



October 15, 2019

We meet on Tuesday at 12:30 pm at Fairfield Inn & Suites – Charlotte Uptown, 201 South McDowell St, Charlotte NC 28202

2019 - 2020 Board Members

President John W. Lassiter

Pres Elect Jerry Coughter

Past Pres Mike Hawley

Secretary Sandy Osborne

Treasurer Phil Volponi

Directors 2019-2020

Cheryl Banks

William Bradley

Dena Diorio

Carla DuPuy

Bill Loftin, Jr.

Clyde Robinson

Rudy Rudisill

Directors 2019-2021

Colleen Brannan

Stuart Hair

Stephanie Hinrichs

Chris Kemper

Chad Lloyd

Alexandra Myrick

Edwin Peacock, III

Membership John Tabor

Foundation William Bradley

Programs Mac McCarley

1st Qtr Edwin Peacock

2nd Qtr Ron Kimble

3rd Qtr Jeff Atkinson

4th Qtr Karen Price

DENA DIORIO Mecklenburg County Manager



Mecklenburg County Manager Dena Diorio addressed several important issues when she addressed Charlotte Rotary on October 15, 2019, noting that she last spoke to the club about six years ago right after she'd been named County Manager. Diorio chose to address the club on new things the county is working on, especially affordable housing.

When the County Commissioners adopted the FY20 budget, they made "a significant investment in affordable housing," she said. "That's not a space in which the county traditionally invests. The city usually builds new units. But the board was passionate wanting to help solve the problem."

The county commission wanted to plug into places where we could add value, not replicate what others are doing, the New York native explained. "We did not want to get into bricks and mortar like the city."

The county has established an \$11.2 million rental subsidy program, a significant investment in eviction prevention. This includes a grant of \$500,000 plus free office space to Legal Aid of North Carolina, she said. Our research showed that when tenants go to landlord-tenant court with legal representation, they have an 85 percent success rate to stay in their homes. Without representation they have far less success. "We felt this is a really good place to help people stay in their homes."

Commissioners also made a big investment in a program called Keeping Families Together, a rental subsidy program with supportive services specifically designed for families at risk of becoming involved with the child welfare system. The effort provides support to keep kids with their families instead of placing them into foster care.

Another program the county is supporting is Habitat for Humanity's critical home improvement program. It helps people who meet certain guidelines make critical home improvement repairs that allow them to stay in their homes. The vast majority affected are single elderly women.

With rental subsidy programs, we're looking at a couple of things, the Columbia graduate said. We've started a program called Meck Home targeted at homeless singles. Most programs help families. There were no programs to help singles who earn 30 percent below the area median income. The County is partnering with the Salvation Army Center of Hope, Urban Ministries/Men's Shelter and The Relatives (agency provides housing support for young people under the age of 24).

This is a rapid rehousing program which will take people out of the shelters and put in housing with supportive services, she said. The goal is to have participants in permanent housing after 24 months. It is targeted to help 870 individuals over a four-year period.

The next program to launch is called Link Housing designed to help seniors and disabled individuals living in shelters to move more quickly to permanent housing. There are large numbers on the waiting lists. Link Housing will move participants from shelters to temporary housing with supportive services until their number comes up for permanent housing designed more specifically for them. This also will provide more shelter capacity so fewer individuals are turned away each night.

Another program will help victims of domestic violence. The county has only one such shelter now and it is always full. The County Commissioners want to improve this. Requests for proposals will be sent to local providers for ways to improve programs for these individuals.

The commissioners endorsed the programs and we are beginning to implement them. The goal is to assist 1,000 households during the next four years, she said.

Diorio, who joined Mecklenburg County in 2007 as director of the Department of Financial Services, changed gears to discuss another County initiative: the MECK Pre-K launched in FY19. The goal is to offer universal pre-kindergarten to all the county's 4-year-old children.

In the first year there were 33 classrooms; this year there are another 36. According to the Opportunity Task Force, children with Pre-K experiences are much more likely to have greater economic opportunity over their lifetimes. There are now 69 classrooms serving 1,242 children in Pre-K programs that would not have been able to before. "We believe this investment will pay extreme dividends and we very excited about that," the county manager said.

Her next topic was the 2020 census. The U.S. Constitution requires a census of every resident of the country every 10 years. April 1st is census day. An accurate count is "incredibly important" for several reasons, she said. Tons of federal dollars are allocated based on the census. In 2016 \$28 billion came to North Carolina based on census figures.

Political representation in the US Congress is based on census data. Based on the 2010 census the state missed getting another seat in the House of Representatives by just 15,000 individuals, she noted. There is a good likelihood NC will get that new seat with an accurate count.

In addition, census data is important to economic development, she continued. Lots of businesses use that data to decide whether to relocate to the county or the state.

Diorio is one of 100 county managers asked by the Census Bureau to lead efforts for a "complete count" in the county. The County Commission in March appointed a broad-based committee to lead that effort with Diorio as chair. The constitution requires a complete count but in 2010 only 75 percent were counted in Mecklenburg.

"We must do better," she said, but there are lots of challenges including significantly changed demographics and a great deal of fear and misinformation. There are language barriers and people don't understand how the census' purpose or how important it is. There is a great deal of instability in living arrangements. According to the census, individuals need to be counted on census day, April 1.

This is the first year the census will be taken online. Everyone will receive a letter in the mail in March with a code so they can go online to provide the required information. This presents a myriad of new challenges.

"We really need trusted voices to go out into the community and speak out about how incredibly important the census is to our community," she said, noting that a great deal of information is available on the "Make It Count!" website, MeckCounts2020.com.

Noting that she can only “educate” not “advocate,” the county manager also discussed the sales tax referendum that is on the November ballot. (Early voting begins today.) In early July, Mecklenburg County commissioners approved the referendum that would raise the county’s sales tax to 7.5 percent from 7.25 percent.

An additional \$50 million in expected revenue would be split four ways:

- Arts and culture: \$22.5 million
- Parks and greenways: \$17 million
- Education: \$8 million
- Arts and parks projects for smaller towns in the county: \$2.5 million

The General Assembly in 2009 gave all counties the authority to levy the tax as a result of a complicated swap in which the state took over county Medicaid expenses and a part of local sales tax revenue. In 2014 county voters rejected the first one-fourth percent increase.

The commissioners have outlined numerous efforts to ensure transparency in use of the funds should the increase pass, she noted.

A larger concern is that the General Assembly said the ballot measure could not say what the referendum is for on the ballot, thus it reads as follows: “Local sales and use tax at the rate of one-quarter percent (0.25%) in addition to all other state and local sales and use taxes.” For or against.

Reporter: Henry Bostic; *Head Table:* Mary Grace Lostetter, John Lassiter, Kandi Deitemeyer, Ed Driggs; *Invocation:* Kim Brattain; *Introduce Visitors:* Kim Brattain; *Photos:* Sandy Osborne; *AV:* Jessica Dupree, Bill Gill, Tom Bartholomy; *Greeters:* Clayton Wood

CLUB NEWS

Terri DeBoo introduced the club’s newest member, **Jason Otte**. Jason is an entrepreneur who is opening the first Instant Imprints store in the Charlotte region. He is also the Area Developer for Instant Imprints and is tasked with helping others open their own stores in Western North Carolina and some counties in South Carolina. He was also an Executive in Industrial Analytics at Honeywell and Consumer Risk Strategy for Bank of America. On a personal note, he has lived in Tega Cay, SC for the past 15 years with his wife Sherry of 25 years. Jason is a serial hobbyist. He currently pursues land and underwater photography, cooking (and eating), is an Emergency First Response Instructor, Dive Master, Rescue Diver, Fisherman and parrot caretaker to name just a few. Through prior employers he has served the community through volunteer opportunities with Habitat for Humanity, Food Bank, and The Light Factory. Welcome! jasono@instantimprints.com.

We welcome **Joe Gass** BACK into the club – Joe stepped out for a few years to grow his business and manage the fast pace of a busy family with four children. Joe is president and CEO of Heritage Printing & Graphics and was a member of the Leonardtown, MD for twelve years before joining Charlotte Rotary in January, 2008. Joe and Angela live in Huntersville and he can be reached at joe.gass@heritageprinting.com.

As was mentioned in Tuesday’s meeting, please remember the following families as they grieve the loss of family...**Tim Chappell’s** wife, Nancy passed away October 14 after a long battle with cancer. **Mike Restaino’s** 92 year old father, Nunzio passed away October 12. And the funeral for **Sandy Osborne’s** brother-in-law, Tom Miller, was October 15.

Chad Lloyd thanks those that have stepped up to participate in a couple service projects. **Edwin Peacock**, **Mike Hawley**, **Robert Daughtridge**, and **Tom Cottingham** will join Chad to be part of the Year Up Elevator Pitch Contest this Friday morning at CPCC. Then at lunch time, Chad will be with **Cheryl Banks**, **John Tabor**, **Jessica Dupree**, **Ed Kizer**, **Linwood Bolles**, and **Mike Ranson** for the Serve & Learn event at the Men’s Shelter of Charlotte. Everybody gets an attendance makeup! Chad is glad to help coordinate volunteers for your favorite service event – clloyd@mihomes.com.

Both **Elizabeth Teagarden** and **Patricia Shafer** have been notified by Rotary International that they were selected as a Rotary Peace Activator and will attend RI Activator training and International Peace Conference in California in January. Elizabeth says this is in addition to and complimentary to the continued work as Ambassador for the Institute for Economics and Peace. And, will strengthen and support work in the district and zone to engage Rotarians in Peace. Congratulations!

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

- Warm clothing donations to support clients served at Crisis Assistance Ministry may be dropped off at Rotary (table set up in the parking deck) October 15 through the 29. Thanks for your continued support of this project.

- NC MedAssist RUN/WALK to raise funds to benefit low-income, uninsured residents across NC...Saturday, October 26, 9AM race start, Olde Mecklenburg Brewery. www.medassist.org. (Lori Gaing: lgiang@medassist.org)

- Classroom Central committee needs more volunteers. This group meets the 1st Tuesday of each month and their task is to get school supplies selected by teachers loaded into their car. Five volunteers are needed to cover each shift: 2:30–4:00pm and 4:00-6:00pm. (Clyde Robinson: cjlax22@hotmail.com)

- Special Olympics of North Carolina need adult volunteers for their annual Fall Tournament November 1-3. Particularly needing 25 volunteers to help be hotel greeters/hosts on Nov 1st 2pm-5pm. Volunteer sign-up link https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfTZHA3hPruvlGh5RnIKBmSKpLluRNupnl8mGcT5CKjnsErMg/vi/wform?usp=sf_link

Colleen Brannan has provided an opportunity: Northeastern University-Charlotte invites our Club members to a free breakfast event on Oct. 30 featuring Lending Tree Founder & CEO Doug Lebda along with other FinTech leaders. While the event is free to attend, due to limited space you must register in advance [here](https://conta.cc/2neisdB) <https://conta.cc/2neisdB>

Foundation Banquet: Everyone should have received an email from the District about the **Foundation Banquet**. Please consider supporting and attending this event that will be held at the Ballantyne Resort & Hotel on November 15. Additional details: 6PM fellowship & cocktails; 7PM dinner with keynote speaker Larry Lunsford (*Past RI Director and Current Aide to RI President*); program to conclude at 9:15PM; cocktail attire, \$65/person or \$120/couple. Registration available at www.dacdb.com (or ask Sandy to register you). **Noelle Culler** and **Bill Gill** are working with the District Banquet committee – thanks to both!

MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2019 276 **New Members:** Jason Otte, Joe Gass

10/15/2019 283

Net Increase +7 **Resignations:** Gunda Knese

Proposed for Membership (*comments to Rotary office by 10/22/19*)

Mort Wise

Retired (Wall Street) Classification: Financial

Sponsor: John Tabor

Endorsed: Luther Moore, Sandy Osborne

Visitors	9
Club Members	120
Total	129 (50.8%)

Thanks for bringing a guest: Renea Robinson with **Biff Virkler**; Elyse Dashew with **Margaret Marshall**; Tammy Emory with **Terri DeBoo**; Linda Dalton with **Chase Saunders**; LaShonda Hart with **Dena Diorio**; Brett Gray with **Luther Moore**; Jamal Tate with **Chad Lloyd**; Paul Haddock with **David Zimmerman**; Jennifer Braun with **Dale Halton**

CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS (10/23/19 – 10/29/19)

10/23 John zumBrunnen
10/24 Charlie Greer, Jerry Walters
10/25 Jim Kelley, Michael Norton
10/26 Wes Sturges
10/27 Bob Knight
10/28 Kevin Poet, Jim Hintz, Alexandra Myrick

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES (10/23/2019 – 10/29/19)

10/23 Sandy & Jim Osborne
10/25 Brooke & Michael Reddington
10/27 Durenda & Tom Bartholomy
10/27 Daphne & Tom O'Brien
10/27 Leslie & Andy Dinkin

ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES (10/23/2019 – 10/29/19)

09 years – Keith Nowokunski
14 years – Sandy Osborne
17 years – Tom Wright

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

(All meetings at the Fairfield Inn & Suites, 201 S. McDowell St., unless otherwise noted)

10/22 – Dan Clodfelter, Utilities Commissioner
10/29 – Gene Woods, Atrium Health
11/05 – Radio Personalities Ace & TJ, and Adam
11/12 – Greg Forest, US Marshal, Western District NC

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on Flickr [Click here](#)