

**DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES OF COUNCIL RETREAT
OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL
SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026**

Council Members Present: Mayor Jess Anderson, Mayor pro tem Camille Berry, Council Member Amy Ryan, Council Member Melissa McCullough, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Theodore Nollert, Council Member Wes McMahon, Council Member Elizabeth Sharp, and Council Member Louie Rivers III.

Others present: Fountainworks Consultant Beau Mills, Fountainworks Consultant Danielle Badaki, Town Manager Ted Voorhees, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Interim Town Attorney James Baker, Police Chief Celisa Lehew, Fire Chief Jay Mebane, Interim Emergency and Risk Management Director Tanner Deisch, Economic Development Director David Putnam, Technology Solutions Director Chris Butts, Library and Community Arts and Culture Director Atlas Logan, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Human Resources Director Anita Badrock, Communications and Engagement Director Susan Brown, Public Works Director Lance Norris, Transit Director Brian Litchfield, Planning Director Britany Waddell, Parks and Recreation Director Atuya Cornwell, Building and Development Services Director Chelsea Laws, Human Relations Manager Shenekia Weeks Parrish, Ombuds Ross Tompkins, Community Sustainability Manager John Richardson, Chief of Staff Jeanne Brown, and Town Clerk Brittney Hunt.

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.

Fountainworks Consultant Beau Mills provided a welcome and overview of the Council Retreat strategic objectives to review Chapel Hill's current context, identify strategic priorities, and strengthen alignment between Council and executive leadership.

Mr. Mills reviewed Chapel Hill's Current Context and Context Map, highlighting findings from a prior Strategic Leadership Team discussion on:

- Town Growth and Development
- Infrastructure Needs
- Financial Sustainability
- Organizational Capacity
- Governance

Council engaged in an interactive exercise with questions such as:

- If you could have any superpower to support Chapel Hill, what would it be?
- What new information do you want to walk away with?
- What would make this retreat successful?

Council and consultants identified the Town's core services as the following: Public Safety, Parks and Recreation, Public Housing, Community Health, Transit, Infrastructure Maintenance (Public Works), Solid Waste, Community Mobility, and Development Review / Permitting and Inspections.

Council reflected on challenges in delivering these services including communicating limitations and roles of Town vs. County, School Board, and Federal agencies, aligning core services with community values and human dignity, and managing expectations and resources constraints. Council discussed core values that are sometimes challenging to complete core services.

Council and executive leadership reviewed priorities, successes, and challenges across five key areas:

- **Town Growth and Development**
 - Support a complete community through zoning for diverse housing options
 - Advance downtown vision and development along BRT corridor
 - Plan for Greene Tract development and address environmental justice concerns
 - Explore tools for economic development and business recruitment
 - Integrate greenways as community assets and revenue sources
 - Address water pollution and stormwater issues in targeted areas
- **Infrastructure Needs**
 - Fund initiatives to connect pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks
 - Update Stormwater Master Plan and implement green infrastructure
 - Plan for major projects: coal ash remediation, basins, public housing repositioning
 - Develop long-term capital plan and evaluate lifecycle costs
- **Financial Sustainability**
 - Follow five-year outlook to fund core services and maintain infrastructure
 - Maximize revenue creation and clarify links between budget and economic development
 - Address trade-offs and long-term cost implications of capital projects
 - Communicate rationale for service changes and reductions
- **Organizational Capacity**
 - Maintain competitive pay and benefits to attract and retain staff
 - Address salary and retention challenges in key departments
 - Explore housing and flexible work options for employees
 - Leverage technology and innovation for efficiency
- **Governance**
 - Prioritize municipal responsibilities while fostering partnerships
 - Communicate engagement efforts and costs transparently
 - Address administrative burdens and lifecycle costs of new initiatives

Council recessed at 12:20 p.m. for a lunch break, and reconvened at 1:07 p.m.

Council identified several priority areas and discussed what success and lack of success would look like for each. Council began with Complete Community and stated the primary action would be the rewrite of the LUMO. Council discussed that success in this area would include strong environmental regulations, simplified processes, greenway connectivity, and operational leadership to guide implementation. Council noted that lack of success would be reflected in failing to make progress on the LUMO rewrite or abandoning goals due to fiscal restraints.

Council then addressed Organizational Fiscal Sustainability. Council stated that success would mean having a clear understanding of trade-offs, developing a five-year strategy with actionable

options, and prioritizing risk management through lifecycle cost-benefit analysis. Council agreed that lack of success would include deepening the deferred maintenance backlog or relying heavily on property tax increases.

Council discussed Housing and identified success as measurable progress on the Town's Affordable Housing strategy, repositioning Town-owned public housing, increasing middle and workforce housing options for employees, and encouraging diverse building types. Council noted that lack of success would be characterized by an exclusive focus on large, expensive housing developments.

Lastly, Council reviewed Environmental Resiliency, focusing on stormwater management. Council stated that success would include updating the stormwater plan with current data, conducting thorough evaluations of stormwater issues, creating operational strategies supported by clear communications, and regular monitoring. Council agreed that lack of success would occur if the Town failed to take decisive action or did not integrate resilience planning into broader infrastructure and environmental goals.

Mr. Mills reviewed the Council priorities and actions, provided a comprehensive overview of the retreat's conclusion, and outlined next steps in their process moving forward.

The meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Brittney N. Hunt
Town Clerk