

Petition to Assess the Town's Advisory Board and Commissions

The Town of Chapel Hill currently has 17 advisory boards and commissions that the Council appoints members and the Town staffs (there are also other Boards to which the Town Council appoints members, but that are not Town boards, e.g., OWASA). These bodies have been created over a number of years and exist to some degree, with the exception of the Board of Adjustment, to advise the Council, although some also have quasi-judicial decision-making roles as well. Seven of these have at least some role in the Town's development review process and/or carry out statutory responsibilities. These are:

- Board of Adjustment
- Community Design Commission
- Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board
- Housing Advisory Board
- Planning Commission
- Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board
- Transportation and Connectivity Board

The remaining ten boards and commissions perform a variety of functions that are intended to bring community input on a range of issues to the Council. It has become increasingly clear that neither the Council's expectations nor the roles of the boards and commissions are, in many cases, well defined. Further, there have been concerns that the membership of these bodies does not appropriately reflect the Town's population. Accordingly, the undersigned request that an assessment of the boards and commissions be undertaken. It is proposed that this assessment be carried out on two tracks: the assessment of the roles, responsibilities, etc., of the seven bodies involved in the development review process (with the possible exception of the Board of Adjustment) be undertaken as part of the ongoing planning systems assessment and LUMO rewrite process and proceed on a timeline that will allow the findings to be incorporated into the LUMO rewrite.

The second track would cover the remaining ten boards and commissions and be undertaken by the staff, with consulting help if needed, and address questions including, but not limited to:

- What are the Council's expectations of these bodies, both collectively and individually
- Are these expectations being fulfilled
- What are the costs to the Town of staffing/supporting these bodies and is the Town getting value for these expenditures
- Are there opportunities to consolidate or phase out any of the existing boards and commissions
- For those boards and commissions deemed to be necessary, what should their role and charge be
- How can the Town ensure that the membership of the boards and commissions is reflective of the Town's population such that all voices are heard

- Related to the above, is the Town's current method of screening candidates and appointing members optimal

We further request that this work be started as soon as practical, that there be appropriate community involvement, and that actionable recommendations be brought to the Council by the fall of 2023.

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