



Friend,

I wish you were at the Candidate Form.

More than 120 Durham residents heard from City Council At Large candidates about their priorities and plans; and asked questions about safety, economic inequality, City Council culture, and more.

The Mayoral forum got cancelled due to Mike Woodard and Leonardo Williams having to tend to business in their current elected official capacities.

Here's some of what we discussed at the candidate forum:

Candidates' Priorities

Let's start with a quick glance at what each candidate named as their top three priorities for Durham. Note: Javiera Caballero was unable to attend due to City Council business.



Khalilah Karim:

Affordable housing, environmental sustainability, community (safety and inclusivity)



Carl Rist:

Shared economic prosperity, community safety, affordable housing



Nate Baker:

Community planning, community safety, and recreation



Sherri Rosenthal:

Functionality of local government, safety, development and affordability



JJ Campbell:

More unity, electronic ways for people to vote on City matters, affordable living (health insurance, transportation, etc.)

Read [D4A's endorsement announcement](#) to learn about why our members, board, and staff endorsed Carl Rist, Khalilah Karim, and Javiera Caballero for the City Council At Large race.

Housing and Development

Candidates were asked about how they'd tackle Durham's affordable housing crisis given the rapid growth of the city. An audience member also asked about the tools candidates will employ to work with developers when state law hugely limits the power of local government. Below are a few of the responses from candidates:

Khalilah Karim

- ◆ Focusing on those here to be able to stay in their houses and neighborhoods
- ◆ Building mixed income houses to break pockets of poverty
- ◆ Tool given limits imposed by state law: Using city land and working with local developers who care about the community

Nate Baker

- ◆ Focus on housing affordability for households with incomes of 30% AMI and lower
- ◆ Tool given limits imposed by state law: Conditional zoning- expectation for developers to build 5-10% affordable housing
- ◆ Tool given limits imposed by state law: Not giving building permissions to developers without getting something in return

JJ Campbell

- ◆ Making it possible for people to develop their own property
- ◆ Tool given limits imposed by state law: Reducing property taxes through Homesteading Tax Rebate
- ◆ Tool given limits imposed by state law: Focusing on local developers instead of Wall Street developers

Carl Rist

- ◆ Making sure we have affordable housing for people who live here and housing supply for people who want to move here.
- ◆ More investment in rental assistance programs
- ◆ Tool given limits imposed by state law: Modernizing our codes to encourage private development for the missing middle price that's important for housing market

Sherri Rosenthal

- ◆ Developing metrics that all developments would be graded on
- ◆ Developing a comprehensive housing plan of what we have and what we need by location, type, and price ranges
- ◆ Tool given limits imposed by state law: Requiring more information from developers at the zoning stage

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Income Inequality

Another audience member asked about the racial and gender-based income inequality, especially for Black people in Durham, and what policies and programs each candidate would put in place to address the racial wealth gap. Below are a few of the responses from candidates.

Khalilah Karim

- ◆ More homeownership opportunities for Black communities in order to have and grow generational
- ◆ Ensuring accessible, living wage jobs for these communities

Carl Rist

- ◆ Increase down payment assistance for first time home buyers so families can start building generational wealth
- ◆ Partnering with nonprofits like RIP Medical Debt to reduce the medical debt of the economically insecure
- ◆ Tool given limits imposed by state law: Modernizing our codes to encourage private development for the missing middle price that's important for housing market

Nate Baker

- ◆ Focus on increasing wages
- ◆ Seeking a future where workers are collectively owning companies: e.g. worker cooperatives
- ◆ More affordable housing, more equitable transit

JJ Campbell

- ◆ networking and mentorship programs for business owners and entrepreneurs in Black and Brown communities.

Sherri Rosenthal

- ◆ Reduce the financial burden of homeownership and renters
- ◆ Focus on building affordable housing for the most economically vulnerable in Durham

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Candidates also discussed their stances on gun violence and community safety, and their plans for ensuring that the Hayti Revitalization Project will not result in more gentrification. We will include those discussions in the next two Politics Watch emails that focus on safety and the economy on October 4th and November 1st, respectively.

In Solidarity,
Cedric Craig
(he/him/his)
Community Organizer