



Wake County

301 South McDowell Street
Raleigh, NC

Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

Monday, February 10, 2025

2:00 PM

Wake County Justice Center

Work Session

Meeting Called to Order: Chair Susan Evans

Chair Susan Evans called today's meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Chair Susan Evans, Vice Chair Don Mial, Commissioner Vickie Adamson, Commissioner Shinica Thomas, Commissioner Cheryl Stallings, Commissioner Tara Waters and Commissioner Safiyah Jackson.

Staff Present: David Ellis, County Manager; Scott Warren, County Attorney; Allison Cooper, Senior Deputy County Attorney; Duane Holder, Deputy County Manager; Ashley Jacobs, County Manager; Emily Lucas, County Manager; Yvonne Gilyard, Clerk to the Board; Toni Womack, Deputy Clerk to the Board; Ben Canada, Chief of Staff; Danya Perry, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Directory; Michael James, Assistant County Manager; Jason Horton, Strategic Initiatives Director; Frank Cope, Director of Community Services; Chris Snow, Parks, Recreation & Open Space Director; Justin Hammond, Deputy Director of Communications; Ellen Meder, Communications Consultant; Matt Roylance, Deputy Director of Community Services; Kate Maroney, External Communications Division Director and Tanika Cooper, Senior Executive Assistant.

Others Present: Carrie Bartek, Executive Director, Wake Tech Community College; Dr. Gayle Greene, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Wake Tech Community College; Landis Barber; Perry Safran; Natalie Lew; and Sig Hutchinson.

1. Agenda

Attachments: [02.10.2025 Work Session Agenda.docx](#)

2. Wake Invests in Women (WIIW) Update

Attachments: [WIIW Transition - BOC - Feb 2025-FINAL.pdf](#)

Mr. Danya Perry, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion introduced background for Wake Invests in Women, a transition and how the work will be re imagined. He shared Ms. Carrie Bartek of Wake Tech will share the impact of Wake Invests in Women.

He shared today's presentation will cover the history of Wake Invests In Women, why this matters to Wake County, the impact and the re-imagining for the future.

He shared Why this matters to Wake County:

- Wake County has always been open to developing a diverse workforce that strengthens the economic progress for Wake County
- Increasing career mobility and reduces the opportunity gap is important
- Strengthening the pipeline for workforce development is important
- Better able to retain STEM talent who graduate from great educational institutions in metropolitan area
- Increases economic stability of the geographic area

He recognized Dr. Gayle Greene, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Wake Tech Community College. He shared two steering committee members, Jackie Hughes and Dr. Saundra Wall Williams, were not able to attend today's meeting. He publicly thanked both of them for their work on this initiative.

Ms. Carrie Bartek, Executive Director of Wake Tech, shared Wake Invests In Women was the vision of some pioneering women, Dr. Gayle Greene and former Wake County Commissioner, Carolyn Sullivan. She shared this work was initially done by assessing the data, creating a task force that showed a gender wage gap in Wake County existed. She shared a report was generated in 2017 and a recommendation was made for funds to be allocated by Wake County to run a collective impact initiative to bring together partners to close the wage gap in Wake County.

She shared mission of Wake Invests In Women.

She shared there were three pillars to the initiative:

- Close gap in occupational wages between men and women
- Increase proportion of women moving through management pipeline
- Increase proportion of women in high demands jobs in Wake County

She shared Wake Invests in Women (WIIW) History from 2016-2025.

She shared Wake Invests In Women Current Impact:

- Expansion of partnership
- Expansion of community presence
- Career guides mentoring program

-Secured additional funding

She shared since the initiative has started, they have seen closure of gender wage gaps, closure in representation gaps in STEM fields. She shared Wake County is still behind Mecklenburg County as it pertains to the proportion of earnings of women compared to men. (Wake County is 75% and Mecklenburg County is 85%).

Mr. Perry shared key takeaways:

- Initiative calls for strategic thinking
- How to re-imagine
- Need to look at resources and allocations
- What is in place now versus what was needed when commission brought forth information in 2016
- The need to look at promising strategies
- Are there areas that need to be contracted
- Determine how to sustain the program
- Transitioned Wake Invests In Women to office of DEI
- Office of DEI started in 2022
- Operational synergies between DEI and Wake Invests In Women

He shared Next Steps.

He shared someone will need to lead this effort and how to imbed Wake Invests In Women into the office of DEI.

Commissioner Stallings asked how is progress tracked for disparities and success.

Ms. Bartek shared they are tracking progress through labor market data (in Wake County) and tracking progress with increasing numbers (students and non-profits) as that is what the strategic plan called for.

Commissioner Thomas asked if RTI International was the organization doing the work and named partner for the challenge. She asked if RTI International did the data for the partners as well, and will RTI International still be a partner.

Ms. Bartek shared RTI International is on the steering committee. She shared RTI International did one portion of the data analysis; but Wake Tech did the remainder of the data analysis. She shared RTI International helped to develop the spreadsheet that the partners used.

Vice-Chair Mial thanked Wake Tech for their involvement, and asked what could have created separation between Wake County and Mecklenburg County; and if education played a part.

Ms. Bartek shared there are historic differences and wider gaps that need to be made up. She shared despite the fact that women had more education than men in the fields they researched, women still made less than men.

Vice-Chair Mial shared data about 60-70% of black females have master degrees and 60% of black females have a PhD.

Ms. Bartek shared that does transcend race and women in general have more education, for the same occupation, but receive lower wages.

Commissioner Waters shared with the increase in partnerships, are the gaps still existing in spaces of this work and what is the biggest barrier for moving forward with this work.

Ms. Bartek shared regarding partnerships, getting access to the right people in an organization was a barrier. She shared re-imaging what the new director will look like and having someone who is experienced in non-profit work to access high level executives.

Commissioner Jackson asked what happens to women who are mothers and participating in high demand fields. She asked if any of the employer partners or program solutions have been made available to reduce impact of parenthood getting in the way.

Ms. Bartek shared studies shown that when flexibility in the work place is provided, that women do better. She shared the partners they are currently working with are all in and wanting to retain and advance women along the pipeline to advance and get into higher level positions.

Commissioner Stallings asked about childcare.

Ms. Bartek shared there has been a decline in workforce participation due to women with children. She shared Wake Invests In Women is putting forth strategies as possibilities and bringing partners in to assist.

Mr. Perry shared this conversation is taking place with several organizations.

Chair Evans thanked Mr. Perry and Ms. Bartek for the partnership with Wake Tech. She shared as the oldest woman on the Board, there has been several changes and she knows a lot of progress has been made, but there is still a long way to go. She appreciates this effort and agrees this is the right time to move WIIW to the DEI.

3. Lake Crabtree County Park Land Lease

Attachments: [Lake Crabtree Land Lease FINAL.pdf](#)

Mr. Chris Snow, Parks, Recreation & Open Space Director, shared Lake Crabtree County Park Land Lease.

He shared today's presentation will cover:

- Historical background before the park, Lake Crabtree as a Flood Control Structure
- Original lease with RDU
- Development of the park and an amendment that allowed mountain biking
- Recent lease for 286 property
- Current lease

He shared map of Lake Crabtree as a Flood Control Structure:

- Started in 1950's, early 1960's
- 10 structures built around the County
- Constructed to prevent downstream flooding, manage sedimentation and erosion
- Wake County is responsible for maintenance and protecting the flood control structures
- Structure is site 23 (is also Lake Crabtree)

He shared land acquisition was done in 1970's-1980's.

He shared 868 acres purchased for Lake Crabtree.

He shared Memorandum of Agreement (1979) significance of airport and flood control structures.

He shared provision in MOA to provide for recreational use as long as operations of airport are not impacted.

He shared a map of Original Lease (1985) = 33.19 acres of land to construct Lake Crabtree:

- Labeled Tracks 1, 2 and 3
- Tracks 4 and 5 are either under water or as part of Lake Crabtree in a flood control structure or they have permanent flood easements. These tracks were not included in the original lease; but Wake County was allowed to use through protection of flood control.

He shared a picture of Lake Crabtree County Park newspaper announcing opening in 1988:

- This is the oldest Wake County park and most visited (330,000 visitors in FY24)
- Original focus of park was educational and recreational programming

He shared a map of Amendment of the Original Lease (1994) which added

Track 6:

- This allowed mountain biking to be offered
- Lake Crabtree was the first sanctioned mountain biking trail in triad

He shared a map of Lease of "286" Property (2017):

- RDU did a Land Lease Request for Proposals
- Parcels 2 & 3 (286 mountain bike trails that are currently maintained by Wake County)
- Recreational use - bike and pedestrian trails

He shared a map of Renewing the Lease:

- Explaining difference in color shading
- Notified RDU in March 2024 hopes of renewing lease
- In July 2024, RDU put out an RFI for 136 acres
- Discussions have been held with RDU about renewal lease
- Leasing tracks 1,2,3 and 4 (some of track 4 does not always flood).
- Track 4 is used for recreation
- Continue a connection over 286 mountain bike trails and the connection will be built into the Lease.

He shared next steps:

- Finalize draft lease
- Present final lease terms to Board of Commissioners
- Continue to enhance the mountain bike trails on the 286 property
- A concept plan for 286 was done with request to expand trails

Commissioner Jackson asked if Wake County put forth a request last year as some parcels were left out.

Mr. Snow shared original lease (1985) put forth Tracks 1,2, 3 and 6. He shared tracks 4 and 5 are part of flood control structure.

Commissioner Adamson shared that she didn't support the lease for 286, and she thinks its a bad park policy to lease land. She shared lease payments will be 40x what the highest appraised value will be. She shared state parks have a policy that they will not lease land, only purchase land, and she wishes this was Wake County's policy. She shared part of her goal with parks is to provide recreation and to save land for perpetuity. She shared the investment that Wake County has in 286, including the lease payments, could turn into a parking lot. She knows Lake Crabtree Park is a little different and 286 is a new acquisition. She shared historically, this land was leased for \$1.00 a year and is now too expensive. She shared with representatives of the airport that her intentions would be to purchase the land so it is preserved for perpetuity. She shared this park is in her district and she asked if official discussions were held about purchasing land.

Mr. Snow shared land has always been leased since 1985 and never suggested for purchase. He shared Lake Crabtree is not the only land leased. To his knowledge, there is no discussion about acquiring land at the airport. RDU does not wish to sale.

Commissioner Adamson shared concerns she has heard from community members. She shared one concern is that trails (Track 6) would go to development and that leads to the concern of accessibility. She shared the past development was done with private money. She asked when will access to the trails be lost and is there a way for persons to continue use until development takes place.

Mr. Snow shared there was private investment in the trails since the beginning. Trails have always been leased and would eventually go away. He shared there will be a transition to 286.

Commissioner Adamson asked what date will access to trails be cut off.

Mr. Snow shared June 30th access will be lost. He shared talking points are being prepared.

Vice-Chair Mial verified it is Tracks 1,2,3 and 4 are up for renewal; which equals to 74 acres. He shared if leasing tracks, can this be joined with 286 in order to provide additional mountain biking trails.

Mr. Snow shared the connection is from Lake Crabtree across part of I-40 and connects to dam structure. He shared conversations with RDU have been held about maintaining the connection from Crabtree to 286. He shared RDU seems amenable to that in the discussions.

Commissioner Waters shared this is a sensitive topic for the community. She asked about changes in the lease as it pertains to cost and larger budget to service other parts in the county and impact.

Mr. Snow shared current lease amount of \$1.00 per year (for 40 years). Due to mandates, the lease amount will be more than \$1.00. He shared, if compared to lease for 286, the amount will be much higher.

County Manager Ellis shared negotiations for the lease are underway and he would prefer not to discuss negotiations at this time.

Commissioner Jackson shared if Track 6 is 140 acres and 286 is 151 acres, and if the acreages are almost identical, then what is being lost by moving the mountain bikers to Tracks 2 and 3.

Mr. Snow shared acre per acre, a lot is not being give up. He shared currently Wake County has Lake Crabtree and 286. He shared there are discussions about potential expansions for mountain biking into Umstead State Park, where it is currently not allowed. He shared early negotiations are still taking place.

Chair Evans asked about beginning for flood control structures, who owned the land, when was it county land.

Mr. Snow shared Wake County owns over 800 acres (deed holder of the land) and then there are flood easement and some of the airport property is underwater and is permanently flooded by the flood control structure. Others have flood easements, where water can be backed up on easement land.

Chair Evans asked if the following is a correct statement : the lease for 286 was signed in 2022 and prior to that Wake County had no involvement and was not responsible for maintenance. Wake County was trying to be helpful to the community and County agreed to do some work

Mr. Snow confirmed Chair Evans is correct, He shared Wake County did not have any involvement in 286 prior to the lease and concept plan is to make it more sustainable.

Chair Evans shared airport is looking to develop 136 of 148 acres, what portion will not be developed.

Mr. Snow shared he was not certain at this time. He shared it might be from an earlier map that he created, but he was not 100% certain.

Commissioner Adamson inquired about the concept plan for 286 and if there is no funding to fully develop the trails.

Mr. Snow shared no. He shared Lake Crabtree trails are beginner to intermediate and for advance bike riders, more technical trails are needed.

Commissioner Thomas asked is the reason for the \$1.00 lease to be fair market value.

Mr. Snow shared the airport is not interested in selling.

Mr. Snow shared appraisal has been done, Airport has had track 6 appraised and its valuable is \$24m for Track 6.

Commissioner Jackson asked if the new federal administration will reduce the priority and if track 6 and parcels 2 and 3 are nearly the same in

acreage, can RDU development on parcels 1 and 2.

Mr. Snow shared he is not aware of any discussions for the airport to develop north of I-40.

Vice-Chair Mial asked what is the cost to maintain the flood zone.

Mr. Snow shared that is a GSA question, and he could get the answer for Vice Chair Mial.

Commissioner Stallings shared with the new administration, what is the FFA interpretation. Also with the fair market value interpretation, is that Wake County's legal interpretation.

Mr. Warren shared this can be a closed session discussion.

Commissioner Stallings would be interested having that conversation.

4. Wake County's Strategic Plan: Follow-up from the Winter Retreat

Attachments: [01 - Presentation, Strategic Plan Initiative Discussion \(2025.02.10\).pdf](#)
[02 - Strategic Plan Summary, 2 pages \(2024.04\).pdf](#)
[03 - Draft Initiatives for Strategic Plan.pdf](#)
[04 - Focus Area Teams \(2025.02.03\).pdf](#)
[05 - Wake County Board Retreat Report January 2025.pdf](#)

Mr. Jason Horton, Strategic Initiatives Director, shared Wake County Strategic Plan.

He shared Strategic Plan mission and vision.
He shared Focus Area/ Goal/ Strategic Initiative.
He shared Community & Organization Success.

He shared outcome of 5 month equals:

- 6 focus area
- 24 strategic plan goals
- 104 recommended initiatives by Focus Teams and the County Manager's Office

He shared Growth, Land Use and Environment:

- Focus is to direct toward cities and towns that provide municipal services, transportation and utilities
- Review and update small area land use plans
- Advocate and promote high-density development in municipalities

- Revise and update the Wake County Transportation Plan
- Collaborate with municipalities to develop integrated utility infrastructure plans

He shared the material is the same as the material included in the Commissioner's January packet.

Mr. Horton shared Discussion Questions:

- Do we need to address any critical gaps or omissions
- What partnerships or collaborations could strengthen the effectiveness of the strategic initiatives

Chair Evans shared she only browsed the material and has not had an opportunity to do a deep review.

Commissioner Thomas also shared she browsed the material and will do a deeper review. She asked about Community Health and Wellbeing, where does the work done for infant mortality and maternal mortality fall. The only place she potentially sees where it could be is in Goal 3, but she wants to ensure work that is being done is addressed somewhere.

Mr. Horton confirmed those goals regarding infant and maternal health care are in Goal 3, 4th Initiative.

Commissioner Thomas asked about broadband - in Goal 1 - is that the only place where digital literacy or access is addressed.

Mr. Horton shared there are 3 places where broadband is directly addressed and one is utility infrastructure, also two initiatives that came out of the digital inclusion plan is about digital literacy and the other is about creating a resource for individuals to access low cost broadband.

Commissioner Thomas shared broadband is not considered a public utility and this is an ongoing conversation.

Vice-Chair Mial thanked Mr. Horton for the material. He shared he is concerned about issues for maternal health. He shared as the only man on the Board, he wants to ensure his concern for maternal health is noted. He shared an area of concern for him is transportation plan.

Mr. Horton shared transportation plan is a technical document and information will be provided in a range and also increasing ridership and now structure to be in place so seeing public information as viable.

Vice-Chair Mial shared having transportation is viable.

Commissioner Waters shared she also has not had a chance to review the list in detail, but her concern for inclusive prosperity for low areas for employment and this concern been captured and potential partnerships.

Mr. Horton shared broadly, inclusive prosperity, the three goals focus on making sure the right jobs are in the community, having access to acquire the jobs (supporting childcare) and the third pertains to quality of life for everyone in the County.

Commissioner Waters asked if there is a place to have more dialogue for workforce that has not been able to participate.

Mr. Horton shared multiple staff from multiple departments met to review all services that Wake County offers and active collaboration took place. Service navigation components and resources was discussed to help ensure the message is getting to the right people.

Commissioner Waters shared importance of working with various teams if under representation for a particular group is needed.

Mr. Horton shared the Wake County survey that was completed honed in to include community engagement learning and underrepresented populations.

Commissioner Jackson asked if service navigation is in the plan.

Mr. Horton shared yes it is.

Commissioner Jackson asked what is the access to benefits cliffs and what development is around public transit amenities.

Mr. Horton shared he will work with Community Health group to discuss. He shared on public transit side, there are initiatives regarding transportation and more bus stops.

Commissioner Jackson asked about intentional development for preschools and grocery stores near bus stops.

Mr. Ben Canada, Chief of Staff, shared benefits cliffs are on federal legislative guidelines opportunity list. He shared for benefits, eligibility rules are set by congress.

Commissioner Jackson shared with the new federal administration and how do we respond and shift to changes that will come.

Mr. Canada shared broadly, when it comes to federal levels of government,

the County is trying to be more nimble and have an active radar and there will be a heightened level of monitoring.

Mr. Horton shared the initiatives will move at varying paces.

Commissioner Thomas shared regarding the senior population that continues to grow in Wake County, what is being done about senior care and senior recreation facilities.

Mr. Horton shared at the Commissioners retreat, a presentation showed population is driven by residents 55 and older and that information was provided after the initiatives were identified, and there will be more discussion around this.

County Manager Ellis shared he's asked for more research to be done regarding the young seniors as the needs are going to be significantly different.

Commissioner Stallings thanked Mr. Horton and staff for the comprehensive and detailed work. She shared appreciation for service navigation pieces. She asked about communication strategy to the public and how it be communicated.

Mr. Horton shared the website will be updated to make the strategic plan more interactive on line. He shared results of community survey will be shared. He will also be meeting with community partners.

Chair Evans asked should initiatives be discussed during committees.

Mr. Horton recommended consulting the initiatives that were identified to align with committee goals as this would help staff to build and maintain momentum around the initiatives. He offered to meet with Chair Evans to have in depth discussion.

Chair Evans confirmed the committee structure will be completed in a week.

Commissioner Thomas asked about time frame for committees.

Chair Evans shared the recommendation will be for 3 meetings, per committee, for the remainder of the year.

Commissioner Jackson asked about timing of committee meetings, does the discussion about initiatives during committee meetings disrupt the staff's timing for moving initiatives forward.

Mr. Horton shared there is enough work to be done and if fine tuning is needed, that can be done.

Chair Evans thanked Mr. Horton and staff for the focus group work that has been done for getting the Commissioners to this point. She appreciates putting forth a plan involving commissioners, staff and community. She thinks the plans will bear good fruit for the County and appreciates Mr. Horton's work and all staff participating in the focus groups and looks forward to in depth conversations.

Adjourn

Chair Evans adjourned meeting at 3:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Antoinette H. Womack, NCCCC
Deputy Clerk
Wake County Board of Commissioners