

## People's Alliance PAC 2008 Questionnaire for Durham Board of County Commissioners Candidates

Candidate's Name Fred Foster, Jr.

1. Do you think that the County Government has exhibited an adequate response to the drought and water crisis? **Answer: No, but water services and water policy is dictated by City Government.** If not, what else could be done and how would it be paid for? **Answer: The County should ask the Legislature to set up a Regional Water Commission to oversee our water resources so that this doesn't happen again. Further, the Commission will make sure that the water is shared equally among all affected counties. Members of the Commission should be composed of representatives of the Soil and Water Commission, County Environmental Affairs Boards, and the City Water Resources Department.**
2. Are you aware that the Department of Homeland Security has chosen Durham/Granville counties as one of five possible sites for a facility to study dangerous and poorly known viruses and diseases? **Answer: Yes, I am aware of the plan to possibly place a facility of this type at a site in Durham/Granville Counties.** Do you support the location of this facility in our community? **Answer: No, this facility will be located above our water shed. The potential for an accident is too great. The community around this site is against this project and I will vote with the community.** When economic development and public health and well-being are in a potential conflict, where does the burden of proof lie? **Answer: Always with the developer who is coming into the community.**
3. The Durham City and County governments' Measuring our Progress report of 2005 focused on 8 measurements. For each, please state Durham County's biggest current challenge—and the single first thing you would try to do as a Commissioner to solve that challenge. One short sentence for each challenge, please! This is an overview question. State the challenge briefly, and briefly state your first method of approaching that challenge.
  - Children are ready for and succeeding in school---**Answer: The challenge is getting to the children at an early enough age to meet their needs. My solution is to target those in grades K-9 and put funding in pre- school reading program. The one thread that goes through all of the social ills of our community is illiteracy.**
  - Durham citizens enjoy a healthy environment---**Answer: The challenge is economic development. I will work with planning and zoning to make sure that air and water quality are protected before approving any further projects which are elements of "smart growth."**
  - Durham's citizens enjoy a community that is vibrant, rich in aesthetic beauty and embraces and promotes its cultural heritage---**Answer: The challenge is keeping open space while developing our community. I will always make sure that we have trees, water, and beauty surrounding us to preserve that for our children. Further, I will make sure that our public investments in the arts reflects our diversity and makes the arts accessible to all citizens in Durham County. I will promote landmarks of more historic sites. The birth places of Citizens that made Durham and our State a better place to live would give pride to neighborhoods and honor them.**
  - Every citizen in Durham has access to adequate, safe and affordable housing---**Answer: The challenge is improving our housing stock. I will ask for the housing code to include energy conservation. Improving our housing stock would save some of them from fire, create green jobs, and increase property value. Durham County has an untapped wealth of talent that as commissioner, I will tap into to provide the necessary resources to meet**

- the communities need for affordable housing. Affordable housing will be the number one priority in all the projects that come before me.
- Durham enjoys a prosperous economy---Answer: The challenge is bringing in industries to promote employment without giving away too many tax dollars. I will work on the incentive plan to guarantee that Durham citizens get first choice of jobs and that we include affordable housing in the package for residential development. I will make sure there is a better match between the skill set of Durham citizens who need employment and the jobs that are created by the industries coming into our community.
  - Durham citizens are healthy---Answer: The challenge is the poor and unemployed are without health insurance. I will work to get healthcare for everyone as well as promote screening and education for those who are most affected by not having healthcare.
  - All Durham citizens are safe---Answer: The challenge is that not all citizens are here legally, so crimes go unreported. Gang activity is at an all time high. I will make every effort to ask public safety to give special attention and protection to citizens who are immigrants. I will ask for funding and special attention for our youths to promote early intervention to keep them out of gangs. Crime prevention begins with more organized neighborhoods and informed leadership. I will advocate for the Crime Watch program for the whole County.
  - Durham citizens enjoy sustainable thriving neighborhoods with efficient and well-maintained infrastructure---Answer: The challenge is the available funding and developers willing to go into depressed areas of our community. I plan to propose economic development in those areas so that the infrastructure will be built to attract developers to the depressed areas of our community.
4. Does the above imply that these statements do not apply to residents who are not citizens (i.e. non-citizen immigrants)? Answer: No, I'm for Comprehensive Immigration. What challenges does the County face with regard to these immigrants/residents, and what policies are needed? Answer: The challenge is that immigration falls under another jurisdiction. and immigrants suffer from identity theft and protection. All immigrants should learn English and be required to get an I.D. We also need a policy to address the problem of identity theft.
5. How do you think that the City and County can work together better? Answer: Collaborate more on all projects that affect the entire community. Would you support some form of City - County government consolidation? Answer: No, for now. If not, why not? If so, what are the obstacles to it and how should they be mitigated or overcome? Answer: Folks would lose their jobs and it would cause such a division in the community that we would spend more time fighting than getting the work done that the citizens elected us to do. Consolidation needs to be well thought out with citizen most effected having buy in.
6. What part can the county play in providing a safety net for the most profoundly mentally ill persons, given the difficulties with state privatization? Answer: Work with Duke and other health systems to provide a bed or facility for those that may need our help as well as keep a fund for just an emergency.
7. In order to raise much-needed revenue for capital needs and operating funds, do you favor enacting a land transfer tax? Answer: No, the citizens voted 60% against this tax. An increase in the sales tax? Answer: yes, this tax would affect the poor more than other income groups, but Durham needs a revenue stream that would pay for the growth Durham will experience. Both? Answer: No. Would you support placing these on the ballot for county voters this fall or in 2009? Answer: I would support placing the sales tax on the ballot in 2009.

8. Do you support increased mass transit? **Answer: Yes.** If so, in what form and how would you propose funding it? **Answer: I support more rail service and I would fund it through user fees and pay as we go. It would be cheaper to support it now. The cost will only go up when we wait.** If not, why not?
9. The County has provided economic incentives to lure new companies and new jobs to the area. Do you support the current County strategy? **Answer: Yes, it guarantees the protection of our tax dollars should these new companies not deliver on their promises.** Do you have suggestions to enhance this strategy, or would you restrict/reduce it? **Answer: Yes, I would include affordable housing and Schools in the package.** Do you support the County providing incentives to Greenfire and Scientific Properties for their current proposals? **Answer: yes. As mentioned above, this will bring smart growth to downtown. These projects will bring people to downtown and increase our tax base. It would cost more to do it later.** If so, should the County provide similar incentives in the future? Should the County impose certain requirements, e.g., require the creation and maintenance of a certain number of jobs? **Answer: Yes.** If so, why, and if not, why not? **Answer: We need to guarantee our citizens have priority of jobs that are coming into the community because we are using their tax dollars to attract those businesses, so they should get a return on their investment.**
10. What is the primary issue facing Durham County in its land use policies? **Answer: The City can annex any time and approve projects that may not be in the best interest of the county. We need more Schools, Roads and Fire Stations.** How would you address this issue? **Answer: I would get the planning department to tell me how many projects have already been approved and not allow any new projects without a plan that would include Schools, Roads, and Fire Stations and until the City and County have decided jointly what to proceed on in the interest of preserving our resources and building a strong community which speaks to "smart growth."**

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