

**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 13, 2018 2:35 PM  
**To:** Sally Greene  
**Cc:** Allen Buansi; Donna Bell; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Lindsey Bineau; Michael Parker; Nancy Oates; Pam Hemminger; Rachel Schaevitz; Town Council; Amy Harvey; Carolyn Worsley; Catherine Lazorko; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Rae Buckley; Ralph Karpinos; Roger Stancil; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** email...RE: Historic Civil Rights Commemorations Task Force

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

If your email is related to a development application or a particular issue being addressed by the Council, your comments will be made part of the record. If applicable, we encourage you to attend any public meetings related to the items addressed in your email.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,



Jeanette Coffin  
Office Assistant  
[Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office](#)  
[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

**From:** Sally Greene [<mailto:sally@ibiblio.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 13, 2018 1:58 PM  
**To:** Town Council <[mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org)>; Jess Anderson <[janderson@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:janderson@townofchapelhill.org)>; Donna Bell <[dbell@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:dbell@townofchapelhill.org)>; Nancy Oates <[noates@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:noates@townofchapelhill.org)>; Michael Parker <[mparker@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mparker@townofchapelhill.org)>; Pam Hemminger <[pheeminger@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:pheeminger@townofchapelhill.org)>; Allen Buansi <[abuansi@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:abuansi@townofchapelhill.org)>; Hongbin Gu <[hgu@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:hgu@townofchapelhill.org)>; Rachel Schaevitz <[rschaevitz@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:rschaevitz@townofchapelhill.org)>; Karen Stegman <[kstegman@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:kstegman@townofchapelhill.org)>; Roger Stancil <[rstancil@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:rstancil@townofchapelhill.org)>; Ken Broun <[Ksbroun@email.unc.edu](mailto:Ksbroun@email.unc.edu)>; Molly Luby <[mluby@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mluby@townofchapelhill.org)>; Flo Miller <[fmiller@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:fmiller@townofchapelhill.org)>  
**Subject:** Historic Civil Rights Commemorations Task Force

Dear Council Members,

I was honored to play a small part in the Historic Civil Right Commemorations Task Force, whose impressive report you have before you for action. I want to commend former mayor Broun for his skillful work in leading the task force, as well as Molly Luby for the passionate commitment that she demonstrated to the project.

I'd like to add a little context: I see this report as making good on some unfulfilled promises on the part of the Town. These go back to the discussions in 2004-05 that led to the renaming of Airport Road for Martin Luther King Jr. That request prompted a very involved, pretty intense public conversation about Chapel Hill's civil

rights history. I know I was not alone, sadly, in being a Chapel Hill resident who had been in town a long time (since 1987) without an awareness of any of this history--but we got a good short-course in it, in short order. Speaking just for me, that process changed the way I looked at Chapel Hill permanently, and for the better.

Along with the agreement to rename Airport Road, the Council asked for some actions that would make the renaming more than a gesture. First, of course, was the creation of the Justice In Action committee, which still carries out the mission of making justice visible in our community. There were other plans as well. The Library was supposed to have a special section on local/regional civil rights history. As far as I know, that didn't happen. (Today, we would have asked even more of our Library, knowing the kinds of things it is capable of; but at that time, the Library did not see itself as engaged with the community the way it does now.) There was even some talk about a Library collaboration with UNC on making more accessible the Chapel Hill-related UNC archives that they hold. That didn't happen.

Then again, when the Council responded to a request to name the space in front of the old Post Office for Joe and Lucy Straley and Charlotte Adams, all great local civil rights workers, by opening it up to more recognition, with the decision to name it Peace and Justice Plaza (and honoring multiple people with their names in stone), another idea was suggested that did not happen. There was an idea to tell the story of what happened at the Post Office in 1964 (the Holy Week fast, at the flagpole), and more of the Chapel Hill civil rights story, on permanent displays inside the Post Office building. That never happened.

So I see some of the suggestions of this task force as picking up on those unfulfilled mandates and raising them again--and I have a lot of confidence that the Town is at last in a position to respond appropriately.

This is in part because the culture, and leadership, of the Library has changed. I see the suggestions of keeping this project open and responsive to new information--and not being afraid of conflicting information--as perfectly aligned with the current work that Susan Brown and her staff or doing toward collecting ground-up histories as building-blocks for the community-engaged museum that we have imagined for Historic Town Hall. I see the suggestion of having posters showing the timeline and accompanying photographs as a new version of the request for an exhibit in the old Post Office. In a bigger sense I see this project as fundamentally having legs, in the way that those earlier ideas ultimately did not.

Goals with terms like "living document," "collaborative process," and "interactive community engagement" today seem very achievable, given all the energy shown by this Task Force. Congratulations to everyone involved (and nearly everyone was more involved than I was!) in creating this report and recommendation.

Finally, I note that Dorothy Bernholz has reminded the committee of the Watts Motel sit-in involving Duke professor Peter Klopfer--an incident that led to a Supreme Court opinion. She says she and her husband are happy to provide recollections of that. Their memories are worth preserving.

On a separate note, the Watts Motel was on the site that has been approved for the Obey Creek development. The Council should bear in mind that that development agreement includes a commitment for the developer to create a memorial space for the Watts Motel incident. I remind you of this so that if the existing Obey Creek development should need to be revisited someday, the intention to create that memorial will remain in whatever comes next.

Thank you for all you are doing to preserve and advance Chapel Hill's civil rights history and ongoing agenda,

--

Sally Greene  
919-260-4077 | [sallygreene.org](http://sallygreene.org) | @GoSallyGreene