

Collaboration aims to reduce high-risk drinking

JANE LITTLE | PUBLISHED 17 HOURS AGO

Read more: <http://www.dailytarheel.com/article/2016/02/collaboration-aims-to-reduce-high-risk-drinking>

Quoted from The Daily Tar Heel

The Chapel Hill Town and Gown Collaborative is looking to hire a community and campus director for alcohol and substance abuse prevention initiatives. The collaboration began in spring 2013 and works to reduce the negative effects of high-risk drinking in Chapel Hill neighborhoods, downtown and the University. The collaboration includes the town of Chapel Hill, the Orange County Health Department, UNC and the Orange County ABC Commission. Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership will employ the director and provide office space for him or her. "The position we all agreed to fund was in response to work done and a report issued by the Town and Gown Task Force to reduce alcohol misuse," Colleen Bridger, director of the Orange County Health Department, said. "The project will go into effect as soon as we hire the project manager," she said.

Barbara Alvarez Martin, leader of the Town/Gown Advisory Board, said she hopes to have the project manager position filled by the end of the 2015-16 school year. Each entity will put forward \$30,000 annually to pay for the salary of the coalition director as well as the costs of the project. The total budget for the town/gown collaborative is \$120,000 per year. This money will go primarily toward the director's salary, benefits and equipment. "As the director of the coalition, they would lead the coalition and implement the work the coalition wants done to address drinking and high-risk drinking," Meg McGurk, executive director of Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership, said.

The director will work to initiate activities, educational opportunities and training sessions for members of the coalition, the memorandum states. Qualifications for this position include a master's degree in the social sciences, student development, public health, health education or a related field. Additionally, they must have at least five years of leadership experience in public health. "Hopefully this will make a big impact in our community," said Lisa Stuckey, chairperson of the Orange County ABC Commission, at the previous Board of Commissioners meeting on Feb. 2.

At this meeting, the ABC Commission presented to the board an update on the collaboration. Bridger said while the project is primarily focused on the Chapel Hill area, she hopes it can be applied to Orange County as a whole.

Alvarez Martin said UNC has been involved in the project from the beginning.

"I would say the goal of UNC's project is to reduce the negative impacts of high-risk drinking through the implementation of a comprehensive set of evidenced-based and promising environmental strategies," Alvarez Martin said.

Chapel Hill News

February 1, 2016

Orange commissioners lay out steps for tackling 6 goals in 2016

By Tammy Grubb

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CHAPEL HILL

The Orange County Board of Commissioners spent Friday brainstorming and narrowing their ideas for how to best serve county residents.

The goals are evolving, Commissioner Renee Price said, especially around issues with which the county has been wrestling for at least 10 years.

"I think what this exercise proved is that some things are more of a priority now than the others," she said.

Poverty – and how it keeps residents from having a better life – has been a common thread for many years, leading to the launch of the Family Success Alliance initiative in 2014.

The alliance is envisioned as a "cradle-to-career or college pipeline" of government and community resources to better serve at-risk children. The first effort, a kindergarten prep program, started last summer, and officials are planning their next steps now.

"I see the Family Success Alliance as really one of our most exciting new initiatives," Commissioner Bernadette Pelissier said, because "counties provide all these services, and a lot of them are really what we call the safety net. The safety net really just helps people, but it doesn't really solve the problem and end the cycle of poverty."

Economic development holds the key, commissioners said, to addressing poverty and community values while also promoting sustainable growth and generating more tax dollars.

"We've got to figure out how to pay for this other stuff, which is going to be extraordinarily expensive," Commissioners Chairman Earl McKee said. The county is doing "better, we've got more funds, but those funds are still coming out of people's pockets from their houses."

He asked staff to prepare a comprehensive report about businesses that may be looking at a move to Orange County. Important decisions include the kind of businesses and jobs to attract and how to continue developing the county's three economic development districts, commissioners said.

Partnerships – with the towns, UNC, residents and nonprofit groups – also are important to the county's success, they said, noting the partnerships with Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough are positive and headed in the right direction.

Other goals were:

- Ensuring a community network of basic human services and infrastructure that maintains, protects and promotes well-being. Affordable housing is a big part of this goal, from mobile homes to rentals and for sale housing available to residents at all income levels.
- Promoting an interactive and transparent system of governance that reflects community values. The commissioners talked specifically about better communication with the public and making the county’s website more functional and easier to navigate.
- Investing in quality county facilities, a diverse work force, and technology to achieve a high-performing county government. One suggestion was paying all county employees a “housing living wage” – enough so they don’t pay more than 30 percent of their income on rent.
- Creating, preserving and protecting a natural environment that includes clean water, clean air, wildlife, important natural lands, and sustainable energy for present and future generations.
- Ensuring a high quality of life and lifelong learning that champions diversity, education at all levels, libraries, parks, recreation and animal welfare. This goal raised several suggestions, including:
 - More, strategically located community centers
 - Free community college for all high-achieving students, perhaps funded from the county’s quarter-cent sales tax for education and the economy
 - Building public support for a \$125 million November bond referendum aimed at meeting affordable housing and school repair and renovation needs

Tammy Grubb: 919-829-8926, @TammyGrubb

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/community/chapel-hill-news/article57727693.html#storylink=cpy>

The Candidates Respond: Why Are People Poor?

Submitted by OP Editors on February 8, 2016 - 11:00am

Nine candidates are running for the Orange County Board of Commissioners in the upcoming Democratic primary election on March 15.

- **At Large** (1 seat): Andy Cagle, Matt Hughes, Mark Marcoplos
- **District 1** (2 seats): Jamezetta Bedford, Mark Dorosin, Gary Kahn, Penny Rich
- **District 2** (1 seat): Bonnie Hauser, Renee Price

OrangePolitics asked the candidates to answer [five questions](#), and all provided responses. Today and on each of the next four Mondays, we will post the responses to one question. We begin today by posting the candidates' responses to the first question:

Why are people poor? What tools or programs is the county using and/or should the county use to address poverty?

The candidates cited a number of reasons for why people are poor, many naming lack of access to education and affordable housing. Some candidates acknowledged that institutional racism continues to play a role in poverty, though discussion of this issue was limited. A few candidates simply said the reasons were complex but did not provide specifics.

The candidates discussed a number of tools to address poverty. The Family Success Alliance—[spearheaded in 2014](#) by Commissioner Mark Dorosin and UNC pediatrician Michael Steiner—was named by several candidates as a key tool. We would like to see the Family Success Alliance target more systemic causes of poverty, such as racial inequity in many of our local systems, such as policing, education, the judicial system, and employment, and none of the candidates discussed this. A few candidates cited living wage policies as a tool, noting that the county's recent living wage policy moved all employees (full-time, part-time, and seasonal) to \$12.76 per hour. This is an important step, and we would love to see the county move closer to what the Town of Carrboro is doing with a living wage floor closer to the cost of living in the county, which no candidate mentioned. A couple of candidates provided specific examples of other tools currently in use, such as the Social Justice Fund and the HOME Consortium (mentioned by Penny Rich) and new tools such as a "poverty ombudsman" (mentioned by Mark Marcoplos).

The candidates' responses are provided below.

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AT-LARGE CANDIDATES

Andy Cagle

Why are people poor? Two words! Opportunities and alternatives, we must make sure that everyone has an opportunity to improve their lives. What we need is more available job training programs that are tailored to the skill set of our diverse population. We need to promote and attract light Industrials development along with other environmental friendly businesses that hire and train within the County. When the opportunity is present then the alternative is our own individual choice.

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Matt Hughes

This is a complex question because people are poor for a variety of reasons, however, no one chooses to be poor. Despite being one of the most affluent counties in the state, and one of the few counties to see incomes above the state average, nearly a fifth of our community lives in poverty. As someone who experienced childhood poverty first-hand, I understand the struggles that these members of our community face. However, it was because I lived in a great county that provided vital programs such as Head Start, that I was ultimately able to succeed.

As it relates to being an Orange County Commissioner, I see it as my job to make sure we are providing the opportunity for all of our resident to have access to education, from early childhood to adulthood. This includes providing the vocational education needed to learn new skills for jobs of the 21st century. By the same token, creating a variety of jobs, both those requiring advanced degrees and those targeting trades, is a must. Additionally, I believe that environment, family and social services, and elder care are essential to the wellbeing of all of Orange County residents. In short, addressing poverty in Orange County is going to require a multi-level approach, including job training, the addition of jobs, the addition of affordable housing, and expanding access to public transit.

The Family Success Alliance is a great tool that the county is currently using to address cradle to grave poverty in our community. By coordinating our various organizations focused on poverty, we can better serve those living in poverty and make a dent in this issue. KidScope, an organization for which I am proudly serving as a member of their Advisory Council, is a partner organization with the Family Success Alliance. KidScope provides great resources, like their Incredible Years Preschool Parenting Classes. These classes help parents understand their children's academic, social, and emotional needs and learn positive, evidence-based parenting skills. The Family Success Alliance can help break the cycle of poverty for children like me. I would like to see this program begin to expand beyond the two current pilot zones in the county.

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Mark Marcoplos

People are poor for a variety of interconnected reasons, many of them the result of an economy that serves the ultra-wealthy at the expense of everyone else. One of the key justifications for allowing our economy to be

dominated by corporate power is the shareholder value theory, which says that the sole purpose of publicly-held corporations is to maximize shareholder profit. (For more on this, see this article from 1971 by the hallowed economist Milton Friedman: <http://www.colorado.edu/studentgroups/libertarians/issues/friedman-soc-resp-business.html>)

In pursuit of this over-arching goal, our economic system has a long and under-scrutinized history of exploiting minorities which continues to this day. These minorities are also often the most under-served by our educational system.

Orange County may seem to many of us like an oasis in this difficult economic landscape. Yet amidst the relative affluence of our citizenry, about 20% of our population lives in poverty. We have an ethical obligation to help these people.

The County is addressing poverty in a variety of ways that are helping, but we can do more. The Family Success Alliance is a relatively new project that is helping children in poverty create a better life in two communities in the County. The Orange County Schools have a free or reduced meal plan for those in need. The County has a Child care Subsidy program. The County Social Services Department administers several programs such as nutrition services, low-income health care, low income energy assistance, and more.

I would like to see the County create a “Poverty Ombudsman” who would:

- Manage information on the various manifestations of poverty in Orange County.
- Go into communities, schools, homeless camps, trailer parks, etc. and gather first-hand knowledge.
- Coordinate efforts and facilitate resource sharing among the various anti-poverty efforts.
- Identify gaps in our efforts to address poverty so that we can consider different approaches.

We must accelerate our affordable housing efforts. The County, Chapel Hill, & Carrboro jointly own a 169 acre parcel of land called the Greene tract which is between the Rogers Road community and Weaver dairy Extension. We should immediately begin making collaborative plans for some affordable housing projects there, since we could save on land costs which are a major source of affordable housing expense. Let’s create an experimental transitional, tiny home village for homeless people. We are likely to learn what many studies have concluded – that it is less expensive for a community to house a homeless person than to use tax money for the various social services that person requires without a home. Successful transitions to an independent life for homeless people begin with having a home.

We should get more bang-for-the-buck by building smaller homes and rentals with smaller units. Quick thought – instead of Orange High students building one 1700 sf affordable home per year, how about three 600 sf homes?

We need to ensure that our transportation systems are serving all communities. I was glad that our work to provide better bus service to the Rogers Rd. – Eubanks neighborhood resulted in improved service for them.

We should ensure that we have equal justice for all, from the streets to the courts. Reduced sentences for minor offenses will help keep families intact and minimize the interruption of young peoples' development, as well as save taxpayer money.

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DISTRICT 1 CANDIDATES

Jamezetta R. Bedford

There are numerous societal conditions which contribute to poverty, including institutional racism. Often these factors weave together making it difficult for an individual to escape their circumstances. Inadequate education, employment, housing, medical care, social services and inequalities in our legal system are a few of the many factors that contribute to an individual's inability to thrive.

Examples of these factors include:

Education: Orange County has an alarming and persistent achievement gap between minority and white students that leads to limited earning opportunities in the future. Underpaid and understaffed teachers in deteriorating buildings only exacerbate existing problems and make it difficult to reach the students most in need. There is also a shortage of quality, affordable childcare to allow parents to work and children to be prepared for success in kindergarten.

Economic/Housing: Although our unemployment rate in Orange County is relatively low, many of our citizens are "working poor" because they are not paid a living wage. We have a shortage of affordable housing in our county, which restricts the ability for low income families to provide safe and stable homes. In 2014, the hourly wage needed to afford a two bedroom apartment in Orange County was \$16.21. Our state hourly minimum wage is \$7.25. Taxation policies also contribute to poverty, including a decrease in unemployment benefits and length of benefit, and elimination of the state earned income credit and the pension deduction of \$2,000-\$4,000 for seniors.

Health and Social Services: Limited access to medical care, disease prevention and prenatal care all contribute to poverty. Mental illness, substance abuse, and disabilities also cause and sustain poverty, particularly in a political climate that will not expand medicaid.

The county is using several tools and partnerships to directly and indirectly address poverty.

- The county sets a living wage for county employees.
- The county Family Success Alliance partners with other organizations to tackle poverty "to improve children's chances for educational and economic opportunities by serving a defined geographic area (a zone) and its children with a seamless 'pipeline' of evidence-based programs, service, and supports from cradle to career." This provides a good example of the programming we need to develop and expand.
- Indirectly the county approved school construction standards that allow for and fund pre-K classrooms to be included in new schools.

- In October, 2015 the County made a great step by appointing its first Criminal Justice Resource Manager (for jail alternative programming such as PreTrial and Drug Court programs). On January 21, 2016 the Board approved the creation of a Criminal Case Assessment Specialist Position with clinical mental health skills to be paid for the remainder of this fiscal year.
- We need to continue our public/private affordable housing partnerships with a goal towards measurable increases in affordable housing stock.

The county needs to expedite economic development in the Buckhorn Economic District for clean commercial projects to bring jobs with benefits at several levels for residents, especially those who do not have college degrees. Companies can partner with Durham Tech-Orange Co to provide any technical training needed.

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Mark Dorosin

Poverty has myriad interrelated and inter-generational causes, including: 1) a lack of adequate educational opportunities, 2) a lack of decent paying jobs, 3) inadequate childcare, which especially burdens single parent households; 4) weakening of the safety net; 5) and the continuing impacts of race and gender discrimination.

While the County has worked to expand the scope and impact of its Departments of Social Services and Health, it has struggled to stem the onslaught of adverse actions by the state legislature.

The Family Success Alliance, a County led coalition of government agencies and direct service providers, has developed a wrap-around anti-poverty program specifically targeting children and families in concentrated low-wealth areas of the county. The key to the model is two-fold and represents an approach we ought to take towards all social justice advocacy: first, it recognizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to community challenges (here bringing schools, health department, nonprofits, and community advocates together); second, it acknowledges that making immediate impacts, even incremental ones, is vital to build support and engagement around issues that can otherwise seem too broad, intractable, or abstract. We need to expand the FSA and coordinate it with efforts to expand affordable housing and support local businesses and job opportunities.

All these efforts should be focused on addressing the growing income inequality in the County, which is among the highest in the state.

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Gary Kahn

People are poor for the following reasons, lack of a proper education , min wage jobs, family planning not planned well(i.e Too many children etc.)The county should do a better job on getting the word out of what services they need, and try to locate and reach out to them.

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Penny Rich

One in five North Carolina families earn too little to afford life's essentials and move up the economic ladder. Orange County, which has one of the highest per capita incomes in our region, has 15.5% of people living below the poverty level (Chapel Hill 23.1%), with our children hit hard at 13.4%. Many factors contribute to poverty: racial discrimination in education, jobs, housing and the criminal justice system are a factor, as well as government policies that disproportionately impact the poor. Some of these policies are implemented at the county level, such as urban and housing renewal policies that result in the poor paying greater portions of their income for substandard housing.

Orange County is tackling the problem of poverty head on. Some of the tools we are using are:

1. **Living Wage** In 2015, Orange county commissioners approved a living wage of \$12.76 for all county employees regardless of job status (full time, part time and seasonal employees). I led the collaboration with the non-profit "Orange County Living Wage Project" to recognize and certify Orange County as a Living Wage Employer, and encouraged our municipalities and schools to become certified as well. OCLWP encourages local business to pay the current living wage and has certified 53 businesses that do so (http://www.orangecountylivingwage.org/certified_employers). It is important that Orange County lead by example, as the county government, both school systems, local governments and the university system are the largest employers in the county. I believe we can take this one step further by implementing a "fair housing wage" for all Orange County employees, which would provide the opportunity for county employees to live in Orange County.
2. **HOME Consortium** This program allows local governments to partner when applying for funding for affordable housing. The 2015-2020 plan includes strategies to expand the supply of quality housing, increase housing choices, ensure equal opportunity, and enforce the "Orange County Civil Rights Ordinance" by investigating housing discrimination cases. While discussing the 2016 Bond Referendum, I insisted that we include funding for Affordable Housing. This was an uphill battle, but I did not let up and ultimately convinced my colleagues to include a 5 million dollar allocation. Although this is a small amount compared to the size of the problem, every dollar helps.
3. **Work First** This program provides temporary assistance to help individuals move off welfare and into jobs. It provides employment services and support services along with some funding for families with children under the age of 18. The county works with local business and Durham Technical Community College to identify possible employment opportunities and assist applicants with the application process.
4. **Family Success Alliance** This program is relatively new to our county that came out a long discussion about poverty in our 2013 commissioner retreat. The goal of the program is to improve a child's chance for educational and economic success by applying evidence-based programs, services and a support systems from cradle to career, and to to end the school-to-prison pipeline. We have identified two "zones" in the county to pilot the program: Zone 4 in central Orange, and Zone 6 that covers downtown Chapel Hill to Hwy 54. A representative from each zone serves on the FSA council, taking an active

decision-making role in both the education and community affairs of the children they represent. This empowers the children and families to exert some influence and control over their future.

5. **Social Justice Fund** This fund was resurrected by the commissioners in 2013. During the recent recession this fund had been depleted, leaving no safety net for the most needy citizens in the county. This fund is used in extreme cases where no other funding is available. For example, funding has been used to supplement state funds when the state reduced funding for childcare reimbursements, to fund The Family Success Alliance, and to support DSS General Assistance for families in crisis and not able to pay utility bills. Although this will not end poverty, it provides a hand up to pull people out of crisis status.

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DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATES

Bonnie Hauser

There are countless reasons that people are poor, ranging from un/under employment, generational poverty, mental illness, sudden loss of employment, healthcare crises and more. No one wants to be poor, or worse, to stay poor. The challenge is to find ways to reduce poverty through better job and skill development and to improve affordability through better access to housing, transportation and essential services. I believe the county can do more by developing solutions for housing, transportation, and services that fit our communities. Every community is different, and solutions need to be adapted to fit. For example, good public transportation in Hillsborough looks different than Mebane or Chapel Hill. Ways that housing solutions can be adapted to our communities are discussed in Question 5. Orange County and the many not-for-profits that serve our communities have wonderful tools to help, but resources but they are not always getting where they are needed. The Family Success Alliance, Project Engage Senior Outreach, and the community center initiative that's building around Rogers Road, Efland, and Cedar Grove are helping. I'd like to foster similar initiatives to provide tutors and to help feed low income children when school is out. A greater challenge is finding ways to serve the families of low wage contract employees that work for UNC and UNC Healthcare. I'd be interested in working with UNC and the towns to find ways to provide housing, healthcare and other services to help make life more affordable for the contractors.

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Renee Price

Many people are born into poverty, and have become part of a seemingly unending cycle. Others people find themselves living in poverty, unexpectedly, years after a life of comfort and security.

People are of low-wealth for a variety of reasons—i.e., lack of education or skills to secure gainful employment; insufficient job opportunities paying a living wage; inability to be hired or promoted due to discrimination because of color, gender or age. Poverty, particularly persistent poverty, is indicative of the state of the local or regional economy, such as the demise of major businesses and employers. Poverty also is the consequence of a capitalistic society.

Orange County, despite its charm and amenities, is home to many households living in poverty. In recent years, the County has intensified its effort to increase economic development in both the rural and urban areas in order to: bring good paying jobs to unemployed and underemployed residents; and to diversify and expand the tax base so as to decrease the tax burden on homeowners and property owners who pass the costs to renters.

To assure a ready and successful workforce, we have forged a partnership with Durham Technical Community College. Our public schools also are teaching STEM and STEAM courses to prepare our young people for a competitive edge in the global economy. The Family Success Alliance teams are working with entire households to help them rise above systemic poverty—i.e., summer reading programs for pre-K youngsters and career assistance for adults

While Orange County government is unable to provide jobs to all individuals in needs, it can forge forward with a campaign to attract, sustain and retain a range of businesses and employers. The County can continue to promote the living wage movement by seeking to do business with companies that offer living wages to their employees.

The issue that remains to be resolved is the prejudice and discrimination that historically has put certain populations in poverty and that continues to keep certain people in an oppressed or dependent state. Certainly, cities and counties thrive when families, neighborhoods and businesses are strong—socially, financially and politically.

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DISTRICT 1 CANDIDATES

Jamezetta R. Bedford

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- The county sets a living wage for county employees.
- The county Family Success Alliance partners with other organizations to tackle poverty "to improve children's chances for educational and economic opportunities by serving a defined geographic area (a zone) and its children with a seamless 'pipeline' of evidence-based programs, service, and supports from cradle to career." This provides a good example of the programming we need to develop and expand.
- Indirectly the county approved school construction standards that allow for and fund pre-K classrooms to be included in new schools.

- In October, 2015 the County made a great step by appointing its first Criminal Justice Resource Manager (for jail alternative programming such as PreTrial and Drug Court programs). On January 21, 2016 the Board approved the creation of a Criminal Case Assessment Specialist Position with clinical mental health skills to be paid for the remainder of this fiscal year.
- We need to continue our public/private affordable housing partnerships with a goal towards measurable increases in affordable housing stock.

The county needs to expedite economic development in the Buckhorn Economic District for clean commercial projects to bring jobs with benefits at several levels for residents, especially those who do not have college degrees. Companies can partner with Durham Tech-Orange Co to provide any technical training needed.

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Mark Dorosin

Poverty has myriad interrelated and inter-generational causes, including: 1) a lack of adequate educational opportunities, 2) a lack of decent paying jobs, 3) inadequate childcare, which especially burdens single parent households; 4) weakening of the safety net; 5) and the continuing impacts of race and gender discrimination.

While the County has worked to expand the scope and impact of its Departments of Social Services and Health, it has struggled to stem the onslaught of adverse actions by the state legislature.

The Family Success Alliance, a County led coalition of government agencies and direct service providers, has developed a wrap-around anti-poverty program specifically targeting children and families in concentrated low-wealth areas of the county. The key to the model is two-fold and represents an approach we ought to take towards all social justice advocacy: first, it recognizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to community challenges (here bringing schools, health department, nonprofits, and community advocates together); second, it acknowledges that making immediate impacts, even incremental ones, is vital to build support and engagement around issues that can otherwise seem too broad, intractable, or abstract. We need to expand the FSA and coordinate it with efforts to expand affordable housing and support local businesses and job opportunities.

All these efforts should be focused on addressing the growing income inequality in the County, which is among the highest in the state.

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Gary Kahn

People are poor for the following reasons, lack of a proper education , min wage jobs, family planning not planned well(i.e Too many children etc.)The county should do a better job on getting the word out of what services they need, and try to locate and reach out to them.

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Penny Rich

One in five North Carolina families earn too little to afford life's essentials and move up the economic ladder. Orange County, which has one of the highest per capita incomes in our region, has 15.5% of people living below the poverty level (Chapel Hill 23.1%), with our children hit hard at 13.4%. Many factors contribute to poverty: racial discrimination in education, jobs, housing and the criminal justice system are a factor, as well as government policies that disproportionately impact the poor. Some of these policies are implemented at the county level, such as urban and housing renewal policies that result in the poor paying greater portions of their income for substandard housing.

Orange County is tackling the problem of poverty head on. Some of the tools we are using are:

1. **Living Wage** In 2015, Orange county commissioners approved a living wage of \$12.76 for all county employees regardless of job status (full time, part time and seasonal employees). I led the collaboration with the non-profit "Orange County Living Wage Project" to recognize and certify Orange County as a Living Wage Employer, and encouraged our municipalities and schools to become certified as well. OCLWP encourages local business to pay the current living wage and has certified 53 businesses that do so (http://www.orangecountylivingwage.org/certified_employers). It is important that Orange County lead by example, as the county government, both school systems, local governments and the university system are the largest employers in the county. I believe we can take this one step further by implementing a "fair housing wage" for all Orange County employees, which would provide the opportunity for county employees to live in Orange County.
2. **HOME Consortium** This program allows local governments to partner when applying for funding for affordable housing. The 2015-2020 plan includes strategies to expand the supply of quality housing, increase housing choices, ensure equal opportunity, and enforce the "Orange County Civil Rights Ordinance" by investigating housing discrimination cases. While discussing the 2016 Bond Referendum, I insisted that we include funding for Affordable Housing. This was an uphill battle, but I did not let up and ultimately convinced my colleagues to include a 5 million dollar allocation. Although this is a small amount compared to the size of the problem, every dollar helps.
3. **Work First** This program provides temporary assistance to help individuals move off welfare and into jobs. It provides employment services and support services along with some funding for families with children under the age of 18. The county works with local business and Durham Technical Community College to identify possible employment opportunities and assist applicants with the application process.
4. **Family Success Alliance** This program is relatively new to our county that came out a long discussion about poverty in our 2013 commissioner retreat. The goal of the program is to improve a child's chance for educational and economic success by applying evidence-based programs, services and a support systems from cradle to career, and to to end the school-to-prison pipeline. We have identified two "zones" in the county to pilot the program: Zone 4 in central Orange, and Zone 6 that covers downtown Chapel Hill to Hwy 54. A representative from each zone serves on the FSA council, taking an active

decision-making role in both the education and community affairs of the children they represent. This empowers the children and families to exert some influence and control over their future.

5. **Social Justice Fund** This fund was resurrected by the commissioners in 2013. During the recent recession this fund had been depleted, leaving no safety net for the most needy citizens in the county. This fund is used in extreme cases where no other funding is available. For example, funding has been used to supplement state funds when the state reduced funding for childcare reimbursements, to fund The Family Success Alliance, and to support DSS General Assistance for families in crisis and not able to pay utility bills. Although this will not end poverty, it provides a hand up to pull people out of crisis status.

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DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATES

Bonnie Hauser

There are countless reasons that people are poor, ranging from un/under employment, generational poverty, mental illness, sudden loss of employment, healthcare crises and more. No one wants to be poor, or worse, to stay poor. The challenge is to find ways to reduce poverty through better job and skill development and to improve affordability through better access to housing, transportation and essential services. I believe the county can do more by developing solutions for housing, transportation, and services that fit our communities. Every community is different, and solutions need to be adapted to fit. For example, good public transportation in Hillsborough looks different than Mebane or Chapel Hill. Ways that housing solutions can be adapted to our communities are discussed in Question 5. Orange County and the many not-for-profits that serve our communities have wonderful tools to help, but resources but they are not always getting where they are needed. The Family Success Alliance, Project Engage Senior Outreach, and the community center initiative that's building around Rogers Road, Efland, and Cedar Grove are helping. I'd like to foster similar initiatives to provide tutors and to help feed low income children when school is out. A greater challenge is finding ways to serve the families of low wage contract employees that work for UNC and UNC Healthcare. I'd be interested in working with UNC and the towns to find ways to provide housing, healthcare and other services to help make life more affordable for the contractors.

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Renee Price

Many people are born into poverty, and have become part of a seemingly unending cycle. Others people find themselves living in poverty, unexpectedly, years after a life of comfort and security.

People are of low-wealth for a variety of reasons—i.e., lack of education or skills to secure gainful employment; insufficient job opportunities paying a living wage; inability to be hired or promoted due to discrimination because of color, gender or age. Poverty, particularly persistent poverty, is indicative of the state of the local or regional economy, such as the demise of major businesses and employers. Poverty also is the consequence of a capitalistic society.

Orange County, despite its charm and amenities, is home to many households living in poverty. In recent years, the County has intensified its effort to increase economic development in both the rural and urban areas in order to: bring good paying jobs to unemployed and underemployed residents; and to diversify and expand the tax base so as to decrease the tax burden on homeowners and property owners who pass the costs to renters.

To assure a ready and successful workforce, we have forged a partnership with Durham Technical Community College. Our public schools also are teaching STEM and STEAM courses to prepare our young people for a competitive edge in the global economy. The Family Success Alliance teams are working with entire households to help them rise above systemic poverty—i.e., summer reading programs for pre-K youngsters and career assistance for adults

While Orange County government is unable to provide jobs to all individuals in needs, it can forge forward with a campaign to attract, sustain and retain a range of businesses and employers. The County can continue to promote the living wage movement by seeking to do business with companies that offer living wages to their employees.

The issue that remains to be resolved is the prejudice and discrimination that historically has put certain populations in poverty and that continues to keep certain people in an oppressed or dependent state. Certainly, cities and counties thrive when families, neighborhoods and businesses are strong—socially, financially and politically.

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Orange County Health Department Focuses on Public Outreach

By Chris Grunert

Posted February 3, 2016 at 1:29 pm

The Orange County Health Department has released its annual report highlighting some of the department's successes.

Spokesperson Stacy Shelp said a lot of their work relies on strong local partnerships.

"The work we are doing both as a health department and a community is just so critical and we are really seeing an impact being made. We are seeing healthier individuals and a healthier culture," said Shelp.

Orange County is the first health department to post their health inspection scores directly to Yelp, a popular website that evaluates restaurants on customer reviews.

"Knowing the importance of technology and peoples use of applications such as Yelp to look at where am I going to go for dinner? This would be a great place to have that information at your fingertips when you're making those choices," said Shelp.

There have been some trends over the past year that worry the health department.

"We are also seeing more trends that are a little more frightening, like an increase in STD cases, so really needing to do more education around prevention of sexually transmitted diseases," said Shelp.

Last year the health department received recognition for its opium overdose program. Police and emergency services now have access to the drug Naloxone, which can help reverse an overdose.

The Health Department has also extended their anti-smoking efforts to include public housing.

"Our services and our partnerships have gone in and worked on projects around teaching property managers about how they can create their own smoke free facilities in public housing, which is very exciting," said Shelp.

You can view the [full report here](#)

Orange County ABC pays living wage, looks to add new position

Jane Little

February 3, 2016

The Orange County Board of Commissioners presented arts grants to local art programs and heard an update from the Orange County ABC Commission Tuesday.

The board acknowledged and presented arts grants to various Orange County arts programs, as well as individual artists.

The Arts Commission awarded a total of \$28,540 in county funds to 13 arts programs, which ranged from elementary schools to individual artists, Martha Shannon, staff support for Orange County Arts Commission said.

“All of our grants are awarded for arts programming in Orange County and these grants help support artist workshops and in-school residencies; they help support arts programs for children in neighborhoods and in community centers, they help support public art,” Shannon said. Additionally, Orange County ABC announced during its yearly update to the board that it is now a living wage employer, but it is not yet certified by the Orange County Living Wage project. “We raised the pay for our entry level, part-time folks to \$12.76, we raised the pay for our full-time folks to \$14.00 and we gave everyone in the organization a pay raise,” said Lisa Stuckey, Orange County ABC board chair.

Stuckey said the payroll would be raised by about \$118,000 per year total.

Commissioner Penny Rich urged the ABC to become living wage certified. “I think it’s really important when people walk through those doors that they see you are certified and that you are paying your employees fairly,” Rich said. “It just makes everybody feel good about it.”

Tony DuBois, the general manager of the Orange County ABC Board, also said an ABC store recently opened in the Chapel Hill North shopping center. “The highlight of that store is it has one of the largest local North Carolina sections in the state,” he said.

DuBois said the local spirits were well received by customers.

“Tony touched on our mission of the ABC board and that is to return the profits that we make back into the community of Orange County,” said Ron McCoy, Orange County ABC finance director. McCoy said Orange County ABC sales in 2015 amounted to \$17.9 million from the sale of 1.3 million bottles. An average of \$0.72 of each bottle sold was distributed locally in Orange County in 2015 and added to a total of \$737,315. The funds were distributed between alcohol law enforcement, alcohol education and

rehabilitation, as well as the Orange County General Fund. Stuckey also mentioned a collaboration with UNC, the town of Chapel Hill and the Orange County Health Department to address high risk drinking. She said each organization would give \$30,000. The funds would go toward a paid position dedicated to reducing high-risk drinking in the community.

The board also heard updates regarding the Cedar Grove Community Center project, as well as Phase two of the Orange County Efland Sewer to Mebane extension project.

Notable: A text amendment was passed by the board, which stated the county cannot prohibit sexually-oriented businesses, but can regulate the location. Orange County Planning Supervisor Michael Harvey recommended a prohibition of the consumption of alcohol at an adult cabaret, though the county cannot ban sale of alcohol. The board passed a motion to strike this prohibition from the text amendment. Quotable: "We had some bad weather recently, which always reminds me that people gravitate toward the most important things: bread, milk, eggs and bourbon," DuBois said. "We're just as busy as a grocery store, so you've gotta get there early."

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http://www.dailytarheel.com/blog/town_talk/2016/02/orange-county-abc-pays-living-wage-and-looks-to-add-new-paid-position Quoted from The Daily Tar Heel

Read more: http://www.dailytarheel.com/blog/town_talk/2016/02/orange-county-abc-pays-living-wage-and-looks-to-add-new-paid-position

Quoted from The Daily Tar Heel

Chapel Hill News

February 1, 2016

Orange commissioners lay out steps for tackling 6 goals in 2016

By Tammy Grubb

tgrubb@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL

The Orange County Board of Commissioners spent Friday brainstorming and narrowing their ideas for how to best serve county residents.

The goals are evolving, Commissioner Renee Price said, especially around issues with which the county has been wrestling for at least 10 years.

"I think what this exercise proved is that some things are more of a priority now than the others," she said.

Poverty – and how it keeps residents from having a better life – has been a common thread for many years, leading to the launch of the Family Success Alliance initiative in 2014.

The alliance is envisioned as a "cradle-to-career or college pipeline" of government and community resources to better serve at-risk children. The first effort, a kindergarten prep program, started last summer, and officials are planning their next steps now.

"I see the Family Success Alliance as really one of our most exciting new initiatives," Commissioner Bernadette Pelissier said, because "counties provide all these services, and a lot of them are really what we call the safety net. The safety net really just helps people, but it doesn't really solve the problem and end the cycle of poverty."

Economic development holds the key, commissioners said, to addressing poverty and community values while also promoting sustainable growth and generating more tax dollars.

"We've got to figure out how to pay for this other stuff, which is going to be extraordinarily expensive," Commissioners Chairman Earl McKee said. The county is doing "better, we've got more funds, but those funds are still coming out of people's pockets from their houses."

He asked staff to prepare a comprehensive report about businesses that may be looking at a move to Orange County. Important decisions include the kind of businesses and jobs to attract and how to continue developing the county's three economic development districts, commissioners said.

Partnerships – with the towns, UNC, residents and nonprofit groups – also are important to the county's success, they said, noting the partnerships with Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough are positive and headed in the right direction.

Other goals were:

- Ensuring a community network of basic human services and infrastructure that maintains, protects and promotes well-being. Affordable housing is a big part of this goal, from mobile homes to rentals and for sale housing available to residents at all income levels.
- Promoting an interactive and transparent system of governance that reflects community values. The commissioners talked specifically about better communication with the public and making the county’s website more functional and easier to navigate.
- Investing in quality county facilities, a diverse work force, and technology to achieve a high-performing county government. One suggestion was paying all county employees a “housing living wage” – enough so they don’t pay more than 30 percent of their income on rent.
- Creating, preserving and protecting a natural environment that includes clean water, clean air, wildlife, important natural lands, and sustainable energy for present and future generations.
- Ensuring a high quality of life and lifelong learning that champions diversity, education at all levels, libraries, parks, recreation and animal welfare. This goal raised several suggestions, including:
 - More, strategically located community centers
 - Free community college for all high-achieving students, perhaps funded from the county’s quarter-cent sales tax for education and the economy
 - Building public support for a \$125 million November bond referendum aimed at meeting affordable housing and school repair and renovation needs

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Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/community/chapel-hill-news/article57727693.html#storylink=cpy>

The Herald-Sun

Legal questions swirl around Barn of Chapel Hill

- Katie Jansen
- Updated Jan 23, 2016

CHAPEL HILL — In Bingham Township, signs march along the winding country roads, proclaiming “Stop the Party Barn” and “Real Farms Don’t Have DJs.”

They’re referring to the Barn of Chapel Hill, a proposed new event venue that was denied a special use permit Nov. 9 after a public hearing before the Board of Adjustment.

Residents of the area, concerned about lights, traffic, noise and safety, hired an attorney to represent them at the quasi-judicial hearing. The board ruled in their favor, finding that the applicant did not prove three conditions that were required for the permit — that the project would maintain the public health, safety or general welfare of the area; that the project would maintain or enhance surrounding property values and that the project would be in harmony with the surrounding area.

But neighbors say they are worried as plans for the Barn continue on property that may be legally exempt from county regulations.

The Barn of Chapel Hill, slated for a 22-acre parcel of land between Morrow Mill Road and Millikan Road, could bring 66 to 163 cars to Bingham Township every day the center holds events, civil engineer Tim Smith said at the hearing.

The building could accommodate up to 250 people, according to project plans submitted to the county, and is envisioned to host retreats and weddings on the weekends and smaller events, such as corporate and university events, during the week.

The property, owned by Kara and Chris Brewer, has a USDA-issued farm number, which makes it a farm recognized by state law. Under this law, first written in 1959, farms operating under farm purposes are exempt from county zoning regulations.

The legislature added agritourism as an acceptable farm purpose in 2006. The Brewers present their project as an agritourism venture — a barn that brings visitors to a flower farm.

This has raised red flags among some in the community, who describe the area as heavily wooded land that hasn’t been farmed in generations.

Brewer said she is a new farmer who was able to obtain a farm number by drafting a farm plan. She plans to begin planting this spring.

Brewer’s property was granted a farm number May 6, according to her special use permit application.

Tina Miller, the county executive director for the FSA office in Hillsborough, said that the criteria for a property to be eligible for a farm number became more stringent as of Sept. 1.

Farm numbers were originally created so that farms could participate in USDA programs, such as farm loan programs or emergency livestock assistance, Miller said. But Miller's office serves Orange and Durham counties, and she said her staff would often see several applicants a day who said they wanted a farm number to avoid permitting fees.

As of Sept. 1, applicants must provide proof of their income from the farm and records of their production or harvests, in addition to the criteria that was already required, so that fewer non-farms can successfully apply for farm numbers.

UNC School of Government professor David Owens said that the laws defining what constitutes as a bona fide farm have presented gray areas in many cases across the state, from event centers to bed and breakfasts to shooting ranges.

Owens said that some assume that a farm property can be used for any purpose and still be exempt from county regulations.

"That is clearly not the case because the statute has always said the exemption does not apply to non-farm uses," he said.

If a farm is conducting agritourism as its farm use, Owens said, the activity must be related to farm production or incidental to production.

Owens said that the government body responsible for administering zoning ordinances — in Orange County's case, the planning department — is also responsible for interpreting what activities in an application constitute a farm use.

If either party doesn't agree with the farm use determination, the decision can be appealed, first with the Board of Adjustment and then in Superior Court, Owens said.

In a letter dated Dec. 15, Pat Mallett of the Orange County planning department wrote a statement to Brewer that said agritourism was protected under state statute as a farm purpose. The statement also quoted the statute, saying that it "does not limit [zoning] regulation...with respect to the use of farm property for nonfarm purposes."

Mallett said in a later interview that because the property is classified as a farm by state law, the planning department has no further involvement in the case.

According to minutes of November's hearing, Michael Harvey, a supervisor in Orange County's planning department, said planning staff suggested Brewer go through the permitting process because they determined "that (planning staff) questioned whether or not there was any farm activity on the property, that warranted it being classified as such."

However, he also said that the property had a farm number and that, regardless of what the Board of Adjustment decided about the permit, "it is likely the applicant has the ability to develop an agritourism operation on a farm, which can include a wedding venue, without permits from the county as same is exempt from (planning staff's) review and permit authority."

It wasn't clear whether the neighbors planned to follow suit as the development moves forward.

Although nothing is planted on the land yet, "we are a working farm," Brewer said of her farm plans. "We do have our orchards and our flowers and will have honey production on the farm."

She said the agritourism component of the farm is important to make the farm more profitable, but she doesn't see herself booking events for the venue until 2017, after the first cycle of her crop rotation.

Brewer said she is continuing forward with her plans and has submitted an application with the county inspections department for a building permit. She hopes construction can begin in the next few months, although she said her first priority is establishing her farm and her plantings.

Daniel Bruce, director of permitting and inspections for Orange County, said the plan was submitted as an events center and is being reviewed. Bruce's department will ensure the structure itself, as well as the electrical, mechanical and plumbing, is up to state building codes. An environmental health review for a septic and well system will also be conducted, and the fire marshal's office will make sure the building meets fire codes.

Brewer said she wanted to go through the permitting process to try to address neighbor concerns.

During November's hearing, Brewer submitted a list of self-imposed conditions for the venue. All events will be required to end at 11 p.m., with no outdoor music after 8 p.m. and no fireworks allowed on the premises. The conditions also state that the Barn of Chapel Hill will work with those who rent the venue to secure shuttle service if alcohol is served.

Brewer said she still plans to adhere to these conditions and has taken further action since the hearing to address concerns. For example, she has hired a sound expert to install speakers inside the barn so that sound can be controlled.

She said that either she or another manager will be on site for every event.

"I think I have a really sound plan to address neighbor concerns," she said, adding that she hopes the neighbors will continue to communicate and let her know what their worries are. "I know there are concerns, and I take them very seriously."