



# TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

## Town Council Meeting Minutes - Draft

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

Mayor Pam Hemminger  
Mayor pro tem Michael Parker  
Council Member Jessica Anderson  
Council Member Allen Buansi

Council Member Hongbin Gu  
Council Member Tai Huynh  
Council Member Amy Ryan  
Council Member Karen Stegman

**Wednesday, April 1, 2020**                      **7:00 PM**                      **RM 110 | Council Chamber**

### Roll Call

**Present:** 8 - Mayor Pam Hemminger, Mayor pro tem Michael Parker, Council Member Jessica Anderson, Council Member Allen Buansi, Council Member Hongbin Gu, Council Member Karen Stegman, Council Member Tai Huynh, and Council Member Amy Ryan

### Other Attendees

Remote Participants: Town Manager Maurice Jones, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey, Communications Director/Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver.

Physical Participants: Deputy Town Manager Flo Miller, Executive Director for Technology Scott Clark, Police Chief and Executive Director for Community Safety Chris Blue, Fire Chief Vence Harris, Emergency Manager Kelly Draden.

### Virtual Meeting Notification

Town Council members will attend and participate in this meeting remotely, through internet access, and will not physically attend. Members of the public may live stream the meeting and view it over the Town's cable television channel access and are encouraged to do so. View Council meetings live at <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> – and on Chapel Hill Gov-TV ([townofchapelhill.org/GovTV](http://townofchapelhill.org/GovTV)).

In addition, there is an opportunity for the public to view the meeting by coming to the Council Chambers in Town Hall. However, because of the stay at home directives issued regarding crowds and social distancing, there will be limited seating available at Town Hall and it may be necessary to turn people away. The Public is urged to find other locations and ways to observe this meeting.

### OPENING

Mayor Hemminger opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m. and explained that it was being held remotely because of a Townwide stay-at-home order during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meeting notices would be posted on the Town Calendar, materials would be put online, and Council meetings would be streamed live on Channel 18 and then posted online, she said. She pointed out that the public could always contact Council Members via email or phone while the stay-at-home order was in place.

Mayor Hemminger said that Town staff had been working with local, state and federal partners to institute changes that would keep the community safe. She said that mayors had been collaborating locally and nationally to share best practices during the COVID-19 health crisis.

April 1 is Census Day

[\[20-0229\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger urged all Town residents to fill out their census forms and turn them in. She stressed the importance of having everyone counted so that the community could get the services and legislative representation it desired.

### DISCUSSION

1. Reconsider a Proposal for an Advisory Board Membership Policy Amendment.

[\[20-0228\]](#)

Town Manager Maurice Jones gave a PowerPoint presentation on a resolution to allow Town advisory boards to meet remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolution would reinstate and amend a pilot program that had run from March 2017 to June 2018, he said. He explained that the amended policy would not apply to quasi-judicial boards such as the Board of Adjustment and the Historic District Commission. It would only be for reviewing and making recommendations on projects, not for approving or denying them, he said.

Mr. Jones proposed that the policy include a quorum count requirement. He recommended that the policy stay in effect during the duration of the Council's emergency stay-at-home order and that it supersede any inconsistent provisions of the Town's Procedures Manual.

The Council confirmed with Mr. Jones that the public could still participate in board discussions by providing comments via [publicmeeting@townofchapelhill](mailto:publicmeeting@townofchapelhill). Staff was in the process of setting up a phone line for that as well, he said.

Council Members confirmed with Mr. Jones that staff was in the process of determining whether any projects needed to come before the Council within a certain period of time. Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos said that the proposed adjustment would help keep the Town from getting too far

off schedule with development projects.

Mayor Hemminger said that the Council preferred to delay as many projects as possible until it was safe to meet face-to-face again. However, a project such as the East Rosemary Street development was under time pressure due to its location in an Opportunity Zone, she pointed out. She said that the Attorney General's Office would inform the Town within the next week or so about how it must address that project.

The Council confirmed with Mr. Karpinos that the risk of being challenged by a developer would be higher if the Town began holding remote hearings on zoning matters, Special-Use permits, or quasi-judicial legislative matters. The state was still struggling with that issue, but he did not think the Council could act on such items remotely as the law was currently written, he said.

In response to a question from the Council about a Land Use Management Ordinance statement that an application would be automatically approved if action were not taken within a particular time period, Mr. Karpinos said that the Town would consider that if the issue arose.

Council Members confirmed that the staff's goal was to settle on one virtual platform for all boards and that staff had been working through conflicts among board schedules. They also confirmed that staff had been working with board members to determine individual comfort levels with virtual meetings. Staff would schedule rehearsals ahead of time so that board members could adjust to the new platform, Mr. Jones said.

Council Members asked Mr. Jones to bring back options for allowing board members to return to normal meetings at their individual paces after the stay-at-home order is lifted. They verified with Mr. Karpinos that board members would be able to continue participating remotely as long as there was a quorum physically present.

Mr. Karpinos proposed changing a portion of the resolution from "shall be reinstated" to "shall be reconsidered by the Council at that time", which he said would allow the Council to consider such factors when the stay-at-home order was rescinded.

The Council discussed how the stay-at-home order would not end until the Mayor rescinded it, regardless of what other governmental bodies decided to do. They spoke in favor of having staff read public comments aloud during meetings, so that they would be as authentic as possible and part of the public record.

Mr. Karpinos proposed including the following clause: "Be it further resolved that these meetings shall provide an opportunity for the public to

participate in and comment during the meeting by remote methods including: email, telephone, and other methods to the extent practical."

Council Members encouraged staff to use a platform that would allow the public to call into meetings by phone. They proposed that virtual meetings happen after 5:00 p.m. in order to allow participation by those who work regular hours. They also noted the importance of notifying residents who do not have internet or email access.

#### Notes on Upcoming Meetings

[\[20-0230\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger said there would be no work session next week and no Economic Sustainability meeting on Friday. We would be working on this going forward, she said, and will keep you informed as we work with all of our partners. She thanked all involved.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.