



Getting Back To Governance

by Jim Crawford

Where do we go from here? There is only one way: beneath the thickening fog we will follow the path of good public policy. It will not be by some forced or faked unity, but by a contentious and probably tortuous process of argument and counter argument under heavy deadline pressure.



Your local electorate endorsed Plan Chatham, a commitment to green energy, improved education, and incentives for hotels and transformational manufacturing projects.

In 2014 the incumbents predicted that a return to progressive leadership would ruin the county's credit rating, push taxes through the roof, and scare off businesses and investment. Quite the opposite has happened in all counts.

The board of commissioners will continue for the next four years as it has in the last four years. Solving problems as best it can, ignoring the clamor and criticisms of partisans, seeking a way forward for our blessed little commonwealth.

The state electorate rejected the worst of the constitutional amendments and put a brake on the worst indulgences of the Republican legislature. The governor and the courts will operate as checks, as they should. Compromise and moderation will be the only way forward for doing the people's business.

Much of the bombast that has dominated the airwaves leading up to the election will persist, but North Carolina's political leaders will have to achieve the goals on which all agree, and yell about, but ultimately put aside, the more partisan targets.

Nationally, the electorate has essentially done the same thing as on the state level. The House of Representatives will only move forward if there is bi-partisan work fashioned on a common-sense agenda. There will be rancor, likely even shut-downs, and investigation of the executive's abuses, but policy will be made somewhere in the middle of the twitter and fog.

Do not look for any relief from Trump and the fear and loathing that exudes from him. He literally can not change who and what he is. Some Republicans will continue to ape his act, but over time they will discover, one by one, that governing well is the real path to re-election. White nationalism is not sustainable in the long run, its shock value is doomed to decline, and eventually its exponents will age into a resentful sadness.

Those who declaimed a 'war on men' during the Kavanaugh confirmation, those who foment panic over Latino immigration, and those who use the word 'libtard' can take little comfort in the close governor, senate, and house races where the categories of Americans whom they despised came within a few points of victory. Honest Republicans know their line was hit hard enough that it is fractured. Strong women, Hispanic, and African-American candidates have run hard campaigns in all corners of this republic. You will see them again.

We are a progressive nation. Each generation solves problems that paralyzed and vexed its parents. As a mass it moves forward; those who look and walk backwards impede, but do not stop its course.

Dr. Jim Crawford is the Commissioner from District 4 and the past Chairman of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners.

Divided We Stand

by Bill Crawford

Now that Election day is over the great question is, what happens next? To properly explain where I think that will lead us, I will also be compelled to do a little forensic analysis of how this election happened.



While Chatham County more than occasionally fits neatly into the patterns I will speak of, I will be maintaining more of a national focus.

I do this in part to not take away from what happened here, a hard fought race on both sides that had a clear outcome and should be followed by a respect for the results and a hope that we can all work together for the things we need to get to locally.

What happened nationally was a further definition of the two varying value sets afoot in America, which are the basis of the culture war that Commissioner Crawford labels as "hogwash". These two sets can be broken down fairly neatly by counties, not states. It can be more accurately be broken down if you place urban and denser suburban areas on one side and sparser suburbs (or exurbs) and rural on the other.

The urban/suburban is what gave us a new Democrat majority in Congress. It did not translate to the Senate in part because those are statewide races and encompass both sides of that equation. This is what allowed them to get the last 15 or so House seats needed to develop a majority.

There already was a GOP handicap going into the election: some senior Republicans who were retiring because their committee chairmanships were term limited by rules set under Speaker Gingrich. There were also a number of them who decided to bail after they had conversations with friends and family following the "are those Democrats or Republicans?" softball practice shooting and the medical

plight of Rep. Scalise.

One other result of this election is that many Republicans who were uncomfortable with Trump lost and many Democrats who were open about their disdain for him won. This will have the effect of purifying the ideological nature of both sides, make compromise even more difficult and in essence, bring Washington D.C. closer to reflecting the value gap in the country.

While the Democrat leadership (as it is now) may want to concentrate more on governing than investigating and possibly impeaching Trump, most of the new blood in their caucus will be demanding it from them — to follow on many of their campaign promises. Being the single largest change from this year to next, the biggest factor in what direction we go in will be on what the new Speaker decides and how well they can find a Democrat consensus.

I think the fear of Trump's viability as a reelection candidate will be a factor in forcing their hand to push down hard on investigating him in whatever capacity they can. If this doesn't lead to anything new or surprising, the thinking will be that it will serve to distract him from governing as he would like and better enable their own efforts to do the same.

Even if they impeach him, it will not be in the expectation of a Senate conviction (not enough votes), but to use as an issue in 2020.

We are not coming together, this election actually shows me that we are driving ourselves further apart. It will get worse before it gets better, folks. There are things coming in 2020 that will make the election two years ago look like Ford vs. Carter in 1976. That it follows our past American history makes it inevitable to me.

Bill Crawford was Republican candidate for Mayor of Pittsboro in 2009 and 2013; Republican candidate for County Commissioner District 2 in 2012.

To the Editor

New Census Not Needed to Expand BOC

A few weeks ago *The Chatham News and Record* ran a story on the report to the Board of Commissioners from the county task force studying the question of whether to expand the Board of Commissioners and if so, what method of election to utilize.

Peyton Holland was its chair and did a fine job leading the group and presenting its findings to the Board of Commissioners.

One point that I believe needs clarification regards whether the county needs to wait for census data to redraw its commissioner districts.

Robert Joyce, the Charles Edwin Hinsdale Professor of Public Law and Government at the UNC School of Government, informed the task force at its first meeting that since

Chatham County elects all of its Commissioners at-large, it is not necessary to wait for a US Census to redraw districts nor is it even required that all commissioner districts need to have an equal population.

The reason Joyce offered was that since all voters in the county can vote for all five commissioners and the districts are only used for a residency requirement, there is no legal mandate to ensure that each district is equal in population for the system that we use in Chatham County.

This fact is important since it means that the districts can be redrawn at anytime by the Board of Commissioners to reflect demographic changes and they can be drawn more sensibly with a better connection of the elected official to the

district they hail from.

Such an application of the law would create compact districts that are more easily understood by the voter and elected official alike.

Finally, the input from Professor Joyce opens the possibility of simply expanding the board under our current system with seven or nine districts of varying population size that have a much better connection physically and philosophically to the voter and the community leaders in the district.

If the County chose this route, it could simply be put on the ballot and voted up or down by the electorate to obtain a clear and coherent outcome.

Randy Voller, Pittsboro

Offensive Article on Pittsboro Confederate Monument

My name is Traci Addison. I have lived in Pittsboro for 12 years. I wanted to let you know how offended I was about your article regarding the Confederate Statue. In no way am I discounting the fact that the man was a soldier. However, he was a soldier fighting on the wrong side of history. He fought to preserve the evil practice of slavery. Your article seemed to leave that part out. In no way would I assume that only white supremacists

think the statue a great idea. However it was erected in 1906, 50 years after the end of the civil war, and deep in the middle of the Jim Crow era. If anything, you should have considered what this article means to ALL our ancestors.

I am extremely disappointed in you for being insensitive and tone deaf in this moment. And the message you chose to convey just doesn't ring true. The best thing that can be done

is remove the statue to the museum. But based on your sentiment I know these are hollow words to you and Mr. Sexton. Shame on you both.

Editors note: Chatham County Line does not and has never supported Confederate Monuments remaining in front of Courthouses. The offensive words were written more than 100 years ago; they are part of history and necessary for an accurate historical account.