



# 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 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

Friday, February 3, 2023 3:30 PM Sheraton Hotel

### 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.

### ROLL CALL

**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

Interim Town Manager Chris Blue, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Town Attorney Ann Anderson, Assistant to the Town Manager Ross Tompkins, Mayoral Aide Jeanne Brown, Dispute Settlement Center, Meeting Facilitator Maggie Ellis Chotas, Communications Manager Ran Northam, and Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey.

### Welcome and Picture

Mayor Hemminger called the meeting to order at 3:48 p.m.

Ms. Chotas reviewed the agenda and materials. She noted appreciation to the organizing committee: Council Members Miller-Foushee, Ryan, Stegman, and Mayor Hemminger.

Mayor Hemminger briefly checked in on Mayor-Council communications. She

noted the Friday email that has compiled upcoming events and information on larger ongoing items. A Council member affirmed that the compiled upcoming events were helpful, and a second member sought something more structured to track Town projects. Council Member Huynh arrived at 3:58 p.m. Council members gathered for a group photo.

### Discuss & Consider Ground Rules for the Retreat

Ms. Chotas revied the ground rules for the group discussions as described on the agenda. The Council members provided the following response to the opening exercise prompt, What's a time you felt Council working together well and making a positive difference for the community?

- Made big policy changes. Developed a high-level Council vision for how we want the community to grow.
- Not always pretty or easy. Taken on important decisions and work for the Town. Compromised to work together.
- The Trinity Court project: long time need and came together well.
- Addressing a full spectrum of housing needs: partnerships with Interfaith Council, Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness, Trinity Court, Homestead Gardens, established metric of need to build 500 houses per year.
- Complete Community
- Affordable housing commitments, recognize need to improve the entitlement process, added expedited review process, which helps organizations that help the community.
- Faced with crisis, discussed with candor, which was important. Good attention to need. Took care of the process and those involved.
- Affordable housing and Complete Community work. I know what other individuals are already focused on, so I can focus on something different. The way we've gone about it is not always well.
- Making decisions on American Rescue Plan Act funding and Excess Fund Balance. Appreciate commitment to support downtown, which helps the broader community. Agree that knowing some areas are covered by others, I can focus on something different. Climate change, infrastructure, business goals. We are on same path for goals, but on different path for the way to resolve.

Ms. Chotas asked Council members to reflect on what they heard during the activity. They shared that in general, the Council has similar goals. However, individuals feel differently about how to achieve those goals. This causes bumpy conversations and tensions. They also acknowledged that the tension could cause the Council to think about many aspects rather than just the easy aspects in decision making. Council members acknowledged that there was some trust, in that they counted on others to focus on different topic areas. They recognized that the Council has taken on a lot and started some transformational change, which takes courage, foresight, and leadership to try, and isn't always easy.

Ms. Chotas helped the Council to explore the Council member's interpersonal relationships and things that may challenge meeting the Council's identified goals. 'Somethings' identified were things that cause mistrust, such as

inequitable or inconsistent information sharing, shaming, being disrespectful, not listening, factions, inequitably standing up for fellow council members when community members overstep, inability to dialogue, lack of transparency, acting on non-priorities, overstepping boundaries with staff, overwhelming staff, and general disagreement on how to proceed. Ms. Chotas appreciated the open dialogue, before the Council took a break at 4:56-5:07 p.m.

### Working Together

Ms. Chotas reflected on the last two rounds. She asked Council members to help identify what to Hold on... Let go... and do More of.. by write 1 or 2 ideas per category. Council members broke into small groups to discuss the ideas and report back to the group.

Hold on... what's working well, we want to keep about how council is collaborating and communicating?

- Council is hardworking and really cares-members read packets, ask questions
- Discernment rooted in intent to meet agreed upon goals
- Briefings in small groups are valuable to learn what others think
- Council briefings provide opportunities to communicate and gain understanding together and hear each other's perspectives
- Focusing on vision, goals-big picture for Town
- Vision-y focus, staying high -level and strategic
- Focus on our shared goals and vision. Re-affirming those.
- Shared vision
- Alignment on goals and vision
- Acknowledgement that staff resources aren't infinite and we need to prioritize

Let Go ... what isn't working about how we are communicating and collaborating, we would like to STOP doing?

- Fear
- Personal attacks
- Criticizing decisions to the public
- Undermining our staff
- Showing of favoritism and potential gate keeping... we need to put in a more democratic process for boards/commission assignments.
- How we structure and do work sessions (need to allow more dialogue)
- Lack of discussion across all members with each other privately and publicly
- Agenda items that are not part of Council-identified priorities
- Mayor and Council giving direction to staff
- Getting into the weeds on Development Projects
- Less time on development review project by project
- No Council Members/Mayor will meet with developers

More of ... what would we like to see GROW/more of

- Notes and report-outs on relevant meetings
- Ensure equitable info to all Council members
- Responding back in a timely manner when requested

- Manager's Office/Staff responsibility to disseminating information and minutes to Council.
- Transparent processes for project/initiative-tracking and agenda-setting
- Clarity around Council rules-side meetings with applicants, how we share information with the community, comms with staff, how we include everyone on council in group requests (petitions, position statements)
- Getting out of factions/being open
- Use of agreed-on tools for consideration of new ideas
- More time for addressing pressing policy issues, e.g., homelessness, parks, scope of town services
- Regular check-ins with Council members
- Communications between all Council members. 2-way
- Proactive comms to Council and public
- Extending grace
- More time for council discussion
- More open decisions and freer discussions especially in work sessions
- Curiosity

### Other Ideas

- Council Member role definition and code of conduct
- Staff comes up with a formal process on how they are instructed to take action on projects and initiatives
- Want to know preferred communication method (text, email, phone...)
- Re-visit during-meeting behavior

Council members continued discussing their interpersonal issues and were encouraged to build relationships to accomplish their interests.

The Council broke for dinner and viewing the Celebrating Successes of 2022 video between 6:07 and 6:46 p.m.

### Taking Stock of where we are & Preparing for Session 2

Ms. Chotas asked Council members for a quick list of potential next steps and things Council members didn't want to lose.

- Tying a few things together like information sharing and tracking staff projects.
  - Need staff to propose a process, something sustainable, tracks projects over time.
  - Need to understand how things are removed or added to Council agenda
  - Who is taking minutes, and who is responsible for distribution.
  - How information connects with goals discussion
- Review Code of conduct
  - Mayor Hemminger and Council Member Parker started to compile information, they could pull that information together and seek next steps. Maybe a future discussion or min-retreat after reviewing with Ann Anderson or School of Government.
- Review Council rules, and confirm that expectations are aligned with each other

- Remain curious
- Leave retreat with a clear summarized action steps with responsible party indicated
- Figure out how to meet community, and individual and allow staff time to do their jobs.
  - o How do we put a system in place to get feedback that we can do XYZ but not ABC.
  - o Connect with 5-year budget strategy.
    - Maybe need more staff.
    - These ... are the resources needed and it will cost you x to meet ... interest/goal/task.
    - What can we address immediately, and what to delay until when

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was recessed at 7:00 p.m. to be reconvened on Saturday, February 4, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. at the Sheraton Hotel, Europa Drive.