



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

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

Town Council

Meeting Minutes - Final

Mayor Jessica Anderson
Mayor pro tem Amy Ryan
Council Member Camille Berry
Council Member Melissa McCullough
Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee

Council Member Theodore Nollert
Council Member Adam Searing
Council Member Elizabeth Sharp
Council Member Karen Stegman

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

6:00 PM

RM 110 | Council Chamber

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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***Information added after 4/24/24**

In-Person Meeting Notification

View the Meeting

- View and participate in the Council Chamber.
- Live stream the meeting - <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>
- Spectrum is replacing 1998 encoder that transmits programming to cable channel 18. It remains offline until complete.
- 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 before viewing online or in person - <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/demosurvey>

Parking

- Parking is available at Town Hall lots and the lot at Stephens Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.
- See <http://www.parkonthehill.com> for other public lots on Rosemary Street
- Town Hall is served by NS route and T route, and GoTriangle Routes of Chapel Hill Transit.

Entry and Speakers

- Entrance on the ground floor.
- Sign up at the meeting starting at 5:30 PM with the Town Clerk to speak.
- If more than 14 people sign up for an item, Council will reduce speaking time from 3 minutes to 2 min./person.
- Please do not bring signs.

ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Mayor Jessica Anderson, Mayor pro tem Amy Ryan, Council Member Camille Berry, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Adam Searing, Council Member Karen Stegman, Council Member Theodore Nollert, Council Member Melissa McCullough, and Council Member Elizabeth Sharp

OTHER ATTENDEES

Town Manager Chris Blue, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Town Attorney Ann Anderson, Executive Director for Strategic Communications and Marketing Susan Brown, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Planning Director Brittany Waddell, Transportation Planner Bergen Watterson, Transit Director Brian Litchfield, Police Chief Celisa Lehew, Parks and Recreation Director Atuya Cornwell, Assistant Director of Business Management Matt Brinkley, Fire Marshal Chris Kearns, Public Housing Director Faith Brodie, Affordable Housing Manager Emily Holt, Public Works Director Lance Norris, Interim Library Director Meeghan Rosen, Town Clerk/Governance Services Director Sabrina Oliver, DEI Officer Shenekia Weeks, Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey, and Assistant Town Clerk Brenton Hodge.

OPENING

0.01 Mayor Anderson Regarding UNC Protests and Arrests.

[\[24-0255\]](#)

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda. She then addressed recent protests at the University of North Carolina regarding the war in Gaza and reaffirmed the Town's support for free speech and public safety. She said that Council members, too, wanted the violence in Gaza to end and that the Town would do its best to help navigate through the current stressful time.

0.02 Proclamation: Bike Month.

[\[24-0256\]](#)

Council Member Searing read a proclamation that designated May 2024 as Bike Month and stated that the Town would join others around the world to celebrate the benefits of active transportation and recreation. The proclamation designated May 8th as "Bike and Roll to School Day" and May 13-17 as "Bike to Work Week" in Chapel Hill as well. It mentioned plans to build more accessible, safe and connected bike lanes and greenways throughout Town.

0.03 Proclamation: Asian American and Pacific Islander Month.[\[24-0257\]](#)

Mayor pro tem Ryan read a proclamation that outlined the contributions that Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) residents make to the local community and nation. The proclamation designated May 2024 as AAPI Heritage Month and described how Chapel Hill's large AAPI population had enriched the Town. Council Member Berry, an AAPI resident, accepted the proclamation and encouraged everyone to show appreciation for the contributions that AAPI individuals make to the local community and to society as a whole.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS**0.04 Mayor Anderson Regarding Deadline for Input for Downtown Mobility and Streets Design.**[\[24-0258\]](#)

Mayor Anderson said that the deadline for sharing ideas online about Downtown improvements would be May 3, 2024.

0.05 Mayor Anderson Regarding Star Wars Day.[\[24-0259\]](#)

Mayor Anderson announced that Stormwater Day -- a joint Chapel Hill Public Library/Community Arts and Culture event -- would occur on May 4th and would include a movie under the stars, free popcorn, and a costume contest.

0.06 Mayor Anderson Regarding Special Work Session.[\[24-0260\]](#)

Mayor Anderson announced that a Special Council Work Session regarding a potential bond referendum in 2024 would be held in Council Chambers on May 3rd at 8:00 am. The public was invited to attend, she said.

0.07 Council Member Miller-Foushee Regarding Houses Now! March.[\[24-0261\]](#)

Council Member Miller-Foushee reminded residents that a May 4th march to support affordable housing would begin at 2:00 p.m. at the Peace and Justice Plaza and then proceed to the Hargraves Center.

0.08 Manager Blue Regarding Green Growth Lunch & Learn.[\[24-0262\]](#)

Town Manager Chris Blue said that a "Lunch and Learn" event on environmental tools and green infrastructure would take place on May 8th at noon at the Chapel Hill Public Library.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON PRINTED AGENDA AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Petitions and other similar requests submitted by the public, whether written or oral,

are heard at the beginning of each regular meeting. Except in the case of urgency and unanimous vote of the Council members present, petitions will not be acted upon at the time presented. After receiving a petition, the Council shall, by simple motion, dispose of it as follows: consideration at a future regular Council meeting; referral to another board or committee for study and report; referral to the Town Manager for investigation and report; receive for information. See the Status of Petitions to Council webpage to track the petition. Receiving or referring of a petition does not constitute approval, agreement, or consent.

0.09 PJ Miller thanked Council for Support of Affordable Housing.

[\[24-0263\]](#)

Chapel Hill resident PJ Miller described how obtaining a home through Community Home Trust had changed her life and thanked the Council for supporting affordable housing.

This item was received as presented.

0.10 Multiple Speakers Request Affordable Housing Bond.

[\[24-0264\]](#)

Four Chapel Hill residents spoke in favor of a 2024 affordable housing (AH) bond referendum. Daren Campbell discussed the connection between safety and AH and said that a \$35 million bond would go a long way toward creating a more integrated community. Hannah Moore and Nathan Jones asked the Council to raise the bond amount to more than \$20 million, and Ms. Moore described the effect that having secure housing had on individuals. Natalie Flow asked the Council to allocate \$20 million for AH and pointed out that homeless people continue to live in Town while others transition in and out.

George Barrett, director of the Marion Cheek Jackson Center, read a statement from local activist Heather Nash about the need to get the AH crisis under control. Ms. Nash said that a \$20 million AH bond was the non-negotiable bare minimum and asked the Council to raise that amount to \$50 million.

This item was received as presented.

CONSENT

Items of a routine nature will be placed on the Consent Agenda to be voted on in a block. Any item may be removed from the Consent Agenda by request of the Mayor or any Council Member.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Ryan, seconded by Council Member Berry, that R-1 be adopted, which approved the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

1. Approve all Consent Agenda Items. [\[24-0226\]](#)
This resolution(s) and/or ordinance(s) was adopted and/or enacted.
2. Adopt a Resolution Supporting a Grant Application to the Governor's Highway Safety Program. [\[24-0227\]](#)
This resolution(s) and/or ordinance(s) was adopted and/or enacted.
3. Adopt Minutes from May 3, 2021 and March 1, 2023 and June 21, 2023 and September 13, and September 20, 2023 Meetings. [\[24-0228\]](#)
This resolution(s) and/or ordinance(s) was adopted and/or enacted.

DISCUSSION

4. Presentation: Recommended Budget for FY 2024-25. [\[24-0229\]](#)

Town Manager Chris Blue presented the Recommended FY 2025 Budget, which reflected conversations that staff and Council had been having over several months. The total budget was \$156,259,106, with the General Fund accounting for about \$89.4 million of that, he said. He noted that \$2,886,155 that had been included for AH represented a 4 percent increase.

Mr. Blue proposed a 2-cent tax increase (1.5-cent for the General Fund/.5-cent for the Transit Fund), which would bring the total property tax rate up to 59.2 cents. He presented a chart showing the Town's tax rate history since FY 2009 and pointed out that the rate had remained essentially the same because previous Councils had chosen to roll back to revenue neutral during revaluation years.

Mr. Blue discussed the positive impact that a 2-cent tax increase could have on Town operations and priorities. He explained the effect that it would have on taxpayers at various property valuation levels. He recommended committing \$100,000 in the budget for tax assistance to low-income taxpayers.

Mr. Blue said that the proposed budget included a 6 percent cost-of-living pay adjustment for Town employees. He then discussed the importance of having a well-maintained, complete Town fleet and showed a list of needed items, such as vehicles and street resurfacing equipment.

Mr. Blue addressed the status of and general outlook for the Town's Enterprise Funds and proposed that Transit Partners (UNC, Carrboro, Chapel Hill) increase each of their contributions. He then reported that the Parking Fund was down 9.5 percent, but that Public Housing and Stormwater were up by 4.3 percent and 7.3 percent, respectively.

Mr. Blue said that the Recommended FY 2025 Budget would address

Council priorities and advance its Complete Community goals. The budget addressed increased Transit costs and would bridge the gap to next year's property revaluation, he said. He outlined a proposed schedule, which included a possible work session on May 8th, a public hearing on May 15th, and a Council vote on June 5, 2024.

The Council confirmed with Director of Business Management Amy Oland that a .5-cent increase for Transit would be the Town's contribution and that its Transit Partners UNC and Carrboro would provide correlating contributions as well.

Council Member Berry asked if more than \$100,000 was needed to help low-income taxpayers, and Mr. Blue replied that staff was still collecting information on how many of last year's applications had been unfunded. When asked about assistance for low-income renters, he said that staff had not yet figured out a way to address that need. Mayor Anderson pointed out that 60 percent of renters were rent-burdened and that small businesses had been struggling as well. She asked staff to provide more information regarding the impact of a tax increase on those two groups.

The Council verified with Ms. Oland that a 2019 study had indicated a need for \$2.5 million, annually, for Town streets and sidewalks. Several Council members commented on the need for street repairs, and Mr. Blue said that he would soon provide new information on Town roads that he had received from the Public Works Department.

Britta Eklund, Community Home Trust (CHT) board chair, spoke about the need for more AH in Town. She pointed out, though, that CHT expected its inventory to almost double in five years thanks to the Town's steadfast support for inclusionary housing and AH initiatives.

Deneane Stanley, a Chapel Hill resident, shared her personal experience of finally being able to purchase an affordable home in Town with the help of CHT. She asked the Council to provide resources for CHT to continue its work.

Miriam Lieberman and Bridget Pemberton-Smith, Pro Bono Counseling Network board members, thanked the Town for its proposed allocation.

Emily Powell and Robina Meek, chair and vice chair of the Town's Employee Forum, spoke about the increasing difficulty of trying to make ends meet and said that the proposed 6 percent salary increase would show Town employees that their work was valued.

Mayor pro tem Ryan expressed concern about the effect of a tax increase on the ability of people to live in Chapel Hill. She emphasized the importance of having the Town's current catch-up budgeting process convert to a sustainable one. She said that some budget items might qualify for federal grants, and Mayor Anderson agreed that the Town had a

unique opportunity and should do all that it could to leverage federal funds.

Mayor Anderson and Mayor pro tem Ryan both recommended having a third party review the East Rosemary Parking Deck process in order to determine lessons learned. The Mayor then thanked the Manager and staff for their hard work on the budget and emphasized the importance of having all Town work fit into the Complete Community strategy.

This item was received as presented.

5. Close the Legislative Hearing and Consider a Land Use Management Ordinance Text Amendment to the Stormwater Management Requirements.

[\[24-0230\]](#)

Senior Stormwater Engineer Sue Burke presented a response to a March 24, 2024, request from Council and community members to look more closely at the impacts of a Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) text amendment (TA) on smaller projects. She said that a proposed revised ordinance (revised O-A) would limit the TA to larger projects, such as Conditional Zoning and major Special Use Permits.

Ms. Burke said that enacting revised O-A would allow the Council to immediately move forward with the TA while giving staff time to develop criteria to address impacts on smaller projects. Later, another TA for those projects could be presented to the Council as part of the LUMO rewrite, she said. She recommended that the Council close the legislative hearing, adopt Resolution A, and enact Revised Ordinance A.

Ian Scott, representing the Chamber for a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro, said that the Chamber and the Homebuilders Association appreciated that the proposed amendment would go a long way to ease concerns regarding small and infill sites. However, the tradeoff was that increasing stormwater standards would increase housing costs as well, he said. He explained that the new standards would likely increase the size of water detention facilities thereby reducing the number of units and increasing the remaining unit's cost.

Mayor pro tem Ryan thanked staff for figuring out a good solution that would take some of the burden off smaller sites. She said that underground retention for larger projects would allow developers to meet higher standards without reducing project size. Council Member McCullough agreed and expressed hope that the TA would provide more incentives to redevelop sites that were already quite impervious.

The Council voted unanimously to approve the TA, which Mayor Anderson characterized as a great compromise. The Mayor thanked Ms. Burke for her work and said that the Council would refer concerns about smaller projects to the Town Manager and Planning Director to address in the

LUMO rewrite. The Town was doing great work on both Climate Action and Housing, the Mayor exclaimed.

This Council closed the hearing.

A motion was made by Council Member Stegman, seconded by Council Member Miller-Foushee, that the Council adopted R-4. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Council Member Stegman, seconded by Council Member Berry, that the Council enacted O-1 as amended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

6. Update the Town's Traffic Calming Policy.

[\[24-0253\]](#)

Mobility and Greenways Manager Bergen Watterson gave a PowerPoint update on the Town's new traffic-calming policy. She pointed out that traffic-calming was part of Vision Zero safety work in the Town's Complete Community strategy. Vision Zero included lowering speed limits and adding traffic-calming and safety installations, she explained. She said that that Town's the new policy was data-driven and proactive while still being reactive to residents' concerns and complaints. She recommended that the Council adopt Resolution 6, which would adopt the updated policy.

Ms. Watterson provided details on the new data-driven, multi-departmental approach, which included a new tracking system, a clearing house for speed and volume reports, a web page with a story map, and a traffic-calming dashboard. She said that the Town's recently hired Vision Zero coordinator would be the point person for data collection and the dashboard.

Ms. Watterson addressed the challenges and opportunities of the new approach. She pointed out that doing evaluations required much time and resources. She said that traffic-calming could divide neighborhoods and that the goal was to have a staff-driven approach that would strengthen rather than divide communities. Grant funding had enabled staff to experiment with bollards, modular medians and various types of signage, and monthly walk audits had led to the collection of more qualitative data, she said.

Council Member Stegman and Ms. Watterson discussed the goal of having a more data-driven, rather than complaint-driven, process. Council Member Stegman praised the improved system and expressed hope that repeated pedestrian incidents would be a primary focus.

Council Member Miller-Foushee asked how the Police Department made its

decisions about where to do speed checks, and Ms. Watterson replied that most speed enforcement was on larger, faster roads. Manager Blue added that most enforcement was in areas with the highest speeds or where there had been complaints.

Council Member Berry verified with Ms. Watterson that crosswalk safety at schools was a priority for data collection and that her department would soon select a consultant to help with a Safe Routes to School action plan. Ms. Watterson said that staff members frequently assessed Town crosswalks and that the Town had removed at least one installation that was not working.

Council Member Searing confirmed that staff would investigate a crosswalk at the Rossburn Way/Culbreth Road intersection where there had been speeding issues. In response to a question from Council Member Sharp, Ms. Watterson said that she thought she had adequate staff but not enough data collection devices.

Mayor Anderson praised staff's more systematic and data-driven approach. She verified that resident groups would be allowed to add their own aesthetics to traffic-calming devices in their neighborhoods. She talked with staff about the potential for doing some tactical urbanism on Department of Transportation roads and about a "Safe Streets for All" grant application that staff planned to submit.

A motion was made by Council Member Stegman, seconded by Council Member Miller-Foushee, that the Council adopted R-6. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.