

# Chatham News + Record

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## David Delaney

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Posted Thursday, April 7, 2022 7:00 am

Name: David Delaney

Current Home Address: 222 Landover Circle Chapel Hill NC 27516

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Cell phone: Same

Date/place of birth: 50 years old. Born in New York, raised in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

Current occupation: Cybersecurity and privacy attorney with Truist Financial.

Campaign website/social media: <https://www.facebook.com/DelaneyForChatham>

Family (names & ages, as of Election Day, of immediate family members): David and his wife Hilary have two children in Chatham County schools.

Party affiliation: Democratic

Current and previous elected offices held or sought & terms of service: First candidacy for elected office

Campaign treasurer (if applicable): Sharon Goldenberg

Why are you seeking this office?

I'm running to ensure we advance smart, strategic development, protect our environment, and promote equity for all county residents. Those goals are not in conflict. Chatham County planning processes continue to improve. The emerging unified development ordinance, master plan for parks and recreation, and wastewater commission are positive signs. We must keep innovating and improving in those areas, and we must take a strategic approach to the education, public health, economic, and technological inequities that limit many residents' lifelong opportunities. All of that takes community-minded partnership, and I would like to bring that perspective to our efforts.

What is your understanding of the responsibilities of the office you seek, and in 100 words or less, why do you believe you're qualified to fill that role?

The county commission provides strategic vision, policy direction, budget decisions, and oversight to ensure the community's wellbeing. Commissioners' decisions set our community priorities from zoning and development to school funding, local tax rates, public health, public safety, and emergency preparedness and response capabilities. What's essential to good policymaking is strategic thinking, collaboration, a willingness to learn, and experience balancing the benefits and costs of policy options. My experience in those areas comes from 20 years of public service as an army officer, law and policy professor, and executive cybersecurity attorney for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Those roles, and my recent work as a private-sector attorney, shaped me as a coalition-builder, problem solver, and innovator. I have drafted new laws and policies, managed large budgets, developed and led strong teams, and worked through cybersecurity and other crises. I have also provided executive leadership to my community as chair of the NC Veterans Business Association, an incorporating director of Innovate Chatham, and committee chair with the Chatham Community Branch of the NAACP.

Give us three goals that are specific, measurable and attainable you would have if elected.

- Create environmental, social, and governance goals for residential developers to aspire to, above and beyond basic state legal requirements, to match residents' goals and values.
- Allocate new funds and align government and nonprofit programs to sharply reduce today's equity gaps in broadband access, digital equity, K-12 disciplinary practices, and juvenile delinquency reports.
- Elevate public health as a primary factor in community wellbeing and equity, from preschool nutrition to K-12 mental health services, addiction, poverty, racism, and other factors.

What are the biggest challenges in Chatham right now and how would you address them?

That depends largely on where you live. Rural areas like the south and west lack broadband access, meaning those residents have less economic and educational opportunity than others. In the north and east, large residential developments have substandard wastewater systems, overcrowded roads, and other infrastructure challenges. Environmental concerns abound, from Haw River water quality to polluted feeder streams, development threats to native habitats and species, and near-term climate change impacts. The county is also confronting the ugly, difficult American legacy of inequality and racism in many forms. All of these challenges require community learning, visioning, and engagement to choose the future we want, then chart paths forward.

Chatham County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state. What do you see as the major challenges due to growth and how would you address them?

Growth challenges us not just in the infrastructure and environmental ways I have mentioned, but also in social and economic ways. Our tax base is heavily residential, which limits our ability to build public infrastructure that will attract larger businesses. VinFast's arrival is welcome news to create jobs and increase the business tax base. We need a similar win for the Chatham-Siler City megasite. More regional and state-level collaboration will do that, and also help us plan with neighboring cities, counties and utilities. We must also enable small-business growth and innovative ways to preserve and use Chatham's rural landscapes.

Parts of Chatham County's future development plans are closely tied to the comprehensive development plan. What do you see as the next steps working toward Chatham's future and the role of the comp plan?

Chatham's move toward a unified development plan is essential. Norms and community interests change over time, and the compact community goals and construction methods of the past are now outdated. We should be aiming for highest quality, environmentally sound land use and construction. That means land preservation or development based on forecasted climate impacts and environmental disruption. It also means adopting a "serve the residents well" mindset. Wastewater management is one essential next step, along with broadband expansion and parity of resources across Chatham County Schools.

What is your view of the expansion of rural broadband and how do you see the county's role?

Broadband is an essential element of the modern age. Quality of life and opportunity are vastly different along the continuum from "none" to "limited speed" to "high-speed" access. Solving this problem can unify all parts of the county. State law prohibits the county from innovating and delivering broadband service. For now, the county plays the role of advocate and resource connector. The county technology team has researched this issue extensively, and I hope we are poised to benefit from new federal and state grants. From there, I would like to see the county partner with nonprofits like Innovate Chatham (for which I am a board member) and the Right Here Right Now Project to launch a digital equity and inclusion plan.

What's your overall view of the role of county government? Is it fulfilling its mission at present? If not, what needs to change?

Chatham County government is most certainly fulfilling its mission, and I am very positive about the work of our civil servants, boards, committees, and other groups. In my experience, our commissioners and other county officials live the motto I learned in federal service—public service is a public trust. I saw the professionalism of the Board of Elections staff first-hand when I filled an open seat for several months in 2019, and again when I filed for the District 3 race. They are diligent, courteous, and knowledgeable, as were all members of the planning department, sheriff's office, library, public health, and I have spoken with over the years.

What differentiates you from your opponent which makes you the better candidate to represent your party?

I was surprised to learn that my opponent was a Republican candidate for the NC legislature in 2016 who also voted Republican in other years. In contrast, I have been an active, unifying leader in the Chatham County Democratic Party by proposing numerous CCDP platform resolutions, chairing and serving on our CCDP resolutions committee, serving as delegate to county and state conventions, and staying active in the Manns Chapel precinct and Briar Chapel Democrats club. In 2019 I formed an exploratory committee to assess a challenge to Republican Congressman Mark Walker, so all my efforts have been to embody the best in Democratic leadership values.

#### Biographical Facts

Political/government hero: Abraham Lincoln

Book most recently read: Wilmington's Lie: The Murderous Coup of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy in North Carolina

Hobbies: Any family activity, running, skiing, hiking, camping.

Church/civic involvement: Lifetime member, Chatham Community NAACP Branch #5377, founding director of Innovate Chatham.