



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Council Meeting Minutes - Draft

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

Mayor Jessica Anderson
Mayor pro tem Amy Ryan
Council Member Camille Berry
Council Member Melissa McCullough
Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee

Council Member Theodore Nollert
Council Member Adam Searing
Council Member Elizabeth Sharp
Council Member Karen Stegman

Wednesday, January 17, 2024 6:00 PM Library Meeting Room B

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.

In-Person Meeting Notification

Changes to meeting start time

- Meetings (business and work sessions) begin at 6 PM to potentially allow for greater community participation and meetings that end earlier.

Changes in Meeting Material content

- You'll notice streamlined reports and more hyperlinks to supporting documents.
- Staff presentations will be posted after the meeting to allow more time to prepare high-quality presentations.

View the Meeting

- Public attendance is welcome, and limited to room capacity
- We will not live stream the event, but will provide the Post-Meeting Video <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/councilvideo/>
- The Town of Chapel Hill wants to know more about who participates in its programs and processes, including Town Council meetings.
- Participate in a voluntary demographic survey before viewing online or in person - <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/demosurvey>

Parking and Entry

- Parking is available at the Library lots. The Library is served by CL Route, D Route, and GoTriangle Routes of Chapel Hill Transit
- Meeting Room B is to the right from the main entrance.
- Please do not bring signs.

ROLL CALL

All Council Members were present.

Present: 9 - Mayor Jessica Anderson, Mayor pro tem Amy Ryan, Council Member Camille Berry, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Adam Searing, Council Member Karen Stegman, Council Member Theodore Nollert, Council Member Melissa McCullough, and Council Member Elizabeth Sharp

OTHER ATTENDEES

Town Manager Chris Blue, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Town Attorney Ann Anderson, Affordable Housing and Community Connections Director Sarah Viñas, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Senior Planner Tas Lagoo, Planning Director Britaney Waddell, Assistant Planning Director Judy Johnson, Transportation Manager Bergen Watterson, Planning Manager Corey Liles, Planner II Jacob Hunt, Senior Planner Katherine Shor, Planner II Charnika Harrell, Community Development Program Manager Megan Culp, Principal Planner of Historic Preservation Anya Grahn-Federmack, Senior OMBUDS Anita Badrock, Police Officer Shinn, Governance Services Director/Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver, Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey, and Assistant Town Clerk Brenton Hodge.

OPENING

Mayor Jessica Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

0.01 Mayor Anderson Regarding the Upcoming Council Committee on Economic Sustainability Meetings. [\[24-0019\]](#)

Mayor Anderson said that upcoming Council Committee on Economic Sustainability (CCES) work would be anchored in Complete Community Framework. She noted that the February and April CCES meetings were being rescheduled due to conflicts with other events.

0.02 Mayor Anderson Regarding Work Sessions. [\[24-0020\]](#)

Mayor Anderson pointed out that the Council's work session format was less formal than its business meetings and did not include voting or public comment.

AGENDA ITEMS**2. *Check-in Regarding Meeting Materials Format.**[\[24-0006\]](#)

Town Manager Chris Blue asked the Council to provide feedback on changes to the meeting packets format and process. Some Council Members replied that the new hyperlinks were challenging but the Council in general expressed appreciation for the changes. Council Members suggested adding a box that would show where a project was in the process, the key considerations, and what decisions staff needed from the Council. The Council emphasized the importance of linking agenda items to strategic goals, such as the Complete Community Framework.

Manager Blue explained that the idea of not including PowerPoints had been based on how information could change at the last minute. Some Council Members said that they wanted to see some visual representation of material involving numbers, however, and would like to have access to PowerPoint slides during meetings. Council Member Stegman and Mayor Anderson emphasized the importance of being clear with applicants that they would not be able to participate in a Council meeting if they did not provide the required materials by a specific deadline.

This item was received as presented.

3. *A Complete Community Conversation.[\[24-0007\]](#)

Mayor Anderson said that this item's goal was to ground three new Council Members in Complete Community (CC) material and to discuss CC implementation across the organization. She pointed out that the Council viewed CC as a new way of doing things that should be built into the Town's DNA.

Planning Director Britany Waddell described staff's efforts to incorporate CC into the fabric of the Town. She said that public realm, green spaces, active transportation, and diverse housing types all played a role, and she described efforts to ensure that all Town departments were invested in the larger vision. She explained that a Tech Review Team (TRT) would coordinate with outside entities, such as Orange Water and Sewer Authority and the NC Department of Transportation and would provide feedback and instruction to applicants. She said that Urban Designer Brian Peterson had been hosting placemaking discussions with the TRT, leading site visits throughout Town, and helping to translate the Council's vision and priorities to staff members who review projects.

Ms. Waddell reported on progress with an Interactive Natural Areas Map and said that a new Office of Mobility and Greenways would be advancing an Everywhere to Everywhere Greenways Implementation Study. In addition, the Town's Parks and Recreation Master Plan would soon be

requesting quotations, she said. She characterized CC as staff's "north star" for the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) update. It was also the starting point for a Comprehensive Plan update and CC would be woven into upcoming budget conversations with the Council, she said.

Council Member McCullough commented on the importance of residents understanding the interconnectedness of different benefits. Doing something for one purpose could serve many other goals as well, she said. Council Member Nollert said that he wanted to learn more about how CC's need for interdepartmental and external coordination was being pursued.

Mayor pro tem Ryan said that the Town should feel proud of pursuing a new way of thinking. She expressed excitement over the notion of having a connected community in 15 years and acknowledged that achieving the vision by getting the desired type of development would be a challenge.

Council Member Sharp commented that the concept of CC informing budget discussions seemed theoretical to those who were not involved in staff's work. It would be helpful if people could understand how it would benefit the Town and how it would affect them personally, she said. Ms. Waddell replied that Planning staff had been working closely with Strategic Communications Executive Director Susan Brown on publicizing the practical applications. Those efforts would increase during LUMO and budget discussions, she said.

Mayor Anderson said that the Council would begin discussing the Town's budget and its relation to CC at its upcoming retreat. She thanked staff for their work and emphasized the need to keep the Council informed. She agreed with the need to strategically communicate more about what CC would mean and look like on the ground, she said. She emphasized the importance of advertising rules early on so that developers would not come in with projects that the Town does not want.

This item was received as presented.

4. * LUMO Rewrite Policy Overview and Work Plan.[\[24-0008\]](#)

Mayor Anderson said that the LUMO updating process so far had also included updating the Town's Future Land Use Map, adopting transit-oriented development, and making changes regarding Town advisory boards. The overall goal was to streamline the Town's development process and make it more productive, she said. She told staff that the Council wanted to clarify the point at which it would be making policy decisions.

Principal Planner Tas Lagoo gave a brief summary of the current planning process, which had begun with Council approval of the LUMO rewrite in 2017. The rewritten version would reflect the intent of all Town plans and would create a clearer and more equitable development processes and

outcomes, he said. He explained how some of the Town's prior planning work, such as the Chapel Hill 2020 Comprehensive Plan, were being incorporated into the revised LUMO.

Mr. Lagoo said that Town staff and a consultant team had charted out a week-by-week work plan that would lead to LUMO adoption by end of 2024. He mentioned a series of upcoming policy-based check-ins that would inform the technical work. Those would begin with a Missing Middle Housing discussion in March and be followed by April and May discussions regarding Design Standards and Procedures, respectively, he said. He said that staff was looking for feedback from the Council regarding the proposed process, he said.

Council Member Stegman proposed holding an extra work session to familiarize new Council Members with previous Council decisions and votes. She also noted that Affordable Housing as well as Missing Middle Housing should be part of the March discussion.

Mayor pro tem Ryan expressed concern about the June deadline, since high-level policy issues needed to be discussed. She and others pointed out that Environmental check-in had been listed, even though the CC consultant had emphasized the importance of first identifying what should be preserved. Policy-setting was the Council's role, and those discussions should happen as early as possible in the process, Mayor pro tem Ryan said.

Mr. Lagoo replied that staff's work was being informed by a long history of policy discussions. There would be more such discussions over the next several months to make sure that the current Council's view was consistent with those, he said. Council Member Miller-Foushee commented that each staff presentation would provide an opportunity for the Council to address policy. She felt as though the Council was having those discussions throughout the process, she said.

Ms. Waddell explained that staff's intent was to lay out the policy questions that they needed the Council to address on each of the topics over the next four months. The elements all build on each other and there was a reason why things were structured as they were, she said.

Mayor pro tem Ryan and Mr. Lagoo discussed the kinds of topics that would be brought to the Council for value judgements and Mr. Lagoo agreed to let the Council know where those places would be. He said that an Alignment Memo, which was linked to the staff report appendix, presented a comprehensive list of recommended improvements that would be implemented through the LUMO rewrite. That appendix tied those improvements to various policy goals, plans and CCs priorities as well, he said.

Mayor Anderson said that she had been hoping for more of a road map,

since there were multiple ways to approach and solve problems. The Council needed to weigh in on the approach and communicate with the community, she pointed out. She said that the Council needed to have deeper discussions regarding tradeoffs in order to provide clarity on how to approach the procedural piece. If there was a way that negotiations could be held administratively and still get the benefits that the Council wants, then she would be in favor of it, she said. "If not, then I need to know where those places are."

Senior Planner Katherine Shor said that staff had been using a different strategy for community engagement that was more focused on education, information and building awareness. She explained that the goals of those activities would be to center historically under-engaged voices in land-use decisions, be responsive to past engagement and community feedback, and educate community members about planning processes. Those goals were based on Town studies and planning processes and best practices in engagement and participation techniques, she said.

Ms. Shor described how community engagement would include a project newsletter, direct outreach to stakeholder groups, and public information meetings. A new, pilot approach would pay community members to learn about planning and zoning and then go out and work within their communities, she said. She said that staff would host "Meet a Planner" pop-ups throughout Town and would provide plain language educational materials at those events. The goal of these initiatives was to reach people in new ways and build trust with community members, she said.

The Mayor and Council praised staff for the hard work and expressed strong support for the plan to have "planning ambassadors" reach out to community members who had not historically been engaged. They proposed tracking how many people were being reached and they noted the importance of letting people know what they could expect from meetings. The Council suggested that staff be intentional about providing audio and visual for those who are hearing impaired, and the Mayor raised the idea of including UNC students, such as future planners, in the process.

This item was received as presented.

1. [Rewriting Our Rules - A LUMO Update](#) [\[24-0004\]](#)

Mr. Lagoo said that this item would be the first in a series of discussions on how to implement the Council's policy decisions and goal. The objective was to explore questions a little further and then staff would present options when the LUMO update was more advanced, he explained. He pointed out that there was general consensus on the need for: more affordable housing for a wide range of residents; multimodal connectivity; and sustainable new development that advances environmental goals.

Mr. Lagoo proposed that the Council discuss expand missing middle housing opportunities with housing types such as triplexes, fourplexes, cottages, cottage courts and small apartments along large arterial roads that have well-established bus networks, sidewalks and bike lanes. He asked if the Council wanted to broaden missing middle housing categories and look beyond traditional tools such as zoning districts for organizing the Town.

Mayor pro tem Ryan stressed the importance of retrofitting some areas and considering nodes where the most people would be.

Mayor Anderson pointed out that one goal of CC was to put housing along transit corridors and green places. She confirmed with Mr. Lagoo that a high-level feasibility analysis would look at the cost of doing that, at where alignments could be made, and at ensuring that Everywhere to Everywhere Greenways actually reached everywhere. She also confirmed with him that the rewritten LUMO probably would not specifically address linking to greenways but would be a living document that would enable Everyway to Everyway Greenways implementation in the future.

Council Member Sharp asked for clarification on how the proposal to expand housing type opportunities differed from a text amendment (TA) that some residents had felt did not include enough safeguards. She also asked if the Town would be risking building an incomplete community if the planning process for greenways and connectivity was not as advanced as the LUMO planning process.

Mr. Lagoo replied that the Town had strong networks of existing pedestrian connectivity, strong bus service along certain corridors, and was close to extending bus service along certain corridors even further. The Town would be ready to take advantage of the opportunity when greenways had advanced to the point where that could inform regulatory decisions, he said.

Council Member Sharp and Mr. Lagoo discussed the different ways in which the LUMO could be written to implement housing density and he said that staff would determine the best implementation tool for what was on the ground over the next few months. Work regarding current unknowns -- such as where exactly new greenways would be -- could happen in the future, he said.

Mayor Anderson said that she had thought the opportunity for missing middle housing would come along with the greenway effort. She had expected that the Town would be ready with the zone to allow for missing middle housing at slightly higher levels of density but would not put that in place until the greenway network was ready, she said.

Mr. Lagoo replied that the Town did not have to wait for the greenway network to be more fleshed out because other connectivity-related assets

already existed. Council Member Sharp commented that the Mayor was referring to a less traditional route whereby higher density would be allowed as connectivity was developed. Mr. Lagoo replied that he did not know if doing that was feasible, and he argued for sticking with tried-and-true tools and using them in more creative ways.

Ms. Waddell cautioned against the possibility of having development outpace regulations. She pointed out that there had been no new development since the Council passed the TA to allow it. She acknowledged that six months was not long enough to judge the effect but said that staff was trying to address additional barriers. In addition to market factors, there were elements of Town code that made it difficult to build Affordable and Missing Middle housing types, she said.

In response to a question from Council Member Searing about the intent of staff's proposal, the Mayor and Mr. Lagoo clarified that the proposal was to look at how the Town's transportation network could better match up with allowed housing types. Council Member Searing stressed the importance of being very specific about what areas were being discussed, since building along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, for example, would be different than building in other neighborhoods. Mr. Lagoo noted that the 2023 TA had applied to all residential zones in Town. Staff was looking to build on that and think about specific areas in a way that was based more on transportation than existing zoning districts, he said.

The majority of Council Members spoke in support of moving forward with staff's recommendations. Council Member Nollert said that cultivating a lifestyle that would be economically and environmentally sustainable meant thinking intentionally about where single-family housing would not fit and trying to build a supply of other housing types. Council Member Miller-Foushee said that rewriting the LUMO presented an opportunity to address the racial discrimination that single-family housing had led to. Council Member Stegman said that Neighborhood Conservation District exemptions should be examined as well, since there was a housing crisis and staff should determine the right balance and standards.

Mr. Lagoo pointed out that density issues -- such as parking, noise and litter -- were covered by Town ordinances, and enforcement would be discussed in a different context, he said.

Council Member McCullough stressed the importance of communicating to the public that climate issues, non-car transportation, and the importance of higher density housing to the tax base were reasons for doing this and doing it well. The majority of households were comprised of one or two people for whom the proposed housing types were ideal, she said.

Mayor Anderson said, in summary, that the Council was interested in exploring the idea and in hearing how issues discussed in 2023 would be addressed in a different way. The item would return to Council during

LUMO conversations and items such as infrastructure and enforcement could be addressed then, she said.

Mr. Lagoo said that parts of Town code were barriers to missing middle housing, and he proposed including more context-sensitive standards for subdivisions. He gave examples of where doing so would benefit the Town by adding connectivity. He said that dedicating rights-of-way for potential future development could be part of that approach. He discussed developing "flag lots", in which the buildable portion of land was not on a street. Flag lots could be subdivided in creative ways, he said, noting that Carrboro was permitting a wide range of such configurations.

Council Member Searing asked about safeguards regarding flag lots. Mr. Lagoo replied that Carrboro's rules were permissive but that other community imposed requirements such as increased buffers or setbacks and size/height limitations.

The Council discussed how allowing flag lots was worth exploring because it could open the door to wider and more affordable housing options. Council Member Sharp pointed out that some residents who had been upset by the 2023 TA had said that sensitively developed flag lots would be a more appropriate way to add gentle density. Council Member Berry pointed out that some of Community Home Trust's affordable homes in Carrboro were located on flag lots.

This item was received as presented.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.