

Proclamation

WHEREAS, since its establishment on March 19, 1996, EMPOWERment has been dedicated to serving the Chapel Hill community, guided by a mission to empower individuals and communities through affordable housing, grassroots economic development, and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, EMPOWERment was founded by two Master of Social Work (MSW) students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, inspired and guided by the will of Northside, Pine Knolls, Tin-Top, and Carver Street neighbors, and grounded in three pillars: community organizing, affordable housing, and grassroots economic development; and

WHEREAS, through community organizing, EMPOWERment has worked to reclaim the power of local communities, and through affordable housing initiatives, has helped low-income families achieve homeownership, while its economic development efforts have reduced barriers for women and minority business owners; and

WHEREAS, EMPOWERment has expanded its reach across Orange County, becoming one of the largest providers of affordable rental housing in the area, currently owning and managing 74 units, including the P.E.A.C.H. (Pine Knoll EMPOWERment Affordable Community Housing) Apartments, a 10-unit complex designed for residents earning 30% of the Area Median Income; and

WHEREAS, its housing advocacy now includes two HUD-certified housing counselors who collaborate with local nonprofits to support first-time homeowners and provide financial planning, achieving an outstanding 100% foreclosure-prevention rate; and

WHEREAS, EMPOWERment's economic development initiatives include the ownership and management of the Midway Business Center, providing an affordable operational hub for ten small businesses, and the creation of BrightPath Solutions, Inc., which since 2022 has supported 184 entrepreneurs through training, business planning, and mini grants; and

WHEREAS, EMPOWERment's community outreach efforts have become integral to Chapel Hill, including establishing a long-running Community Watch group, co-founding Neighborhood Night Out and the Good Neighbor Initiative in partnership with the Chapel Hill Police Department and other community partners, organizing holiday celebrations, supporting residents through the MOM Utility Program, and fostering youth opportunity through the Career Explorer program for individuals aged 18 to 24.

NOW, THEREFORE, with deep gratitude the Chapel Hill Mayor and Town Council do hereby proclaim Wednesday, March 25, 2026 to be

EMPOWERment Day

in Chapel Hill and encourage all residents to recognize and celebrate the lasting contributions of EMPOWERment to strengthening communities, expanding opportunity, and advancing equity for all.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL, ON THIS THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF MARCH IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX.

