



RECONSIDER A PROPOSAL FOR AN ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP POLICY AMENDMENT

STAFF REPORT

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL MANAGER’S DEPARTMENT
Maurice Jones, Town Manager

AMENDMENT REQUEST Amend the Advisory Board Policy regarding board members participating remotely.		MEETING DATE April 1, 2020
STAFF’S RECOMMENDATION That the Council amend the Advisory Board membership policy to continue a pilot program for remote participation by members of Town Advisory Boards.		
BACKGROUND The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has restricted meetings for Town advisory boards. The Council created standards regarding remote participation in the Advisory Board Membership Policy (which has expired). Staff believes reinstating this policy is necessary to allow the advisory boards to continue to operate. The proposed changes to the Advisory Board Membership Policy would continue the remote participation standards with some modifications to adjust to the current COVID-19 restrictions in place. On March 6, 2017, the Council adopted a resolution for a pilot program for remote participation ¹ by members of Town Advisory Boards in advisory board meetings. This pilot program expired on June 30, 2018. Staff recommends temporary changes to the Advisory Board Membership policy with the proposed amendments effective immediately. These proposed amendments would be active for the duration of Orange County’s Stay at Home declaration, at which point the remote participation policy would revert to the original language, unless otherwise modified or rescinded.		DECISION POINTS The proposed changes do not apply to boards that are quasi-judicial in nature, specifically the Board of Adjustment and the Historic District Commission, except if engaged in making recommendations and not hearing quasi-judicial applications. Members attending remotely would fully participate in and vote at meetings and would be counted toward a quorum (Board members would not be present at the meeting site as meetings would be held virtually). Advisory Board meetings, as possible, would be scheduled and advertised as virtual meetings with opportunities for the public to participate. On March 26, 2020, the NC Department of Justice provided an advisory opinion stating that “electronic meetings are allowed under N.C.G.S. §143.318.13, and the requirements of notice, access and minutes can be met through electronic means. During this COVID-19 State of Emergency period, Board and Commission members can participate remotely in all meetings with no requirement to attend in person.
ATTACHMENTS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resolution 2. March 6, 2017 Council Minutes² 3. NC Department of Justice advisory opinion 	

¹ https://chapelhill.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&clip_id=3044&meta_id=154166

² https://chapelhill.granicus.com/MinutesViewer.php?view_id=21&clip_id=3044&doc_id=b3cb3c2d-034b-11e7-ad57-f04da2064c47