



Three Mayors Share Ideas/Thoughts on Region's Growth: Highlights of the TCC's First Lunch and Learn

April 8, 2005

Clean air, transportation funding, and balanced growth regulations were just a few of the topics discussed by the mayors of the region's largest municipalities at a recent forum. Mayors Bill Bell of Durham, Ernie McAlister of Cary and Charles Meeker of Raleigh gathered together on April 8, 2005 at the TCC's first Lunch and Learn of the year.



Before a record crowd of about 150 attendees, the mayors discussed how their respective jurisdictions are managing growth in an expanding and changing economy. While each mayor had a different perspective on growth, they all---like the "Three Tenors"---were singing the same tune: *growth is good, and it must responsibly and fairly managed.*

Mayor Bill Bell kicked off the event with a discussion of his most pressing concern: clean air. Mayor Bell talked about Durham's explosive job and population growth, and what the Bull City is doing to handle the situation.



Specifically, he mentioned several tools Durham is using to manage growth including the City/County Comprehensive Plan and [Unified Development Ordinance](#). He concluded his comments with a quick summary of Durham's recent attempt to address school capacity challenges.



Following Bell's presentation, Mayor Ernie McAlister spoke candidly about the ups and downs of growth management in Cary. He told the attendees that Cary, while enjoying a robust tax base, had been through several attempts to manage growth during the boom times of the 1990's.

In his regular diplomatic fashion, McAlister complimented previous councils--- those that laid out the original plans that facilitated Cary's quality growth, and the council that implemented a series of controls to slow down growth. But he qualified his comments suggesting that Cary's growth regulations went too far, offering his colleagues---Meeker and Bell---friendly advice about not repeating Cary's growth management missteps.



Mayor Meeker wrapped up the presentation portion of the event spending most of his allotted time discussing pressing regional transportation needs.

Meeker asked the crowd of businesses leaders, real estate executives, and citizen activists to [lobby the Wake County delegation and the NC Department of Transportation](#)*---and work with the [Regional Transportation Alliance](#)---for needed funding for roads and other forms of transportation in the Triangle.

"The Triangle is the economic engine driving North Carolina's economy, and we must do more to insure that a fair share of that money is reinvested in our transportation infrastructure," said the Mayor Meeker.

Chris Sinclair, President of the TCC, moderated a panel discussion of the mayors, and the audience chimed in with several questions. Members of the audience asked the mayors several questions on issues ranging from schools to wireless internet and how to fund infrastructure.

Tom Anhut of Toll Brothers—and a TCC Board Member---suggested to Mayor Meeker that the City of Raleigh improve the development approval process (one of TCC's [main issues](#)). According to Anhut, "It's costing a lot of people time and money---and ultimately that cost is passed on to the end user---the citizen."

Mayor Meeker informed the audience that the Raleigh City Council is aware of the delays in the approval process, and would be addressing the issue in an upcoming council retreat.

About TCC's Lunch and Learn Series

The event was sponsored by [Toll Brothers](#), [M/I Homes](#) and [New Homes & Ideas Magazine](#)

The Lunch & Learn Series was designed to inform Triangle area residents on growth-related issues to better help them educate their elected officials to make wise decisions on these issues. For more information on the series or the issues, contact the Triangle Community Coalition, at (919) 654-5418 or visit www.tricc.org