

Community Safety and Wellness Task Force

4.28.2021

In Attendance

- Xavier Cason, Co-chair
- Marcia Owen, Co-chair
- Jesse Huddleston, City of Durham Appointee
- Isaac Villegas, City of Durham Appointee
- Shanise Hamilton, City of Durham Appointee
- Jennifer Carroll, City of Durham Appointee
- Tyler Whittenberg, Durham County Appointee
- Mike Sstrom, Durham County Appointee
- Jatoia Potts, Durham County Appointee
- Manju Rajendran, Durham County Appointee
- Tonya Williams Leathers, Durham Public Schools Appointee
- Samuel Scarborough, Durham Public Schools Appointee
- Nori McDuffie-Williams, Durham Public Schools Appointee
- Dr. Wanda Boone, Durham Public Schools Appointee
- Alec Greenwald, Durham Public Schools Appointee
- Muffin Hudson, Durham Public Schools Appointee

Not in Attendance

- Cynthia Fox, City of Durham Appointee
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Values

- Xavier Cason --Curiosity
- Marcia Owen -- Gratitude
- Jesse Huddleston -- he/she/we -- Authenticity, ancestral and historical grounding
- Isaac Villegas -- he/him -- Patience
- Shanise Hamilton -- she/her -- Advocacy
- Jennifer Carroll -- Tenacity
- Tyler Whittenberg --he/him -- Intentionality
- Mike Sstrom -- he/him -- Collaboration and compromise, beauracracy
- Jatoia Potts -- she/her-- Community
- Manju Rajendran -- --Love
- Tonya Williams Leathers -- Compassion
- Samuel Scarborough -- he/him/his-- Solidarity
- Nori McDuffie-Williams -- he/his -- Holding space for everyone
- Dr. Wanda Boone -- Resilience
- Alec Greenwald -- Inquiry
- Muffin Hudson -- Should refer to people as formerly incarcerated or currently incarcerated, bringing those forgotten about in society

Elected Officials

- Chair Brenda Howerton- Chair of Durham Board of County Commissioners
- Bettina Umstead- Chair of Durham Public Schools
- Mayor Steve Schewel- Mayor of City of Durham
- City Council Member Javiera Caballero
- City Council Member Jillian Johnson-- Mayor Pro Tempore
- Commissioner Burnes-- Commissioner on Board of County Commissioners
- Jovonia Lewis-- Durham Public School Board of Education

Brenda Howerton

- Voiced appreciation to volunteers, citizens giving up their time to help the community
- It will be hard work- but she knows that task force members will produce something safe and helpful to community
- Done with a lens of racial equity

Other elected officials also voiced gratitude for task members' time and commitment

Durham Beyond Policing Presentation

- 2016- asked what residents want to spend budget on- no one listed police
- 2019- a lot forums around policing, won a city worker wage increase, pushed back against DPD's, funding for eviction diversion program
- 11 deaths in Durham
- Since police existence- always reform- trying to move beyond not enough measures-
 - Reforms help but not enough
- Invite the community to be involved in what they feel safety is
- Safety is articulated and performed to control
- Mostly in durham county jail, and youth jail are for poverty crimes
- Durham has a long history of fighting for racial justice, and winning
 - What is special about Durham?
 - Durham is historically black
 - Grassroots
 - People who care

Introductions and Vision

- Alec
 - Reimagine the public institutions, groups and organizations
 - Center those who feel the least safe
- Manju
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- Jennifer
 - Center individual autonomy
 - Value safety more than the systems we have made to make people safe

- Nori
 - When we care for each other in such an accountable transformative way, everyone will feel safe and no harm will fall
 - Want to keep that as a goal
- Tyler
 - Take police out of school
 - Act and invest in things we know prevent harm- family support, teacher support
- Samuel
 - Distributing services resources in an equitable way
 - Food deserts- increased likelihood of health issues
- Rev Isaac
 - Commit to keep each other safe
 - Experience joy- have things necessary to do that
- Toia
 - Building community and relationship honoring
 - Honoring each other as true neighborhoods
 - Understanding what the community really needs
- Jesse
 - Creative energy and revolutionary love
 - Transforming psychic violence into creative energy
 - Arts
 - “And while I could not always suppress the violent thoughts that raged inside me, I would nevertheless dedicate my life to seeking alternatives to physical violence, and would wrestle continually with the problem of transforming psychic violence into creative energy” — Pauli Murray, *Song in a Weary Throat: Memoir of an American Pilgrimage*
 - Like Call 9-1-1 for fire- and actually get help for other needs
- Shanise Hamilton
 - Examined from a lens of a mother of a Black son
 - Nurtured with resources that feed our souls
 - Structures that keep us safe
 - Exceed needs not just meet necessity
 - Freedom to live the fullness of who were are
- Tonya
 - Collaborate, be unified
 - In order to be safe and well- need an environment that isnt just affordable housing- but livable housing
- Mike
 - Focus on specific, detailed data driven solutions
 - Holistic community-based solutions
 - More resources to formerly incarcerated
- Muffin
 - only say formerly incarcerated or currently incarcerated
 - Real affordable housing- that you want to live
 - Mental Health services
 - Money to leave something to their kids other than debt
 - People need to be free

- Instead of funding police, fund organizations that have been doing the work for so many years
 - Dr Wanda Boone (need to go back and listen for other programs mentioned)
 - Strive- youth program
 - Figure out what causes the hurt, that keeps us from hearing, seeing, and listening to each other
 - Help children with their trauma
 - Look at her lenses (self-reflect)
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Roundtables

- Task Force members agreed to start roundtables to hear from the community
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Next Steps

- Examine Q and A from citizens
 - Want to hear from groups already in
 - Meetings in May and June (Two in May and Two in June)
 - Monthly Meetings starting in July
 - Writing in email about bylaws
 - Set up roundtables
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Notable Topics and Issues Highlighted by Task Force Members

- Housing
 - Food access and Food insecurity
 - Mental Health
 - Arts
 - Community building
 - Programs helping formerly incarcerated reintegrate in society
 - Take police out of schools
 - Strive Youth Program
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Notable Statements and Questions from Attendees

Questions

- “Will the Task Force engage the harms that the Department of Social Services also inflicts in this community, and engage critically the idea of exchanging police for social workers housed under DSS?”

- Maybe publicizing data and reports from DBP and other places on task force website (many questions were asked about this)
- "I believe putting the pressure on the police to give folks a safe way to seek help is unrealistic. There are systems in place that have other ways to seek help. So is the issue that folks are unaware or need greater intervention to avoid the need for police interaction?"

Comments

- "Durham needs a lot of things to move our most underserved communities forward but looking at the makeup of this group while I believe you folks have good intentions I don't see enough folks that have the history and have been doing the work in these underserved areas for decades and still boots on the ground before the gentrification takeover folks that can help this group understand how Durham got to this point and what it will really take to get us to a better and safer community"
- "Round tables sound great!"
- Organization mentioned- Durham Committee On The Affairs Of BLACK People

Wrap up and Values

- Xavier Cason --change is going to come
- Marcia Owen – respect
- Jesse Huddleston -- he/she/we -- support
- Isaac Villegas -- he/him -- inspiration
- Shanise Hamilton -- she/her -- community
- Jennifer Carroll -- representation
- Tyler Whittenberg --he/him --
- Mike Sstrom -- he/him -- humility
- Jatoia Potts -- she/her-- strength
- Manju Rajendran -- vision
- Tonya Williams Leathers -- eagerness
- Samuel Scarborough -- he/him/his-- healing
- Norie McDuffie-Williams -- he/his -- Hopefulness
- Dr. Wanda Boone -- enthusiasm
- Alec Greenwald -- collective