



# TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

## Town Council

### Meeting Minutes - Draft

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

Mayor Pam Hemminger  
Mayor pro tem Michael Parker  
Council Member Jessica Anderson  
Council Member Allen Buansi

Council Member Hongbin Gu  
Council Member Tai Huynh  
Council Member Amy Ryan  
Council Member Karen Stegman

**Wednesday, April 29, 2020**      **7:00 PM**      **Virtual Meeting**

#### 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 Zoom webinar directly online or by phone.

Register for this webinar:

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_l\\_ybuQdqRo6Xb5UJQ-9ZcA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_l_ybuQdqRo6Xb5UJQ-9ZcA) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar in listen-only mode. Phone: 301-715-8592, Meeting ID: 995-8302-0699

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

#### Roll Call

**Present:**      7 - Mayor pro tem Michael Parker, Council Member Jessica Anderson, Council Member Allen Buansi, Council Member Hongbin Gu, Council Member Karen Stegman, Council Member Tai Huynh, and Council Member Amy Ryan

**Absent:**      1 - Mayor Pam Hemminger

#### Other Attendees

Town Manager Maurice Jones, Deputy Town Manager Florentine Miller, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, Emergency Management Coordinator Kelly Drayton, Executive Director for Technology Scott Clark, Police Chief and Director for Community Safety Chris Blue, Communications Manager Catherine Lazorko, Housing and Community Executive Director Loryn Clark, Communications and Public Affairs Director/Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver, and Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey.

#### OPENING

Mayor pro tem Parker opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m. and said that Mayor Hemminger would be absent due to personal matters.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

##### 0.01 Mayor pro tem Parker Regarding Advisory Board Meetings. [\[20-0286\]](#)

Mayor pro tem Parker said that a Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board meeting was being postponed to May 4th at 5:00 p.m. and that more information was available on the Town calendar. He said that the Human Services Advisory Board would meet at 6:00 p.m. on April 30th and that the Planning Commission would meet at 7:00 p.m. on May 5th. Links for participating via ZOOM could be found on the Town Calendar, he said.

Mayor pro tem Parker noted that there would be a special Council meeting at 7:00 p.m. on May 6th and said that the Council Committee on Economic Sustainability would meet at 8 a.m. on May 8th. He pointed out that all meetings would be held virtually and said that agendas, materials and instructions on how to submit information and/or comments could be found at those links on the Town's calendar.

##### 0.02 Mayor pro tem Parker Regarding Census. [\[20-0287\]](#)

Mayor pro tem Parker urged all Town residents to complete the 2020 Census. He said that it was impossible to overstate how important getting an accurate count was for obtaining federal funding and resources over the next 10 years. Residents could fill the census form out online at [2020census.gov](http://2020census.gov), he said.

##### 0.03 Mayor pro tem Parker Regarding Food Distribution Update. [\[20-0288\]](#)

Mayor pro tem Parker praised local food distribution efforts during the COVID-19 emergency. He said that Food for Students had been delivering meals on weekdays and that Porch had distributed \$80 gift cards to families and was helping with school and food bank distribution. The Inter-Faith Council's Community Kitchen had been serving lunch and dinner daily and its Pantry was providing monthly bags of groceries, he said. He said that Meals on Wheels had been delivering to seniors weekly and that the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC had been distributing boxes of food as well.

Mayor pro tem Parker listed items that local food distribution groups still needed. He pointed out that people could support the Inter-Faith Council and local restaurants by ordering meals for shelters through "Take Them a Meal" on the Chapel Hill Foodies Facebook page. He pointed out that organizations would welcome cash donations as well.

##### 0.04 Council Member Anderson Regarding Giving Tuesday. [\[20-0289\]](#)

Council Member Anderson said that information would soon be available regarding an improved Giving Tuesday. She pointed out that OWASA's (Orange Water and Sewer Association) Care to Share program allowed residents to add money to their monthly payments to be used for others

who were having difficulty paying their bills. Residents could sign up for Care to Share at the OWASA website, she said.

## INFORMATION

1. Receive Upcoming Public Hearing Items and Petition Status List. [\[20-0278\]](#)

This item was received as presented.

## DISCUSSION

2. Update on Town Efforts to Respond to the COVID 19 Crisis. (no attachment) [\[20-0279\]](#)

Town Manager Maurice Jones and Emergency Management Coordinator Kelly Drayton gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Town's response and coordination efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Drayton described how local and regional partners and non-profits had been working together to respond to the health emergency. She said that communication was the cornerstone of the Town's response efforts and that messaging had been based on community need. She noted large increases in the Town's number of social media followers and e-newsletter recipients. Information was also available through the Town's Emergency Operations Center (919-969-5005) and its COVID-19 website (Townofchapelhill.org/coronavirus), she said.

Ms. Drayton praised front-line workers and emergency responders and said that Town efforts had been focused on supporting its most vulnerable residents. She reported that Town staff had processed 81 rent adjustments for public housing residents and was continuing to work with more than 50 human service agencies to reach out to those in need.

Mayor pro tem Parker pointed out that many different groups had been working with the Town regarding mass food distribution efforts. The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and non-profits had been serving about 2,000 school children per day and there was a weekly food drive on Wednesdays at the Chapel Hill Public Library, he said. He also noted that efforts were underway to expand food distribution efforts at the Northside Neighborhood.

Ms. Drayton mentioned the following recent key updates: the FDA had approved a test for COVID-19 that involved at-home sample collection; the federal government had approved a \$484 billion relief package; NC Governor Cooper had extended the stay-at-home order to May 8th and the Town was aligning with that. She pointed out that the NC General Assembly was back in session and she summarized some of the numerous pandemic-related bills that had been introduced. She said that the University of North Carolina expected to open in fall 2020 but that it might

look different from campus to campus.

Ms. Drayton discussed long-term planning efforts for a phased reopening of the state and mentioned some of the metrics the state had been watching. The Town had already begun working on draft operational plans for a phased reopening, she said, adding that the long recovery process would include assessing impacts, building community capacity, and connecting resources. A key piece would be to engage local partners in articulating a post-disaster community vision focused on creating a more resilient community, she said.

Council Member Ryan said that many people were happy to make face masks for others but did not know how to connect with those in need. That might be something that the Town and County could coordinate, she said, and Mr. Jones agreed to follow up on that idea.

Council Member Anderson proposed also providing directions on how to make face masks from tee shirts and other resources. In addition, she asked staff to publicize information regarding utilities and rental assistance programs that were in place.

Mr. Jones agreed to provide information at the next Council meeting on additional funding that could be used for rent and utilities.

Council Member Gu asked about a New York Times article that had predicted a rise in COVID-19 cases in North Carolina, but Mr. Jones was not aware of that. He pointed out that the number of COVID-19 cases in Orange County had been relatively low and said that he had not seen examples of community spread beyond two congregate care facilities. Mr. Jones agreed to provide a response after he had read the article and had spoken with Orange County health officials about it.

This item was received as presented.

3. Public Forum and Consider Amending the 2019-2020 Community Development Block Grant Program Plan. [\[20-0280\]](#)

Executive Director for Housing and Community Loryn Clark gave a PowerPoint presentation on a proposed amendment to the FY 2019-2020 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program which would reallocate \$169,728 of CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization funds to assist with temporary housing. She asked the Council to take immediate action due to the Inter-Faith Council's current need for temporary housing assistance for residents.

Ms. Clark gave a brief overview of the Community Development program and explained that funds were intended to meet an urgent need. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had provided guidance on how those funds could be used in response to COVID-19

needs, she said. She explained that HUD had reduced public notice requirements, approved the use of virtual meetings, and removed the amount a town could spend on public services activities for FY 2020 and FY 2021.

Ms. Clark displayed a chart that summarized a staff proposal to shift funds from Neighborhood Revitalization to Temporary Housing. With Council approval, next steps would be to revise the Town's Annual Action Plan and submit that to HUD, she said. Staff would continue to work with Orange County, the Inter-Faith Council, and community partners to finalize plans as soon as possible in order to be able to make the transition quickly, she said. Ms. Clark recommended that the Council adopt Resolution 1 and Enact Ordinance 1 to amend the CDBG budget.

Council Members stressed the urgent need to move those who were experiencing homelessness and/or living in shelters into a hotel soon. Ms. Clark and Mr. Jones explained that Orange County had been moving quickly to get contracts in place with hotel and food vendors. The County had been finalizing plans and was getting close to accomplishing that, and staff would update the Council and public as soon as it happened, Mr. Jones said.

The Council confirmed with staff that the plan was to have people remain in the hotel for 30 days, with extensions as needed, and that the Town would fund 2 to 2.5 months of hotel expenses. Ms. Clark said that Orange County, the Partnership to End Homelessness, and the Inter-Faith Council was trying to find permanent housing for people but had been encountering challenges.

Council Member Buansi confirmed with Ms. Clark that there were multiple public service uses of CDBG funds, such as after school programs, counseling services, and employment programs. He asked how much was available in the Affordable Housing Fund and the Affordable Housing Development Reserve and if those funds might be used for this purpose.

Ms. Clark agreed to provide that information. She pointed out that about \$150,000 of FY 2019 CDBG funding was still available for neighborhood revitalization.

Council Member Gu confirmed with Ms. Clark that the Town and its regional partners were planning for the longer term since the COVID-19 case count was expected to increase again in the fall.

Council Member Ryan verified with staff that Orange County would contribute to hotel expenses, food, laundry services, and Inter-Faith Council costs. She confirmed that rent for low-income tenants was essentially being forgiven and that HUD would increase its subsidy to

make up that difference.

Mayor pro tem Parker asked if FEMA might reimburse expenses, and Ms. Clark said that staff had been trying to get clarification on whether FEMA considered all shelter residents to be in its high-risk category.

Ms. Clark said that staff would present a plan at the next Council meeting that would include funding for rental and foreclosure avoidance. It would be based on an additional \$249,000 in CDBG funds that the Town had been awarded as a result of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, she explained. She said that staff would propose using the majority of those funds for assistance with current rent and mortgages.

Mr. Jones said that municipalities would be reimbursed 75 percent from FEMA and 25 percent from the state for rehousing people in high risk categories. Rehousing people from situations where social distancing was limited or impossible might also be reimbursable, but the Town was still trying to get answers regarding that, he said.

A motion was made by Council Member Huynh, seconded by Council Member Anderson, that R-1 be adopted. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Council Member Buansi, seconded by Council Member Huynh, that O-1 be enacted. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

4. Authorize the Mayor to Execute a Contract for the Process to Select a Town Attorney and Consider a Process for Recruiting and Selecting Community Members to Participate in the Town Attorney Assessment Center. [\[20-0281\]](#)

Mayor pro tem Parker noted that Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos was retiring and said that the Council had decided to work with Development Associates, Inc. (DA) to search for his replacement. He pointed out that DA had conducted the town manager search that had found Town Manager Jones and that the Town had a high level of satisfaction with the candidates that DA had brought the process they had used.

Mayor pro tem Parker said that three to five Town residents would be recruited to participate in an Assessment Center, and that a three-member Council committee would review applications and make recommendations to the full Council. He introduced DA partners Steve Strauss and Heather Lee to give an overview of their approach to the selection process.

Ms. Lee described the multiple methods that DA used to recruit, evaluate,

and select final candidates. She explained how they craft an ad that ensures a diversity of applicants. The evaluation stage included essay questions, structured interviews, an emotional intelligence skill assessment, and a Google name and media search, she said. She noted that only the Council would decide which candidates would be invited to the assessment phase of the process.

Mr. Strauss explained that the interviewing phase would be an opportunity to assess candidates' oral communication skills and knowledge and would include exercises that determine how they would respond in various situations. DA would train assessors from the community, who would evaluate those exercises, and then assessment teams would meet with the Council to share scores and answer questions about candidates' performances, he said.

Mr. Strauss said that the Council would narrow the field of candidates down to one, two, or three, and would then conduct final interviews with a focus on how those candidates would fit with the Council. The Council would then make a conditional offer of employment that would depend on an extensive background investigation before being final, he said.

Council Members confirmed that the process would essentially be the same as the town manager search had been, but with different exercises and assessment questions. In response to a question about legal expertise and skill evaluation, Mr. Strauss said that exercises would require applicants to show a broad range of knowledge about a variety of legal issues. Candidates would also be required to do in-depth research and analysis on a cutting edge issue and make a presentation, he explained. Mr. Strauss said that an NC attorney would conduct a screening interview and that the majority of DA's assessors would be municipal attorneys.

In response to a question about the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Lee said that there had been an extraordinarily high number of online views of the ad. She recommended that the Council lower its expectations regarding the quantity of applicants because pandemic-related uncertainties, however.

A motion was made by Council Member Anderson, seconded by Council Member Huynh, that R-2 be adopted. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Council Member Anderson, seconded by Council Member Stegman, that R-3 be adopted. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.