



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

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

Town Council

Meeting Minutes - Final

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, February 8, 2023

6:30 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

View the Meeting

- Public attendance is welcome.
- 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 <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/demosurvey>.

Parking

- Parking is available at the Library lots. The Library is served by CL Route, D Route, and GoTriangle Routes of Chapel Hill Transit

Entry and COVID-19 Protocols

- Meeting Room B is to the right from the main entrance.
- Visitors and employees will self-screen. Do not enter if you have these symptoms: Fever, chills, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, headache, muscle pain

ROLL CALL

Mayor pro tem Stegman and Council Member Anderson were absent, excused.
All other Council Members were present.

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

OTHER ATTENDEES

Interim 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, Assistant Planning Director Judy Johnson, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Economic Development and Parking Services Director Dwight Bassett, Mayoral Aide Jeanne Brown, DEI Director Shenekia Weeks, Police Officer Steven Bradley, and Communications and Public Affairs Director/Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver.

OPENING

Mayor Hemminger called the work session to order at 6:30 p.m. and pointed out that Agenda Item 2 had been moved to the Council's February 15, 2023, meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

0.01 Mayor Hemminger Regarding Traffic Garden.

[\[23-0112\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger announced the opening of a new "traffic garden" at the Homestead Aquatics Center parking lot on February 11th from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

0.02 Mayor Hemminger Regarding Upcoming Community Meetings.

[\[23-0113\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger announced that three days of in-person and virtual meetings regarding the Town's Housing Choice Initiative would be held during the week of February 13th. There would also be a public information meeting regarding a crosswalk on Martin Luther King Jr., Boulevard on Thursday, she said. She pointed out that specific information regarding these meetings could be found on the Town's website.

0.03 Mayor Hemminger Regarding the February 15th Council Meeting.

[\[23-0114\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger pointed out that the Council would be honoring Congressman David Price at its February 15, 2023, meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Current Parking Downtown and East Rosemary Parking Deck Construction Update.

[\[23-0096\]](#)

Director of Economic Development and Parking Services Dwight Bassett presented a status update on the Town's parking system and construction schedule. He said that demand at the Wallace Parking Deck and Rosemary-Columbia Parking Lot had nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels and that it continued to grow. Total parking income for the first six months of the current budget year had been \$1.1 million, \$170,000 more than had been projected, he pointed out.

Mr. Bassett said that there had been a large increase in demand for parking spaces systemwide, and especially at the 140 West parking deck. He pointed out that Downtown projects that were currently being developed were expected to create a demand for leased spaces in the East Rosemary Parking Deck.

In response to a question from Council, Mr. Bassett said that it might be time to revisit raising fees in high demand parking lots. The Council confirmed with him that staff's goal was to have a 60/40 balance of hourly and leased spaces at the East Rosemary Deck. It probably would be more like 50/50 or 40/60 at the initial opening, and then staff would determine how to balance it out, Mr. Bassett said. The Council also ascertained that 25 to 30 percent of those who use the Town's new parking meters use the parking app. The system did not currently have the capacity to issue parking passes, but the East Rosemary Deck would have license plate recognition, Mr. Bassett pointed out.

Mayor Hemminger proposed that staff look into capturing credit card user fees. She pointed out that the Town had been paying about 30 cents for every customer transaction. Council Member Huynh noted that the City of Durham had been capturing that fee, and the Mayor said that many places had been doing so.

Assistant Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger continued the staff's presentation with a report on how the East Rosemary Deck's foundation work had been delayed due to rain, which had led to the deck's completed date being extended to February 2024. She reported that the North Street/Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard intersection was being redesigned for safety and attractiveness, and she said that Urban Designer Brian Peterson had been working with the landscape designer on that design. The NC Department of Transportation had approved a signalized intersection at that location, and the Town had received a \$25,000 grant for electric vehicle infrastructure, she said.

Council Members verified that the original target date for completing the

East Rosemary deck had been August 2022. They confirmed that drivers would be required to turn left on North Street when exiting the new deck. Ms. Nirdlinger said that a few neighbors had wanted additional traffic-calming measures at that location and that staff intended to take base level traffic counts and measure again after the deck opened.

Director of Business Management Amy Oland pointed out that the Town's original financing model for the East Rosemary Deck had been a self-sustaining one that would generate enough revenue to cover debt service payments and operating expenses. She said that it had been understood that borrowing most of the financing up front would mean being behind until positive cash flows led to self-sustainability.

Ms. Oland said that the Town was currently looking at financing up to \$41.9 million. The Town had borrowed \$32.9 million in limited obligation bonds in August 2021, but that total needed to be increased by \$9 million due to overruns, she explained. She recommended borrowing the additional funds. She outlined a plan in which user fees would help pay the debt service over time and explained why that would be better than using excess Fund Balance.

Ms. Oland said that the Town would generate a positive cash flow four years, or sooner, after the Deck opened. She outlined a plan for making payments from the Town's Debt Fund and/or its Parking Fund. She said that the Town did have \$13.9 million in its Debt Fund but that using \$9 million of that for the Rosemary Deck would mean delaying the new Municipal Services Center.

In response to a Council member's comment about possible long-term inflation, Ms. Oland said that the Town would have to increase its prices if costs elsewhere continued to rise. The Council confirmed that with her that cost projections did not include a reserve for major deck repairs early on. Once the project was net positive, funds could be set aside for that purpose, she said.

The Mayor and Ms. Oland discussed the many revenue sources that would help the Parking Fund. They talked about how debt payments for both the 140 West Deck and the Wallace Deck would be reduced in a few years because the Town had been paying a higher amount up front in order to pay those off faster. Council Member Huynh confirmed with Ms. Oland that a higher occupancy rate at the Rosemary Deck would lead to a net positive cash flow much sooner.

Council Member Searing asked Ms. Oland to run her projections again using a 4 or 5 percent inflation rate. She agreed to do so and said that she would also recalculate for leasing at 75 percent occupancy.

Council Member Parker said that the Town seemed to be underpricing its leased spaces, but Mr. Bassett replied that there was a market reality

regarding how far the Town could push those fees. Hourly rates were expected to cover that difference once the Town had new employees and customers downtown, he said, and he proposed looking at leasing fees again in 6-12 months. The Mayor and Mr. Bassett discussed the potential for offering semester parking and for doing surge pricing during large events.

Mayor Hemminger pointed out that the Council had always intended that parking revenues, not the General Fund, would pay for the Rosemary Deck. Despite the \$9 million overrun, that plan was still possible even though there might have to be more leased spaces than intended until the new building opens up, she said. She described recent Downtown improvements and said that more would be made in the near future.

Council Members emphasized the importance of wayfinding signs and lighting. Council Member Berry asked about a possible parking app, and Mr. Bassett replied that a "Park On The Hill" license plate recognition website would be available in about six months.

Mayor Hemminger thanked the Parking Systems staff. She said that everything seemed to be running smoothly and that the department had come a long way since she first came into office.

This item was received as presented.

2. Shaping Our Future - Transit Oriented Development and Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) Update.

[\[23-0097\]](#)

This item was moved to the February 15, 2023, Council meeting.

3. OneOrange Racial Equity Framework Update.

[\[23-0098\]](#)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer Shenekia Weeks gave a PowerPoint presentation on OneOrange, a racial equity plan for changing how race had been a predictor of outcomes. The goal was to use a racial equity assessment lens to align strategies and interventions until disparities decrease and there were better outcomes for all, she said.

Ms. Weeks discussed the results of recent training sessions for Town department directors and non-profit partners. She said that participants had felt the training helped them to notice their own biases. She showed a training calendar and said that there would be ongoing opportunities for impromptu training as well. She discussed how Town departments had been applying the racial equity assessment lens. She also described a process called "turning the curve" that involved data, community engagement, and accountability.

Council Member Miller-Foushee commented on how some organizations had more practice with institutions, systems and processes than others,

which made the grant application process somewhat inequitable. She asked Ms. Weeks to address how the Town should understand that when asking community members to go through that process.

Ms. Weeks pointed out that those with the strongest financials and backing had historically been the ones to receive funding. And those were not people of color, she said. She thought that a deeper look at equity could reduce some hurdles for the non-profits that did not have years of experience and/or grant writers on staff, she said. The goal of results-based accountability training was for Town non-profits to be competitive, to have the capacity to go after larger grants, and to work together to serve more people, she explained.

Ms. Weeks described a Racial Equity Pocket Guide that included a list of questions regarding racial impacts. She said that example questions were who was and would be experiencing burdens and benefits, what are the root causes of inequity, what might be the unintended consequences of an action or strategy. Staff was developing a community engagement pilot project as well, she said.

Council Member Parker said that the lack of a complete feedback loop in some of the Town's previous efforts had led citizens to feel that the Council had made decisions they did not agree with. He asked how the decision-making process could be made more inclusive and full circle, rather than always ending with the Council.

Ms. Weeks described how OneOrange was attempting to change that process while building community trust. She agreed that Town staff needed to receive feedback from more people and said that the Affordable Housing and Community Connections team had been working on that issue. Council Member Ryan raised the idea of financially compensating community partners who help with engagement, and Ms. Weeks gave examples of where that had been done.

Ms. Weeks said that people who had taken a 2021 Toy Chest survey had listed the following as their three top racial equity priorities: increased education outcomes for children of color; increased affordable housing options; increased employment opportunities for people of color. Respondents said that they wanted more educational support, more affordable housing services, and more opportunities for people of color in the workplace, she said. She mentioned that Orange County Racial Equity Analytics Project had noted disparities within the child welfare system and said that she would share those results as soon as they were available.

Ms. Weeks said that OneOrange was asking for \$10,000 from each jurisdiction in Orange County to start work that would support the

Reimagining Community Safety Task Force's recommendations regarding education, housing, and employment. The current request was for collecting data, getting estimates, and creating models, and she anticipated requesting additional funds in the future, she said.

Council Members Berry and Miller-Foushee asked what role the Town could play in helping to solve the achievement gap in schools and the inequity in employment. Ms. Weeks replied that the Racial Equity Index would help to align programs and strategies. It would also help determine best practices and risk factors, and how the Town could have an effect, she said.

Council Member Huynh said that data from My Future NC showed that Orange County's schools had one of the lower FASFA completion rates. He said that the Town could collaborate with the schools to post FASFA drives in public housing, and it could provide transportation for low-income high school students to participate in programs at Durham Technical Community College. A collaboration between the Town's transit and school systems could be an immediate step toward addressing equity issues, he said.

Council Member Miller-Foushee agreed with Council Member Huynh's comments and stressed the importance of thinking differently and moving forward to find new solutions that bring everybody along. Council Member Berry said that students and parents were hungry for opportunities. There must be ways in which the Town could provide the necessary access, she said.

Ms. Weeks agreed that building capacity and partnerships included looking at who could fill the gaps. She said that staff had shared that perspective with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools team. So those conversations were happening and elements of OneOrange would move the Town closer to evaluation and accountability, she said.

The Council and Ms. Weeks discussed the importance of having school systems explicitly involved as equal partners. Council Member Ryan asked if staff had been partnering with the University of North Carolina, and Ms. Weeks mentioned the need to be able to compensate people who share their expertise. Council Members asked staff to make racial equity an integral part of Council's packets and deliberations. Council Member Berry urged her Council colleagues to attend training sessions when invited, and Ms. Weeks pointed out that the Council could request customized training, if desired.

The Council and Ms. Weeks talked about how the COVID-19 pandemic had interrupted natural opportunities for feedback from community members. Mayor Hemminger said that some residents were still being cautious, and

that the Town needed to find a way to include them in the conversation. Ms. Weeks pointed out that people were starting to venture out again and said that she would address community engagement plans when she returned to the Council on February 22, 2023.

This item was received as presented.

ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.