



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Council

Meeting Minutes - Draft

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

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 22, 2024 **6:00 PM** **Library 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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In-Person Meeting Notification

View the Meeting

- Public attendance is welcome, and limited to room capacity
- We will not live stream the event, but will provide the Post-Meeting Video <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/councilvideo/>
- 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 and Entry

- Parking is available at the Library lots. The Library is served by CL Route, D Route, and GoTriangle Routes of Chapel Hill Transit
- Meeting Room B is to the right from the main entrance.
- 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, Downtown Special Projects Manager Sarah Poulton, Executive Director for Strategic Communications Susan Brown, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Nikiya Cherry, Parks and Recreation Administrative Coordinator Robb English, Manager's Intern Colin Fox, Landscape/Park Maint. Principal Planner Marcia Purvis, Police Officer Shane Osborne, and Governance Services Director/Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver.

OPENING

Mayor Anderson called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda. All Council Members were present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

0.01 Mayor Anderson Regarding May 29th Budget Work Session. [\[24-0298\]](#)

Mayor Anderson pointed out that a May 29th work session had been cancelled.

0.02 Mayor Anderson Regarding Estes Drive Ribbon Cutting. [\[24-0299\]](#)

Mayor Anderson said that the Estes Drive project had been making great progress and that a June ribbon-cutting was expected.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Complete Community Update [\[24-0291\]](#)

Planning Director Britany Waddell gave a PowerPoint presentation on her department's approach to tracking and communicating about Complete Community (CC) work. That approach included pursuing grants and other external funding opportunities, she said. She described staff's commitment to data-driven decision-making and outlined their approach to monitoring progress.

Ms. Waddell described an improved dashboard that would make data more understandable and accessible. She pointed out that GIS maps would show where things were located and could help with understanding which parts of Town were over- or under-served by CC elements, such as transit, parks and greenways. She said that a new website for community

engagement regarding CC would be available in fall 2024.

Ms. Waddell discussed the goals and costs of data collection. Staff's goal would be to collect measurable, accessible, meaningful and useful data -- and data the Town had been collecting for many years would help with creating maps, dashboards and visualizations, she said.

Ms. Waddell explained that the overall goal was to tell the full story of CC and how its various elements would work together across Town. She asked the Council to provide input on the type of information it wanted to include that might be helpful or of particular interest to the public.

In response, the Council agreed with Ms. Waddell's proposed approach of staying at a high level and keeping a manageable list of metrics. Council Member Stegman mentioned the Council's interest in encouraging small commercial development, such as grocery stores and coffee shops, as part of connectivity.

Council Member Nollert suggested representing the accessibility of walksheds and bike sheds to key destinations. He also expressed interest in gathering information about users served as new connectivity segments are added. He proposed looking at analytic metrics that Consultant Rod Stevens had presented to the Town regarding longer term strategic planning.

Council Members pointed out that including metrics regarding equity and sustainability would be important. Council Member Searing said that the ability of children to access parks and green spaces would be an important issue for him going forward as well.

Mayor Anderson said that she liked the idea of also using the dashboard as a decision-making tool. She proposed that it indicate the number of acceptable CC components a neighborhood has and how complete and accessible it is. The dashboard would allow developers to show how they were meeting CC goals, she pointed out, and she emphasized the goal of becoming more granular about where particular types of housing should be located.

Ms. Waddell said that putting Town goals on the website should lead to upfront conversations with the development community and make it easier for staff to communicate the Council's priorities and goals. Staff was striving to find an effective way to tell the average person what CC meant and to help the development community define how a project could fit in, she said.

Council Members noted the importance of being able to describe how higher density leads to more revenue, which leads to being able to afford other CC things that the community wants and needs. Whatever the final metrics turn out to be, it would be crucial to fully tell that story, said

Council Member McCullough. The Council and Ms. Waddell discussed the importance of having the website contain plain language, a story-telling element, and the ability to click into the dashboard, if desired.

Council Member Stegman suggested thinking about how the public could provide feedback, and Mayor Anderson recommended including data that shows what is succeeding and how the investment was changing people's lives.

Ms. Waddell mentioned several grants that staff had recently won that would support CC initiatives. She said that some new staff positions had been included but that it would require additional grant funding to continue those. She shared information on CC grant opportunities which staff was monitoring or applying for. She noted numerous other grants that staff was pursuing or being awarded but which were not completely tied to CC implementation.

Ms. Waddell said that Central Pines Regional Council had been assisting the Town with its grant applications and management and that 9 of 50 potential grants had been identified through that process as appropriate for Chapel Hill. The Town had been awarded \$12,109,641 in overall grant funding since summer 2023 for projects, such as Transit, that were not specifically related to CC, she said.

Ms. Waddell said that additional applications would be submitted later in the year for projects related to smart transportation technology, firefighting, and infrastructure improvements. Staff was particularly excited about one grant that ranged up to \$135 million for land acquisition and redevelopment of existing manufactured home communities, she said.

Ms. Waddell mentioned Community Project Funding, which helped local governments receive direct federal funding for shovel-ready projects. She said that the Town has submitted multiple projects to that fund and had received awards for: Tanyard Branch Trace (\$1.5 million), Transit bus stop improvements (\$1.4 million), Ephesus Church Road sidewalks (\$1.2 million), Transit bus replacements (\$8 million), Homestead Gardens (\$2 million), and Downtown streetscape (\$2 million).

Ms. Waddell pointed out that two projects (Legion Road affordable housing and the Fordham Boulevard side path) had recently been advanced to the House Appropriations Committee in Washington DC to be considered for FY 2025 funding.

Council Member Ryan confirmed with the Town Manager that some grants come through his office and others were either partly or totally managed by Central Pines. Council Member Berry commented that outsourcing the grant writing process to Central Pines was very smart because it let Town

staff stay focused on delivering services. Council Member Nollert mentioned that he had interacted with Central Pines and been impressed by their competence. Council Member Stegman agreed that having the Central Pines team involved was an effective and efficient approach.

The Council talked about communicating Town interest in the manufactured housing program to the Office of Governmental Affairs. Mayor Anderson proposed that the Manager share what staff was learning about potential funding sources with others, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Partnership, and School System. She said that the Council was happy with Ms. Waddell's report and excited about the number of current opportunities.

This item was received as presented.

2. Update on FY 24' Penny For Parks Projects.

[\[24-0292\]](#)

Director of Parks and Recreation Atuya Cornwell gave a PowerPoint overview of FY 2024 "A Penny for Parks" projects and his department's future spending strategy. He pointed out that "A Penny for Parks" was in addition to Pay/Go and Payment-In-Lieu funding and FY 2021 Two-Thirds Bonds. A memo in the Council's packets provided details on Parks and Recreation projects and their funding sources, he pointed out.

Mr. Cornwell explained that a \$971,000 "Penny for Parks" allocation had been used for deferred maintenance, capital projects, and planning. He said that FY 2024 project highlights included: system-wide park improvements (\$50,000), Community Center improvements (\$350,000) and Teen Center renovations (\$30,000). He described how the funds were spent on each project.

Mr. Cornwell provided examples of how Community Center improvements had increased programming opportunities, customer satisfaction and revenue. He said that "A Penny for Parks" had allowed the Parks and Recreation Department to support Town initiatives, such as CC and Everywhere to Everywhere Greenways. He gave examples of how being able to address deferred maintenance issues had improved safety, created a better user experience, and improved staff morale.

Mr. Cornwell said that future spending would be guided by priorities outlined in the upcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan, other guiding Town documents, a community assessment, and available funding. In 2025, the Town would use "A Penny for Parks" funds to address a Cedar Falls Park tennis courts project that had begun in 2014 but paused due to a budget shortfall, he said.

Mr. Cornwell said that staff would provide recommendations over the summer regarding the Parks and Recreation Department's future, including its funding needs and grant opportunities. That process would be an opportunity to evaluate the current state of Town facilities, infrastructure

and programming, and to prioritize funding needs moving forward, he said.

Mayor pro tem Ryan commented that the Cedar Falls project probably would take most of the "Penny for Parks" money and she asked about funding for the Master Plan. Mr. Cornwell replied that about \$300,000 had been outlined for the Plan in the current year, and that could roll over. She pointed out that the Council had hoped that some of those funds could be used for new facilities, and he explained that staff planned to take a balanced, holistic approach to using funds and addressing issues.

Council Member Miller-Foushee and Mr. Cornwell discussed how some Parks and Recreation programs fill up quickly. He said that staff had been tracking the issue and would share that information with the firm they select to help with the master plan.

Council Member Miller-Foushee said that she would be looking for information in the future regarding a K-5 afterschool at Hargraves. That was different from other afterschool programs. She said she would like to know more about interactions with the School System around opportunities for expansion and helping families with affordability.

Mayor Anderson and Mr. Cornwell talked about the need to balance emerging trends with items that has been on the Town's needs list for a long time. They discussed being creative and transparent with regard to capacity limitations. The Mayor and staff discussed how the developing master plan would include CC components, such as how greenways and parks would be connected and how neighborhoods should have access to parks.

Council Member Searing confirmed with Mr. Cornwell that the Town rents space to a variety of groups, including some from out-of-Town, and that the money from those rentals goes into the general operating budget. Council Member Searing said that the Department should be prepared to answer questions from the community about why it did not spend past funds on things that residents had suggested.

Council Member Nollert ascertained from Mr. Cornwell that more money was available now than had been available in 2013, and he asked staff to provide an apple-to-apple comparison. Council Member Miller-Foushee commented on how developing in different ways, culturally, was creating more revenue opportunities for the Town to invest in the community. She stressed the importance of being clear about the reasons why (such as the pandemic) some things had not happened in the past.

Mayor Anderson pointed out that the Town probably would not be able to fund everything on its list in the next master plan either. She said that she did not think it was necessary to justify previous funding decisions.

She stressed the importance of thinking about maintenance versus new amenities and recommended attending to maintenance while pushing ahead with new and exciting projects as well.

This item was received as presented.

ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.