



“I’m 61 today!”

Donning a simple black t-shirt and cackies, city council member hopeful Carl Rist stands outside of Durham’s Main library to greet potential voters.

It’s early voting week, and Rist is the only individual on the ballot present. Confetti and presents appear to be low on the tier list of importance- Rist would rather meet supporters where they are.

“This is just what I do,” he said.

With the Durham primary elections fast-approaching, Rist hopes to bring a breath of fresh air to the council.

His venture into the political realm, while a new endeavor, is deeply rooted in personal experience.

Growing up in Ft. Lauderdale, Fl to a forward-thinking mother, Rist grew to understand the value of activism [at an early age.](#)

According to his campaign website, CarlforDurham.com, a deepening of his desire to improve his community occurred during his childhood. Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, Rist witnessed firsthand the impact that access to affordable housing had on communities. This only intensified his desire to find ways to assist those in need.

Rist’s acceptance into prestigious Duke University would pave the way for a future located in Bull City. Having moved with his wife, Lisa, to Durham, the two immediately fell in

love with the city and its rich history. They especially appreciated the town's "blue-collar identity and multi-racial community," he said on his campaign site.

30 years later, and their opinions on Durham have yet to change.

Having grown accustomed to participation in community service, Rist now hopes to bring his passion for service to the city council. However, before tackling Durham, itself, Rist hopes to restore the trust and confidence in the board that has been lost.

According to [a recent interview](#) conducted by the People's Alliance of Durham, Rist pledges to take time to "break bread" and "meet with fellow council members" should he be elected.

"I understand that relationships are built on trust," he said in the interview.

The council aside, the majority of Rist's agenda promises to deal with issues outside of the committee, within the community of Durham itself.

At the forefront of his agenda is tackling Durham's affordable housing crisis head-on:

For years Durham was an affordable place to live for those who sought out its vibrance and charm as refuge. However, the rise in the cost of housing and increasing gentrification of a once thriving, historic black community threatens to upend the authenticity of Bull City.

Rist hopes to challenge this dilemma by working to increase access to housing, according to his campaign site.

He strives to advocate for solutions to the crisis by investing in tools like "down payment assistance, the construction and renovation of affordable homes, subsidies, and other incentives to encourage private development of affordable housing," he said on his website.

"Every Durham resident should have access to safe and affordable housing," he said in an interview with the People's Alliance.

According to his campaign site, Rist also seeks to collaborate with local developers and nonprofits in an effort to close the ever-increasing gap across class lines.

An enormous advocate for the expansion of living wage jobs, Rist seeks to address the gap by targeting its source and investing in education. Continually, he promises to promote wealth-building, "so that all households have the opportunity to build assets like homes, small businesses, and higher education," he said on his campaign site.

Not only that, but, according to his campaign, he “supports community-first approaches like the H.E.A.R.T. program to ensure citizens in crisis get the help they need while allowing the police force to focus on genuine law enforcement.”

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For Durhamites, the prevailing question of “will he follow through?” remains, only to be answered should he be elected.

The ideas and issues Rist brings forth are doubtless pertinent, as Durham’s [top concerns](#) among constituents have been affordable housing and urban development.

Only time will tell, however, as Rist’s biggest hurdle, the primary, is set to occur on October 10.

Should he claim the council seat, perhaps a birthday filled with campaigning and meetings, rather than cake and candles, will have all been worth it.

After all, it’s just what he “does.”



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