



# TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

## Town Council

### Meeting Minutes - Final

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

Mayor Pam Hemminger  
Mayor pro tem Karen Stegman  
Council Member Jessica Anderson  
Council Member Camille Berry  
Council Member Tai Huynh

Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee  
Council Member Michael Parker  
Council Member Amy Ryan  
Council Member Adam Searing

**Monday, October 3, 2022**

**6:30 PM**

**Library Meeting Room B**

#### 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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919-969-5105.

#### In-Person Meeting Notification

The Chapel Hill Town Council will meet in person for the Meeting. Public attendance is welcome. The Town of Chapel Hill wants to know more about who participates in its programs and processes, including Town Council meetings. Please participate in a voluntary demographic survey <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/demosurvey>.

We will not live stream the event, but will provide the Post-Meeting Video <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/councilvideo>

#### Parking

• Parking is available at the Library lots. The Library is served by CL Route, D Route, F Route, and GoTriangle Routes of Chapel Hill Transit.

#### Entry and COVID-19 Protocols

• Meeting Room B is to the right from the main entrance.  
• Visitors and employees will self-screen. Do not enter if you have these symptoms: Fever, chills, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, headache, muscle pain

- Attendees are encouraged to wear masks and will sit physically distanced.

## OPENING

Mayor Hemminger called the work session to order at 6:30 p.m. and reviewed the agenda. She pointed out that Item 3, regarding the Legion Road property, was being postponed. Many pickleball advocates were present at the start of the meeting, but they left shortly after the Mayor explained that there would be no public discussion or voting at the work sessions.

## ROLL CALL

All Council Members were present.

**Present:** 9 - Mayor Pam Hemminger, Mayor pro tem Karen Stegman, Council Member Jessica Anderson, Council Member Camille Berry, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Tai Huynh, Council Member Michael Parker, Council Member Amy Ryan, and Council Member Adam Searing

## OTHER ATTENDEES

Town Manager Maurice Jones, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Town Attorney Ann Anderson, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Parks and Recreation Director Phil Fleishmann, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Atuya Cornwell, Senior Manager Park Planning and Operations Kevin Robinson, Parks Principal Planner Marcia Purvis, Senior Project Manager Sarah Poulton, Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer Shenekia Weeks, Housing and Community Assistant Director Sarah Vinas, Fire Inspector Justin Matthews, Police Officer Bradley, Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey, Assistant Town Clerk Brenton Hodge and Communications and Public Affairs Director/Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

0.01 Mayor Hemminger's Thank You to Front-Line Workers for Help During Hurricane Ian.

[\[22-0732\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger thanked the Town Manager and front-line employees for their hard work before, during, and after Hurricane Ian.

0.02 Mayor Hemminger Regarding Council Committee on Economic Sustainability.

[\[22-0733\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger announced that the Council Committee on Economic Sustainability would meet virtually on October 7, 2022, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. Information was on the Town's website, she said.

0.03 Mayor Hemminger Regarding Arts Markets and Festifall.

[\[22-0734\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger noted that Festifall would include a series of art markets this year. Those would be held from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. on

Saturdays at 140 West Franklin Street throughout the month of October, she said.

## AGENDA ITEMS

### 1. Splash Pad and Inclusive Playground Feasibility Analysis Update.

[\[22-0729\]](#)

Mayor Hemminger urged the Council to consider previous conversations about increasing the Penny for Housing and allocating the resulting \$1 million per year for Parks, Recreation, and Greenway facilities. She said that the Council would address that idea again during its upcoming budget discussions, and she suggested keeping it in mind when discussing Town facilities.

Senior Manager of Planning and Park Operations Kevin Robinson presented preliminary findings from a feasibility analysis of constructing splash pads and inclusive playgrounds in Town. The study had begun in response to a 2021 citizens' petition and the Town had contracted with Coulter Jewel Thames (CJT) and 80 West to take an expanded look at various sites, he said. He discussed the study's criteria and described the project in the context of Town goals and community interest.

Principal Planner with the Parks and Recreation Department Marsha Purvis said that a team had looked at the following sites: Cedar Falls Park, Community Center Park, Hargraves Center, Homestead Park, Southern Community Park, Umstead Park, and Eastwood and Oakwood public housing communities. She showed photos of an area at Homestead Park that the team thought might be a suitable location. Additionally, an area near Eastwood Public Housing could be good for a combination pocket/splash park and several other areas were suitable for that as well, she said.

Wendi Ramsden, a landscape architect with CJT, presented a comparison of potential sites and Cory Anderson, principal/owner at 80 West, showed examples of destination splash pads and discussed their potential operational costs. Mr. Anderson said that three Town parks (Community Center, Hargraves, Homestead) would be suitable sites because they had aquatic facilities on site. Smaller pocket/splash parks were typically less than 2,000 square feet and could accommodate 60-70 children, he said.

The Council and Mr. Anderson discussed annual operating costs and savings that would result from water being recirculated. They said that Cedar Falls Park was a candidate for a small facility with only a few water features because there were no water and sewer facilities there. Mr. Anderson said that Umstead Park, Southern Community Park, Community Center Park, Homestead Park, Hargraves Center, and Eastwood were all good sites for pocket parks and that some of those could accommodate mid-size splash pads.

Ms. Ramsden defined "inclusive" playground as one that allowed all children to play with their peers regardless of their physical, social, or cognitive needs. She gave examples of playground equipment that inclusive playgrounds would need and explained how Cedar Falls Park, Southern Community Park, and Umstead Park playgrounds could be made more accessible and inclusive.

Ms. Ramsden provided individual cost estimates (ranging from \$350,000 to \$2.2 million) for a large destination splash pad, a small destination splash pad, a pocket park with spray features, and a new inclusive playground with spray features. She provided operating cost estimates as well and shared the estimated costs of adding dedicated water and sewer, building new changing rooms, adding accessibility, adding bio-retention, adding parking, and more.

Ms. Ramsden said that the next step would be to narrow the choices down to individual parks. CJT would then develop concept plans and hold public meetings with community engagement, she said.

Council Member Ryan reported that the Parks and the Greenways Commission had preferred refitting across Town and thought that a couple of medium size splash pads in different neighborhoods would work best. Commission members had emphasized the importance of equity, had recommended saving money by recirculating water, and had stressed the importance of having bike and pedestrian connections to the sites, she said.

The majority of Council Members said they agreed that locating splash pads where pools already exist and recirculating that water was the best approach. They said that the Hargraves Center and Homestead Park seemed most appropriate, and some mentioned the Community Center as well. Council Members recommended having small and medium splash pads at multiple sites rather than building one, large, destination facility.

Ms. Ramsden and the Council agreed that a couple of sprayers would be appropriate for parks such as Cedar Falls and Southern Community. The Council stressed the importance of making all of the Town's playgrounds inclusive. There was support for creating a fully inclusive playground with upgraded equipment, and several said that Hargraves would be a good location for that.

Mayor pro tem Stegman recommended that the Council narrow the options before engaging the community in discussion, and Ms. Ramsden described a plan to show the public summaries of each park and have them place stickers on their top three choices. Mayor pro tem Stegman proposed that community conversations be based on the decisions that the Council was

currently making, and Council Member Miller-Foushee stressed the importance of including public housing residents in such community discussions.

Council Member Miller-Foushee expressed shock at the cost estimates and proposed starting with only one facility, since the Town had many competing needs. Council Member Berry agreed and mentioned infrastructure needs at Fire and Police facilities in particular. She was not convinced that the Town should invest in a splash pad or an adaptive playground, she said.

Mayor Hemminger pointed out that a process regarding the Fire Station was expected to begin soon and that the Police Station issue was currently being addressed. The Town could have a sustainable path for improving all of its facilities with a combination of expected extra Town funds, ARPA money, and perhaps a bond, she said.

Mayor Hemminger pointed out that the demand for facilities such as splash pads and pickleball courts had increased after COVID-19 because people were eager to be outside again. She mentioned several advantages that splash pads had over swimming pools and said she agreed with the majority of Council Members' recommendation for a medium size splash pad and more than one, if possible. She said that Hargraves and Homestead seemed like appropriate sites to her. She pointed out that both were walkable and served many people.

Mayor Hemminger said that there had been a mix of Council comments regarding the inclusive playground. She was in favor of making existing playgrounds inclusive rather than creating new ones, she said. She proposed that future discussions include which projects could be moved along quickly, if the Council were to decide to fund them.

This item was received as presented.

**2. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Town Department Project Update.**

[\[22-0730\]](#)

Business Management Director Amy Oland gave an update on the Town's plan for allocating the nearly \$7 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that had been awarded to the Town. She said that the Town was currently in the project assessment phase and staff hoped to present a final slate of projects on either October 19 or November 3, 2022.

Ms. Oland presented information on projects for which funds had not yet been completely allocated. These included: Parks and Recreation facilities, Bike Pedestrian and Greenways infrastructure, Town facilities, Downtown revitalization, and digital access. She explained that about half of the \$2.5 million that the Council had set aside for Parks and

Recreation had been approved, which left \$1.35 million for additional allocation. She said that \$500,000 remained in the Bike, Pedestrian and Greenway Infrastructure category and that none of the \$1 million that had been set aside for Downtown Revitalization had been allocated. There was also a total of \$2.85 million remaining for Town department projects, she said.

Ms. Oland reported on the status of projects for which the Council had already approved funding. She said that progress was being made on several Parks and Recreation projects, and she provided cost estimates for others. Bike, Pedestrian and Greenways projects would range from \$500,000 to \$1 million, she said, and she presented additional information on some of those.

Ms. Oland said that the Town facility maintenance needs that had been identified in the five-year budget would cost an estimated \$11.4 million. She said that a Homestead Aquatic Center HVAC project was underway and would cost \$1.2 million. She gave a list of potential projects for the \$1 million that had been allocated for Downtown Revitalization but said that staff needed more input from the Council on which ones to fund. She said that \$300,000 had already been approved for the Chapel Hill Public Library's audiovisual system but that a staff proposal for digital inclusion/literacy programs and broadband infrastructure at public housing neighborhoods would require a reallocation of funds from some other category.

The Council verified that a proposed allocation for the Teen Center would address basic repairs and that staff could develop cost estimates for more than that when the Council's interests were more clearly determined. Mayor Hemminger mentioned that Carrboro was planning to build a teen center and that Chapel Hill could look into possibly partnering on that.

Council Member Anderson confirmed with Ms. Oland that the list of Greenway projects had been put together before the Town's Complete Communities initiative had gotten underway. She proposed looking at those projects through that new paradigm, and Town Manager Maurice Jones offered to find out how quickly the Parks and Recreation Department could provide new cost estimates.

Council Member Miller-Foushee asked for an update on the Historic Town Hall renovation, and Mayor Hemminger replied that several ideas needed to be vetted before any renovation plans would be brought to Council.

The Council discussed the absence of restrooms in the Downtown area resulting from the Wallace Deck demolition, and Senior Project Manager Sarah Poulton said that staff had been looking at that problem and would be discussing it again in a couple of days. Mayor pro tem Stegman proposed that staff obtain information on restroom facilities that the City of Portland, Oregon had built for \$90,000. She said that the Chapel Hill

Downtown Partnership's director was in favor of such an option.

Mayor Hemminger asked Ms. Oland if she thought the Town would see an excess in fund balance this year, and Ms. Oland said she would know more about that in two or three weeks. The Mayor commented on how a possible overage might be used to supplement ARPA funds.

Council Member Parker asked about the possibility of ARPA funds being used for costs associated with the Town taking over Franklin Street from the state, and Ms. Poulton replied that she would address that topic in an October 12th presentation to the Council.

Mayor Hemminger said that the Town of Hillsborough intended to use all of its ARPA money on its water facility and Orange County was planning to use its ARPA funds on broadband. In response to a question from the Council, she said that the County's investment in broadband would likely extend to the Town's public housing, but she would know for certain at a later time.

Mayor Hemminger pointed out that U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellin had talked about the next Federal Inflation Reduction Act and money for environmental issues during her recent visit to Chapel Hill. The Mayor said she believed more funding would be coming, and she emphasized the importance of knowing what the Town's needs were in order to make good, sustainable choices.

Council Member Miller-Foushee spoke against using ARPA funds for a splash pad or skate park, stating that she preferred to put it toward repair and renovation of existing facilities. Mayor pro tem Stegman agreed, and Council Member Berry emphasized the importance of directing that money toward those who had been impacted by COVID-19.

Council Members Anderson and Ryan said they supported building a splash pad, which Council Member Anderson characterized as a one-time response to people's needs and desires to be outside following the pandemic. There were other sources of funding, such as public/private partnerships or increasing taxes, that could be used for ongoing maintenance, she said.

Council Member Huynh recommended looking at current facility needs first and then investing in items such as the skate park if money was left over. Council Member Searing said that the Town ought to do big projects, such as splash pads and/or adaptive playgrounds with the ARPA money.

The Mayor and Council emphasized the importance of rebuilding public restroom facilities in the Downtown area. They agreed that the Teen Center should be made habitable and that they needed to determine where its long-term space would be. They said that planning for greenways should include a Complete Community (CC) lens, and they

proposed that the Raleigh Road multi-use path be part of the CC pilot project. Council Member Anderson stressed the importance of getting that CC pilot funded and said that ARPA money seemed like a reasonable source.

Council Member Ryan questioned spending \$11.4 million on maintenance of Town facilities but said that anything critical would obviously need to be addressed. She asked what the Green and Clean Team did for \$150,000 a year and expressed a preference for funding one-time projects. Mayor Hemminger said that \$300,000 of the Downtown Partnership's \$1 million allocation had been earmarked for the Clean and Green Team but it had not yet been passed on. Discussions were being held about possible sustainable alternatives, she said.

Mayor Hemminger recommended that the Downtown Partnership and Downtown Together submit a list of options and priorities. She reminded the Council that it had originally intended to use ARPA funds for "transformational" projects. Several items fit that category, but the Town also needed to fix what it already had, she pointed out. She mentioned the possibility of issuing bonds for Parks and Recreation and/or Affordable Housing and talked about the potential for public/private partnerships, state funds, and matching grants as well.

Mayor Hemminger said that she wanted to see a plan for renovating Peace and Justice Plaza. She then characterized the Council's opinion as mixed, with some wanting to do something big and transformational and others wanting to take care of what already existed. She understood that debate and wanted to find answers for both, she said. She proposed that the Manager's Office provide more information on realistic options. She confirmed with Ms. Oland that ARPA funds needed to be committed by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026 and asked staff to bring back information on which projects could, and could not, make those deadlines.

Mr. Jones said that money had been set aside to address current issues at the Teen Center and perhaps a feasibility study similar to the one that was underway for a splash pad. Mayor pro tem Parker suggested that such a study include the possibility of partnering with Orange County, the school system in particular.

Ms. Poulton presented three scenarios for ARPA projects with community partners. Each totaled approximately \$1 million and had been developed based on feedback from the Council's September 19, 2022, work session, she said.

Scenario 1, the highest scoring projects across the board, included: Farmer Foodshare, Transplanting Traditions, EmPOWERment Inc, TABLE, Refugee Community Partners, Compass Center, and El Centro Hispano.



Scenario 2, the highest scoring projects that were also most specific to pandemic relief, included: Farmer Foodshare, EmPOWERment, Inc., El Centro Hispano, Orange County Partnership for Young Children, and OWASA's water bill forgiveness program.

Scenario 3, the highest scoring and financially sustainable, included: Farmers Foodshare, Orange County Partnership for Young Children, OWASA, PORCH, Transplanting Traditions, two Refugee Community Partners programs, EmPOWERment, Inc.

Ms. Poulton said that community project ideas from Town departments had been delayed but there had been general support for putting \$500,000 toward projects that the Town would execute but the community would vote on. She said that Affordable Housing and Community Connections was continuing to organize a common funding application for \$2.5 million and would bring that forward soon. Some of that money could go toward community partner projects, if needed, she said.

Mayor Hemminger reminded the Council to not comment on any project where they sat on its board.

Council Members discussed how some projects were included in more than one scenario, and Mayor Hemminger pointed out that Scenarios 1 and 3 totaled more than \$1 million each while Scenario 2 totaled less than \$1 million. Council Member Ryan said that doing all of the projects listed would total far more than \$1.4 million.

Mayor pro tem Stegman asked why the Compass Center had not received a higher score on pandemic specificity, since it addressed domestic violence which had greatly increased during the COVID-19. Ms. Oland replied that the Compass Center had not specifically linked a general increase in domestic violence to the pandemic on its application. Other Council Members agreed that the Compass Center needed to be looked at again.

Council Members Parker and Searing said they trusted staff to make the final cut on applicants, but other Council Members discussed preferences and ultimately agreed that Scenario 2, plus the Compass Center, would meet the Town's goals for balance and diversity of services and populations served.

Mayor Hemminger pointed out that Transporting Traditions was a program that helped refugees become more self-sufficient. She said that El Centro Hispano was asking for the largest amount. She did not want to choose between applicants but was interested in finding a balance that would allow the Town to cover more projects, she said.

Mr. Jones confirmed that the Council was amenable to going over \$1

million, and Ms. Poulton reminded the Council that some of the Affordable Housing's \$2.5 million in ARPA funds could be used for any overage.

This item was received and filed, and continued to the October 19, 2022 council meeting.

3. Future Use of the American Legion Property. (No Attachment)

[\[22-0731\]](#)

\*\*TO ALLOW FOR ADEQUATE TIME FOR DISCUSSION ON THIS IMPORTANT COMMUNITY ISSUE, THIS ITEM HAS BEEN DEFERRED TO AN UNDETERMINED, FUTURE DATE.\*\*

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.