



October 21, 2020 Discussion Guide

To Members of the Town Council, Town of Chapel

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Purpose of Discussion:

The focus for tonight is on ways to work together for creating equitable and high-quality policy, specifically through resolutions. I appreciate the time each of you spent sharing your thoughts with me the past few days, and the staffing support to direct me to written materials and understanding of your current methods. I had three major takeaways from my conversations with you that I hear are important to you:

1. Processes to bring forward Council Member initiated petitions and resolutions, including general timelines and protocols for informing, including and engaging each other and the public.
2. Communication methods and transparency to respond to emerging issues, to offer intentional leadership actions, and to stay grounded together to act on behalf of all Chapel Hill residents during these challenging times.
3. Commitment to shared beliefs around how to be and act, develop trust, and create spaces for robust policy dialogue that can forward everyone’s thinking.

Background:

The Council has passed four resolutions between 2016-2020. The Council agreed during a retreat a few years ago, that they do not wish to support resolutions for things that do not fall within their purview.

HB2 - March 28, 2016

- R-1: Resolution Affirming the Dignity of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People and Calling for the Repeal of Session Law 2016-3/House Bill 2
- R-2: Resolution of Strong Condemnation of the Actions of the North Carolina General Assembly Legislators and North Carolina Governor who have Enacted Hate Legislation Session Law 2016-3/House Bill 2

Climate Change – June 2017

- Resolution recommitting to the Paris Agreement

Racial Equity, Public Safety - June 2020

- A Resolution on Developing New Community Approaches to Improve Racial Equity and Public Safety in Chapel Hill

The process for **Petitions** is clearly articulated in the Council Procedure Manual, with a few pertinent excerpts here.

- “Residents desiring to present petitions are strongly encouraged to contact the Mayor or the Town Manager’s Office by the Thursday morning before a Wednesday Council meeting”.
- The guidelines also include a statement: “Members of the Council may also petition the Council, generally to ask the Town staff for a report on a particular subject. Petitions from Council members should be distributed to the Mayor and Council in writing prior to the meeting or at the start of the meeting”. Council-initiated petitions would then be managed as all other petitions.
- When petitions are received in advance, copies are included in the Council packets and, as a result, are also available for the public to see. Council members also receive a Petition Status report in their meeting packets for easy reference

The process for Council member-initiated **Resolutions** has not been similarly articulated. You are invited this evening to agree on a few first steps to bring forward Council member-initiated resolutions that reflect protocols for informing and engaging each other and the public.

1. An expectation for informing the Mayor first as the lead of the Town Council, along with the Town Manager as the lead of the TCH Staff. Similar to the Petition process, its receipt can then be formally documented, and progress tracked. There can be an assessment of resources needed and discussion of timing with the Council calendar, and consideration of assigning a subcommittee to help finalize the details.
2. A defined, timely window for response on how the request is being handled and who (staff) will be handling it, or clear rationale if the timeframe for action cannot be met as requested.
3. An expectation for sharing the resolution ideas or materials with Council Members, allowing adequate time to offer ideas, perspectives, opinions, etc. prior to a discussion and/or vote.
4. An expectation for sharing the resolution “final draft” with the public, allowing adequate time to offer ideas, perspectives, opinions, etc.

In instances where there is an urgent request for action on a resolution, the Council can still utilize all of these steps, though will need to work on an accelerated timeline, or use its option for Special Meetings.

I recognize that to say “yes” to these procedural recommendations may be asking for a leap of faith that the other communication and relational takeaways I mention will be adequately addressed, because they are intertwined. That is my understanding and my commitment to you, along with other parking lot issues that may surface this evening.

Here’s the start of the Parking Lot!

- ~ Communication methods and transparency to respond to emerging issues, to offer intentional leadership actions, and to stay grounded together to act on behalf of all Chapel Hill residents during these challenging times
- ~ Commitment to shared beliefs around how to be and act, develop trust, and create spaces for robust policy dialogue that can forward everyone’s thinking

I look forward to talking with you soon.