. has two streets that immediately parallel it – Cameron Ave. and Rosemary St. One borders a historically low-income community of color, the other borders one that is not and has been designated a historic district. One is viewed as entirely appropriate for significant development, one is not. This is our legacy.

Going forward, there are no magic bullets. The Town Council must be vigilant and intentional as we rewrite our Future Land Use Map and our Land Use Management Ordinance and as we review development projects. We simply must recognize the impacts that past racist decisions have had on our Town and address them one by one.

Transportation, Infrastructure and Environmental Justice

13. What can the town do to make public transportation function better for low-income workers, hourly workers, senior citizens and the disabled?

- Describe your own public transportation usage; in what ways has your use of public transportation informed your perspective on our present system?
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Given where I live, I am able to walk a great deal and so I don't use Chapel Hill Transit all that often. More importantly, I serve on the Chapel Hill Transit Partners, the group that is responsible for oversight of CHT, because of my very strong commitment to transit (I also serve on the GoTriangle Board). In that role I am acutely aware that we are not fully meeting the needs of low-income workers and those who work off shifts. The major reason for this quite simply is money. We do not have the funds to run buses 24-hours per day or have full schedules seven, or even six, days a week. That said, we work hard to try to align our routes with the needs of lower-income and transit-dependent residents. We have recently completed a short-term improvement plan and next August we plan to make service changes that we believe will help in this regard. We also operate a senior shuttle to help connect seniors with shopping and the Seymour Center and our EZ Rider program provides on-demand service for riders with disabilities, albeit only during times when CHT's fixed route service is operating.

Our planned North South Bus Rapid Transit line, running from Eubanks Rd. to Southern Village will provide high frequency service seven days a week until 11 in the evening.

Reflecting the interconnectedness of much of what we do, the Council has an informal guideline that Town-subsidized affordable housing should be within one-quarter to one-half mile of a transit stop.

14. Define "environmental justice" as it relates to our community. Do you see any model environmental justice work being undertaken locally?

- Describe how you believe a racial equity framework should be applied to new sustainable infrastructure or greenway projects?
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Quite candidly, Chapel Hill and Orange County's record in regard to environmental justice is less than stellar. The fact that we sited a landfill so close to the Rogers Rd. community and then took so long to close it speaks for itself. The only environmental justice program of which I am aware was the provision of sewer service to this community, again rather late.

Going forward, as I referenced elsewhere in my responses, we need to ensure that:

- As we implement the kinds of actions that we need to combat climate change – better transit, more greenways and green spaces, walkable neighborhoods – that we don't inadvertently gentrify these areas and make it impossible for low-wealth residents to continue residing there.
- We also need to be intentional about environmental justice as we commit resources to climate action. Experience tells us that it is low-wealth individuals that are most likely to be adversely impacted by climate change through flooding and the like and so we must ensure that we prioritize the needs of these residents in our decision-making and resource allocation processes.

Policing

15. How would you work to ensure improved relationships between citizens and law enforcement? What suggestions do you have to increase diversity (by race, class and gender) in our police department?

While I believe that, for the most part relations between the Chapel Hill police Department and our residents are good, we should always be seeking to improve them. One of the best ways to do this is to ensure that the police force “looks like” those it is serving and protecting. While Chapel Hill has significant minority representation on our force, we need to do more. One of the challenges for Chapel Hill and many other communities is recruitment of officers who meet our standards regardless of race or ethnicity – police are not adequately compensated, particularly at the entry levels. Toward that end, the Council approved an additional \$200,000 for police salaries in the current fiscal year’s budget to improve recruitment and retention. We also have a program wherein we hire an intern from NCCU in the hopes that those individuals will return to the Chapel PD upon graduation although to date we have not had the results we desire.

Another approach could be to mirror what we currently do for firefighters. Working in collaboration with the CHCCSS, we have started a firefighters’ academy for high school students at Chapel Hill High School. A similar program for police officers might be beneficial in getting our high school students interested in a career in law enforcement, although we would expect them to attend college first.

16. Do you support citizen review of police departments? Why or why not? What is your position on citizen review of the UNC police department?

First, let me say that I am very proud of Chapel Hill’s police department and have enormous confidence in its leadership. It is for just this reason that I believe a level of citizen review would be appropriate. If we are doing things right and have nothing to hide, scrutiny should be welcome. I believe that our Community Policy Advisory Committee’s charge could be expanded to accommodate this additional responsibility. I would, however, make its authority much like our Town’s Grievance Board. If a resident felt that their complaint had not been adequately addressed through our existing internal channels, then they would bring it to the CPAC for a hearing. The CPAC’s authority would extend to reviewing the case and making a recommendation to the Town Manager for final action. Final decision-making authority would reside with the Manager.

While I am not intimately familiar with the workings of the UNC Police Department, it seems like a similar procedure for UNC would be appropriate. Those involved, presumably, would be UNC students, faculty, staff, and, some number of non-UNC Chapel Hill residents.

17. [If a candidate for Chapel Hill Town Council] What is your present understanding of the co-jurisdictional authority of the Chapel Hill Police and the UNC Police?

- What is your assessment of the current relationship between the two entities?
- What responsibility should the Town of Chapel Hill ultimately bear for the conduct of UNC-Chapel Hill campus police on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus?
- Do you feel it is important that the public know the specifics of the co-jurisdictional relationship between the two departments? If so, how do you propose to engage the community on the matter?

My understanding is that the relations between the two police forces at an operational level is quite good. In that regard it is important to bear in mind that our two forces are co-equal, with UNC having jurisdiction over its campus and the Town’s force covering everything outside of campus (and, for the record, UNC Healthcare has its own, separate force). The Town’s police force has no authority over, nor responsibility for UNC’s force and that is how it probably ought to remain.

That said, I think that the events surrounding Silent Sam highlighted some shortcomings in UNC’s force that need to be addressed. Their new chief appears to have excellent credentials and would appear well positioned to help UNC move toward the community policing model that Chapel Hill already has.

Finally, I think it would be helpful to our residents – and the Town’s officers – if the community at large better understood each forces roles and responsibilities. I think it would be appropriate for the Town staff to work with the CPAC to develop a plan for engaging with our residents on this issue.

18. [If a candidate for Carrboro Board of Alderman] What is your assessment of the town’s response to the racial profiling by the Carrboro Police Department as outlined in the recent Dr. Frank Baumgartner study on race and policing?

Business and Labor

19. What more can our town do within its jurisdictional authority to promote living wages? North Carolina law really ties our hand when it comes to this. We have no authority to mandate minimum wages and our ability to require contractors to pay living wages is also limited. We have, as a Town committed to paying our own employees a living wage. And I believe that as individuals, Council Members can play an important role. We are leaders in our community and have a bully pulpit. I personally was able to get the condominium building in which I live to agree to pay a living wage (and provide health benefits) to our admittedly small number of employees. And as a member of a non-profit board, I have been able to get us to commit to paying all employees (our full-time employees are already there) a living wage within the next year to 18 months.

20. What do you believe are the main reasons or barriers as to why people of color are not attracted to Chapel Hill/Carrboro to start (or relocate) a business?

This is a question about which I have some preliminary ideas but also requires further study by me and our Town government. That said, my hypotheses are as follows:

- Due to institutional racism and the like, people of color typically have less access to start-up capital. Many people starting businesses are able to draw upon funds from their families. Given the huge disparities in familial wealth between people of color and whites, this funding is far less available to people of color.
- In recent years, Chapel Hill has not been as attractive to younger people of color as Durham and some of our other neighboring communities., in part due to a lack of a social ecosystem. This age cohort is the one most likely to start new businesses, thus we see an absence of start-ups.

21. What are the existing governmental policies or programs that harm or promote business development for entrepreneurs and/or people of color?

Chapel Hill is making a very deliberate effort to assist entrepreneurs. We have doubled our funding of LAUNCH and we are also looking at removing regulatory obstacles to starting new businesses. The creation of our enterprise zone is another action to facilitate new business creation.

Chapel Hill has not developed policies assisting for people of color in starting new businesses. One thing that I thought might be helpful, was the creation of commercial space geared toward Northside residents as were negotiating with the developers of the proposed Amity Station development on Rosemary St. That project, as of now, will not go forward, and so there will be no commercial space built for now.

One thing that merits study is starting to think about affordable/accessible office space in ways similar to the way we have thought about affordable housing. This could include a combination of below market rents for a defined period of time and also shorter, more flexible leases that allow for the uncertainties associated with start-ups.

Demography and Engagement

22. In what ways can local governance better promote student engagement?

- What are you doing to engage the student community in your campaign?
- What should be the role of local elected officials in engaging with student-lead, anti-racist organizing on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus?
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I value student engagement enormously and have tried to connect with students as much as possible. As a Town, Chapel Hill has designated non-voting seats on most of its Advisory Boards and Commissions for members of the Town's Youth Council.

As an Individual, during my last campaign and while on Council, I have spoken with campus Young Dems and have also attended many campus events relating to immigration policy and gun violence. I have reached out to the campus Young Dems once again for this campaign and I earnestly hope that they will see fit to work on my – or anybody else's – campaign.

Town Council members should be engaging with and supporting anti-racist groups anywhere in Chapel Hill and most certainly with those led by students. Quite candidly, I have found it difficult to find out about what is happening on campus and would welcome any suggestions as to how I could do a better job of it.

23. Assess the town's response to shifting demographics in our community. In what ways can the town improve access to services and communication generally with non-native-English-speaking populations?

- How can our town do a better job of welcoming immigrants to our community without creating tensions with other underserved communities?

While Chapel Hill is a welcoming community, we have not done enough to ensure that non-English speakers are fully able to participate in Town activities. It was only recently that the Town provided Spanish-speaking interpreters at a Council meeting (when the problems of the Lakeview Mobile Home Park were being discussed). We have to be more proactive and do more for such individuals.

Working with UNC, Chapel Hill has begun the Building Integrated Communities Project (BIC). BIC is a two-year collaboration between the Town of Chapel Hill, local community groups and residents, and the statewide Building Integrated Communities program at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Chapel Hill BIC is a community planning project, which means that community members and government staff are working together to develop town plans. The goals of Chapel Hill BIC are to:

- Share and build knowledge about Chapel Hill's foreign-born and refugee communities
- Improve relationships and communication with foreign-born "newcomers" to Chapel Hill
- Support resident participation in local government

Achieving these goals is a three-phase process. The first phase, a community assessment, gathered information on immigrant and refugee residents and their recommendations to improve local government. Chapel Hill's 2018 Community Assessment Report reflects the valuable input of 250+ local residents. The next two phases of the initiative are action planning and implementation.

The Town's Action Plan, published in February 2019, was jointly developed in collaboration with representatives from Chapel Hill's immigrant and refugee focused organizations

24. How would you characterize our town's readiness to ensure a full and accurate count in the upcoming census? How can our municipal government increase citizen participation?

Our Town is clearly committed to ensuring an accurate census count. I am less confident about our readiness. That said, I believe that this is an issue where the County and all of the Towns must come together and pool resources, both financial and human to ensure that all in our community are counted. To do otherwise would be disastrous.

Matters of State-Level Jurisdiction

25. How should municipalities like ours express our values or policy positions in matters which are generally the domain of the state legislature (e.g., living wage policy, immigration policy, reproductive rights, etc.)?

Chapel Hill has a long history of expressing itself on matters of Federal and State jurisdiction. For example, within days of the NCGA passing HB2, our Council passed a resolution that not only condemned this odious legislation, but also authorized our Town Attorney to join lawsuits that might be brought (and some were) to overturn it. We have also passed resolutions condemning torture and extraordinary rendition using state facilities. That said, we as a Council have sometimes had to be more circumspect that we would like because the Republic-controlled legislature has shown itself to be vindictive and willing penalize jurisdictions that challenge it.

We in Orange County are extremely fortunate to have an exceptional legislative delegation at both the state and federal levels and we are able to bring matters of concern directly to them. Hopefully the NCGA will flip in 2020 and we here in Chapel Hill will have more influence and success is addressing important social justice issues.