



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Council Meeting Minutes

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Mayor Pam Hemminger
Mayor pro tem Karen Stegman
Council Member Jessica Anderson
Council Member Camille Berry
Council Member Tai Huynh

Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee
Council Member Michael Parker
Council Member Amy Ryan
Council Member Adam Searing

Wednesday, May 25, 2022 **6:30 PM** **Virtual Meeting**

Language Access Statement

For interpretation or translation services, call 919-969-5105.

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Para servicios de interpretación o traducción, llame al 919-969-5105.

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919-969-5105.

Virtual Meeting Notification

Town Council members will attend and participate in this meeting remotely, through internet access, and will not physically attend. The Town will not provide a physical location for viewing the meeting.

The public is invited to attend. The Town of Chapel Hill wants to know more about who participates in its programs and processes, including Town Council business meetings and work sessions. Please participate in a voluntary demographic survey <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/demosurvey> before accessing the Zoom webinar registration. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar in listen-only mode. Phone: 301-715-8592, Meeting ID: 829 5734 2944

View Council meetings live at <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> – and on Chapel Hill Gov-TV ([townofchapelhill.org/GovTV](https://www.townofchapelhill.org/GovTV)).

OPENING

Mayor Hemminger opened the special work session at 6:30 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Hemminger called the roll and all Council Members replied that they were present, with the exception of Council Members Ryan and Anderson, who were absent/excused.

- Present:** 7 - Mayor Pam Hemminger, Mayor pro tem Karen Stegman, Council Member Camille Berry, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Tai Huynh, Council Member Michael Parker, and Council Member Adam Searing
- Excused:** 2 - Council Member Jessica Anderson, and Council Member Amy Ryan

OTHER ATTENDEES

Town Manager Maurice Jones, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Town Attorney Ann Anderson, Planning Director Colleen Willger, Assistant Planning Director Judy Johnson, Community Resilience Officer John Richardson, Community Education Coordinator Sammy Bauer, Public Works Director Lance Norris, Business Management Assistant Director Matt Brinkley, Director of Affordable Housing and Community Connections Sarah Viñas, Manager of Engineering & Infrastructure Chris Roberts, and Communications and Public Affairs Director and Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

0.01 Mayor Hemminger Regarding Gun Violence. [\[22-0478\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger commented on recent shootings in New York and Texas and the unacceptable level of gun violence in the United States as a whole. She shared her frustration over North Carolina legislators not allowing towns and counties to prohibit people from carrying guns. Mothers Demand Action and other groups had petitioned the state for sensible gun safety laws, and she had spoken with local legislators about that as well, she said. She urged citizens to call state senators.

Mayor Hemminger noted that June 3, 2022, would be National Gun Violence Awareness Day and said that a ceremony would be held at Peace and Justice Plaza. Mayor pro tem Stegman added that a vigil regarding gun violence would take place on May 26th at Bicentennial Plaza in Raleigh at 5:30 p.m.

0.02 Proclamation: Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. [\[22-0479\]](#)

Council Member Huynh read a proclamation that declared May 2022 to be Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month. The goal was to celebrate and recognize the contributions that AAPI people had made to the community, nation, and world, he said.

Council Member Berry said that the Council wanted to raise awareness of

anti-Asian hate crimes and express solidarity with the AAPI community. She encouraged everyone to turn grief and injustice into activism, inclusion and joy.

0.03 Mayor Hemminger Regarding Boys and Girls Club. [\[22-0480\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger noted that a new Boys and Girls Club had recently opened in a renovated Town building in the Northside neighborhood. She was proud that the Town had partnered to make that happen, she said.

0.04 Mayor Hemminger Regarding Smith Middle School CSPAN Awards. [\[22-0481\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger said that she and Council Member Berry had recently joined NC Chairman David Price at an awards assembly for seven Smith Middle School students and one East Chapel Hill High student who had won C-Span awards for producing videos based on the theme: How does the federal government affect you?

0.05 Mayor Hemminger Regarding Memorial Day Proclamation By Council Member Parker on Behalf of the Orange County Peace Coalition Annual Memorial Day Program. [\[22-0482\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger said that Council Member Parker would present a proclamation on ZOOM from 3:00-4:30 p.m. on May 30th as part of the Orange County Peace Coalition's Memorial Day program.

0.06 Mayor Hemminger Regarding Future Council Meetings. [\[22-0483\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger noted that the Council would have a work session on June 1st and Economic Sustainability meeting on June 3rd. Both meetings would be virtual, she said.

AGENDA ITEMS

2. Update from the Booker Creek Working Group. [\[22-0470\]](#)

John Morris, co-chair of the Booker Creek Working Group (WG), explained that the Council had created the WG to recommend new approaches to Stormwater (SW) management. He then gave a PowerPoint update on the WG's findings.

Mr. Morris said that the way to evaluate flood damage reduction projects was to assess benefits and costs as well as environmental impacts. He provided detailed information on both as they pertained to the Elliott Road project and six other flood storage projects that had been proposed but not yet built. He pointed out that a previous report by the Town's consultant, W. K. Dickson, had identified issues that might greatly increase costs or prevent projects from being built at all.

Mr. Morris said that the projects would create a considerable amount of environmental damage, including the loss of about 50 acres of mature forest and valuable wildlife and aquatic habitat. The Dickson report had not given any weight to such environmental losses, he said, and he urged the Council to get estimates that include those costs.

Mr. Morris said that the proposed flood storage projects would achieve a modest reduction in flood water levels at some places but would not solve the flooding problem. The projects did not document benefits and costs in a way that allowed the WG to determine whether they were economically justified, or not, he said. He noted that proposed projects did not account for significant environmental damage and said that better ways to evaluate costs and benefits might be developed.

Mr. Morris said that some of the WG's tentative recommendations included the following:

- 1) Offer a green infrastructure grant program for homeowners to cover the cost of doing small projects on their properties. These projects could include creating rain gardens, disconnecting downspouts from roofs, installing cisterns, adding bank stabilization, and more.
- 2) Create a habitat restoration demonstration project, such as stream bank stabilization, using techniques developed at NC State that reduce erosion.
- 3) Create a cost-effective, flood damage reduction program that would target homes and businesses that are subject to flooding. This would consider a wider range of flood damage reduction measures, such as acquiring and/or relocating property, elevating structures, adding flood proofing, building small flood walls, and elevating heating and air conditioning equipment.
- 4) Consider permanently protecting a number of Town-owned bottom land forests and acquiring additional forests to create unbroken corridors.

Mr. Morris showed a list of other potential recommendations that the WG intended to evaluate. They would return to Council with their final report and recommendations in the fall, he said.

Mayor Hemminger thanked Mr. Morris and the WG for their work, and she praised them for providing such a concise presentation on such a complicated topic. She pointed out that there was a broad spectrum of experience and diversity among WG members and said that she was looking forward to receiving the final report in the fall.

In response to questions from the Council, Mr. Morris explained that Durham already provided homeowners with matching grants for projects

that reduce their stormwater runoff. Durham had done some creative and innovative projects, such as working with teachers to instruct school children on stormwater and environmental management and employing high school students to help implement some projects, he said.

Council Member Searing asked if the WG needed more help from staff, and Morris replied that the goal was to flesh out some good ideas but not produce complete polished plans and budgets. However, having a very knowledgeable and experienced consultant provide feedback on their recommendations probably would improve the quality of their product, he said.

Mayor Hemminger raised the idea of having UNC interns help with evaluation, research, videos, and so forth. Additionally, she proposed that staff create community videos that show how a disconnecting project works and pointed out that a water spreader only costs about \$10. The Town could look into the feasibility of providing grants from the Stormwater Fund for some projects, she said.

This items was received as presented.

1. Continue Discussion on the Development of the FY 2022-23 Budget.

[\[22-0469\]](#)

Town Manager Maurice Jones provided the Council with an update on the proposed \$128 million Town Budget for FY 2022-2023. He pointed out that the budget included a pay adjustment for employees, a reserve fund to help address compression issues, and four new staff positions. There was an additional \$80,000 for climate action and an additional \$118,000 for affordable housing, he said.

Mr. Jones explained that the budget included a 3 percent escalator for Human Services agencies funding, an extra \$100,000 for the Downtown Partnership, \$125,000 in new bike and pedestrian safety funding, \$40,000 for cultural arts, \$50,000 for parks maintenance, approximately \$95,000 for vehicle replacement, \$160,000 to address the increased cost of doing Town business, and nearly \$100,000 for cyber-security.

Mr. Jones said that a proposed property tax rate of 52.2 cents would represent an 0.8 cent increase for Transit. Based on previous Council feedback, staff had added an administrative coordinator position and removed a compensation analyst position, he said.

Mr. Jones said that staff had begun discussing how to address recent requests for \$531,000 in new funding from the Interfaith Council (IFC) and the Partnership to End Homelessness. He said that the IFC had asked local municipalities to consider entering into an interlocal agreement (ILG) that would provide them with \$650,000 annually. Chapel Hill's share of that would be \$258,000 each year, he said. He said that the Partnership

to End Homelessness had also recently requested \$273,000 to support several positions, including counselors for the Street Outreach Harm Reduction and Deflection (SOHRAD) Program.

Mr. Jones said that options for funding these requests might be to raise the tax rate by an additional 0.3 cents, which would yield \$287,500. The Council could also consider taking \$95,600 from vehicle replacement and \$118,000 from a new affordable housing fund, he said. Those would total \$501,100 and staff probably could find the balance over next week or so, he said.

Mr. Jones pointed out that the Council had two more budget work sessions. Adoption of the budget had been scheduled for June 8, 2022, he said.

Mayor Hemminger confirmed with Council members that they supported entering into an ILG to provide funding for the IFC. She and the Council discussed what might or might not happen to the SOHRAD positions under various scenarios, and they concluded that they did not yet have enough information from Orange County.

Council Member Searing proposed having the IFC provide a financial accountability plan and said he wanted to know what would happen if the other municipalities did not contribute funds.

Mr. Jones replied that those were important points for discussion. In the meantime, though, Chapel Hill needed to decide on its own best path forward and clearly communicate that to the other elected officials, he said.

Mayor pro tem Stegman reported that the Town of Carrboro had recently expressed support for both funding requests. Hillsborough supported the Partnership's request but could not fund the IFC due to its own current funding restrictions, she said. She spoke in favor of finding a way to put a significant amount of money toward both, without raising taxes. That probably would not be the full amount until there had been more information, discussion, and understanding, she said.

Some Council members spoke in favor of moving forward without waiting to hear what the other jurisdictions decide, but some said that the other jurisdictions were waiting to see what Chapel Hill would do. Mayor Hemminger confirmed that the Council supported an interlocal agreement for the IFC and supported the Partnership to End Homelessness request but wanted more information before making a decision on that. She proposed that staff continue discussions with Orange County and return with a recommendation for funding both that did not include a tax increase.

Council Member Huynh pointed out that the sources of funding that the

Manager had listed in his presentation would come close to the amount needed to begin a phased-in approach. The amount still needed after giving \$126,000 to SOHRAD and \$258,000 to the IFC would be about \$116,000, he said.

Council Member Parker agreed, and said that the Town could fund those initial amounts and then discuss the ILA when the amount of the current year's excess Fund Balance is known.

Mayor Hemminger clarified that the Council supported full funding but wanted more options regarding the Partnership to End Homelessness request. She and Mr. Jones discussed the pros and cons of using the Fund Balance to cover such expenses, and Mayor Hemminger said that doing so was not the preferred solution but it was an option. She also pointed out that new positions were budgeted for the entire year but often did not begin right away and the excess goes into Fund Balance.

This item was received as presented and continued to June 1, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.