

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 21, 2019 10:29 AM  
**To:** Orah Raia  
**Cc:** Ben Hitchings; Loryn Clark; Allen Buansi; Donna Bell; Hongbin Gu; Info - CAPA; 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; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ralph Karpinos; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** email...RE: Public Comment by Orah Raia on March 20, 2019

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



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

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**From:** Orah Raia [mailto:orahraia@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 20, 2019 9:03 PM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** Public Comment by Orah Raia on March 20, 2019

Hello,

Attached is my public comment to the Town Council committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council.

March 20, 2019  
Orah Raia  
(919) 650-3160

Good evening Council Members,

I am here to discuss the need for affordable housing in Chapel Hill and specifically the parcel of land, 220 Homestead Rd.

I am the parent of a 34 year old young man whose name is Brian. He has two part time jobs, he volunteers for Habitat for Humanity and he is a photographer who has had his photos exhibited in numerous art shows. He is known for his sense of humor, his empathy and his willingness to help. Oh, and by the way, he has autism.

The majority of his life has been in inclusive settings, starting from elementary school through high school graduation, and in his jobs. He thrives when he is surrounded by a diverse range of people. He is unable to live independently due to the limits of his disability and because he is on the waiting list for the Innovations waiver where he is joined with the other 12,000 people in North Carolina. As a result of not receiving the waiver he continues to live at home with his parents. This is not an appropriate setting for a 34 year old and this lack of housing options continues to limit the quality of life that he deserves and that we, his parents, who are in our golden years, deserve. My husband and I have not been able to take a vacation together for over 20 years due to the lack of supports.

I am one of the four founding members of HOPE, which stands for Housing Options for People with Exceptionalities and I would like to share our vision with you:

**HOPE's vision:** To create an inclusive community where all individuals, including those with developmental disabilities, can live a meaningful and purposeful life.

And now I would like to share **Chapel Hill's Vision** for affordable housing, as expressed on your website:

A vibrant and inclusive community where all residents have access to affordable housing and opportunities to thrive.

**Chapel Hill's mission** is to:

Creating partnerships, catalyzing affordable housing and building community.

As you can see, we have a lot in common! We hope that we can collaborate with the town of Chapel Hill in providing affordable housing options for our most vulnerable populations, which include individuals with disabilities.

I would like to end with this, I cannot take credit for writing it but it is reflective of many of the parents we represent.

“Every parent plans to raise their child for about 18 years, set them free for 30 years and then hope they come back to help them face the final years of their own life. A SPECIAL NEEDS parent plans to raise their child for 65 years and while doing so also has to prepare for the other 20 or so after they themselves are long gone. Let that sink in for just a moment and you will begin to understand the drive and determination that many of us have while we are here on earth.”

If you have never thought about that, don't be sorry, be thankful.

Thank YOU for your time this evening.