



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Council Meeting Minutes

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

Thursday, May 19, 2022 **8:30 AM** **Virtual Meeting**

Language Access Statement

For interpretation or translation services, call 919-969-5105.

ဘာသာပြန်ဆိုခြင်းနှင့် စကားပြန်ခြင်းအတွက်၊ (၉၁၉) ၉၆၉-၅၁၀၅ ကိုဖုန်းခေါ်ပါ။

Para servicios de interpretación o traducción, llame al 919-969-5105.

လၢတၢ်ကတိကျ်းထံ မ့တမၢ် လၢတၢ်ကွဲးကျ်းထံအတၢ်မၤစၢ်အဂီၢ် ၎် ကိးဘၣ် (၉၁၉)-၉၆၉-၅၁၀၅

如需口头或
书面翻译服
务，请拨打
919-969-5105.

Virtual Meeting Notification

Town Council members will attend and participate in this meeting remotely, through internet access, and will not physically attend. The Town will not provide a physical location for viewing the meeting.

The public is invited to attend. Register for this webinar:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4cYY0NDYSrCaJ57nKcdSQA After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar in listen-only mode. Phone: 301-715-8592, Meeting ID: 832 2047 6685

OPENING

Mayor Hemminger welcomed all to the virtual meeting at 8:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Hemminger called the roll and all Council Members replied that they were present, with the exception of Council Member Huynh, who was absent/excused.

- Present:** 8 - Mayor Pam Hemminger, Mayor pro tem Karen Stegman, Council Member Jessica Anderson, Council Member Camille Berry, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Michael Parker, Council Member Amy Ryan, and Council Member Adam Searing
- Excused:** 1 - Council Member Tai Huynh

OTHER ATTENDEES

Town Manager Maurice Jones, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Town Attorney Ann Anderson, Executive Director Technology Solutions/CIO Scott Clark, Transit Director Brian Litchfield, Senior Park Planner Marcia Purvis, Mayoral Assistant Jeanne Brown, Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey, and Communications and Public Affairs Director and Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION BY MAYOR HEMMINGER

Mayor Hemminger introduced NC Senator Valerie Foushee and NC representatives Graig Meyer, Verla Insko and Vernetta Alston. She also introduced Beau Mills from Metro Mayors and Erin Wynia from the League of Municipalities.

TOWN UPDATES

1. Pandemic Response and Recovery

Council Member Anderson reported on programs that the Town and its community partners had established during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included a joint effort by the Town, the Orange County Department of Housing and Community Development, and the towns of Carrboro and Hillsborough to establish a Housing Helpline, which had provided assistance to more than 1,800 households. She said that more than \$7.8 million in federal, state, and local funds had been allocated to Orange County residents in need. Although the Council was optimistic about the future, many community members were still struggling and the Council would appreciate any additional help from the state and federal governments, she said.

a. Use of CARES Action funds – ReVive Plan, housing assistance, food bank distributions, etc

Council Member Anderson described a ReVive Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan, in which the Town had invested \$200,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money to rebuild in a more inclusive and equitable manner. She also discussed a Summer Careers Academy, which had provided grants to 66 small companies with the goal of creating a more diverse employer base in Town.

Council Member Anderson said that Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds had been used to support low-income families through Neighborhood Support Circles, which had been launched in

partnership with the YMCA and Refugee Community Partners. The Town had also worked with Orange County to provide housing and food assistance, childcare and scholastic support, and refugee support, she said. She described on-going food distribution efforts and said that some families continued to struggle. The Town appreciated any support that its congressional representatives could provide, she said.

2. Economic Development

Mayor Hemminger said that the Town was in good financial shape. Chapel Hill had emerged from the pandemic with a hefty Fund Balance and high sales tax revenues, she said, and she outlined some of the reasons for that outcome. She pointed out that a Town goal had been to diversify its tax base through more commercial and retail development.

Mayor Hemminger discussed Downtown Together, a joint effort with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to revitalize the Downtown area. She described upcoming changes to the Downtown that would include more housing, new office buildings, and street/sidewalk improvements.

Mayor Hemminger said that the Enterprise Zone in the northern part of Town had attracted some great research companies and that a Family Fun Zone was being constructed in that area as well. She said that Well Dot was expanding, Wegmans had been highly successful, and a new Gwendolyn Building at Glen Lennox had attracted a lot of interest.

a. Economic Update

b. Downtown Revitalization

- i. Downtown Together Initiative
- ii. East Rosemary Parking Deck, Wetlab space, and other redevelopment
- iii. Franklin Street

3. Affordable Housing Progress & Projects

Mayor pro tem Stegman pointed out that affordable housing (AH) was a top Council priority and that the Town had more than \$15 million in local and federal funding sources to support those initiatives. She noted that the Town had passed a \$10 million AH bond in November 2018 and had allocated the first \$6.135 million to five organizations that would develop about 325 units of AH. She said that the Town had developed 195 AH units and preserved 895 over the last five years. She pointed out that several of the new developments that were in the pipeline were on Town-owned land and had applied for a 9 percent Low Income Housing Tax Credit.

Mayor pro tem Stegman discussed results from a countywide Emergency Housing Assistance Program that the Town was doing in partnership with Orange County and the towns of Carrboro and Hillsborough. The program had provided \$3,383,688 in assistance to 851 Chapel Hill households, she said. She pointed out that the Council was especially concerned about the fate of manufactured home communities. The Town had been working with Orange County and the other jurisdictions to find long-term solutions and any help it could get from the state would be appreciated, she said.

4. Climate Action Plan and progress

Council Member Ryan said that the Town had adopted its Climate Action and Response Plan in 2021 with the goal of achieving net-zero emissions and 100 percent clean, renewal energy by year 2050. She pointed out that 96 percent of the Town's emissions were coming from buildings and transportation, which made those the top areas of focus. However, waste, water, natural resources, and Town resiliency were areas of focus as well, she said.

Council Member Ryan said that the Town was committed to achieving its goals and to being part of regional and national solutions to combat climate change. She said that areas of progress included: three new electric buses and several more on order; expanded greenways and bike lanes; and streetlights transitioned to LED. The Town had been working with Orange County to create an EV-charging mapping tool and was in the process of revamping its green building standards, she said.

Council Member Ryan said that key areas where the Town needed congressional support were: having North Carolina join a Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative; advocating for General Assembly bills that support renewable energy and clean upgrades at the local level; supporting initiatives such as Duke Energy's Green Source Advantage Program; continuing and enhancing the State Transportation Improvement Program; and implementing the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

5. Transportation

Council Member Parker pointed out that the Council had recently reduced the Townwide speed limit to 25 mph and had passed an Anti-Dooring Ordinance as part of its adopted Vision Zero resolution. He described several other improvements that were underway as well in order to make the Town safer and more attractive.

Council Member Parker pointed out that Chapel Hill Transit was one of the largest fare free systems in the nation. He said that the Town took enormous pride in that system, which could not have been done without state legislative support. He said that the Town had recently purchased new electric buses and was expecting to receive federal funding to buy more.

Council Member Parker provided a progress update on the Town's north-south

bus rapid transit system. He said that the Town had about \$15 million to put toward the \$25 million it needed for a local match and could use legislators help with getting the remaining funds from the state. He expressed gratitude that the State Maintenance Assistance Program (SMAP) had been fully funded and asked legislators to help provide stability for that in the future.

Council Member Parker pointed out that current rules prohibited state funding for bike and pedestrian projects that were not done in conjunction with highway projects. The Town needed help with getting funds for pure bike and pedestrian projects, he said.

- a. *Chapel Hill Transit*
- b. *Vision Zero Plans - Bikeways & other*
- c. *Projects*
 - i. *Estes Drive Connectivity Plan*
 - ii. *Fordham Sidepath*

6. *ARPA Funding Plans*

Mayor Hemminger explained that the Town intended to use its \$10 million in ARPA funds to benefit those who had been impacted by the pandemic and to do some things that would be transformative. She said that Chapel Hill had been allocated about \$10.6 million and had spent \$0.6 million to help local businesses.

Mayor Hemminger said that the Council was looking forward to seeing what ideas come forward in the letters of intent. She said that projects or programs currently being considered broke down as follows: 25 percent for Affordable Housing and Homelessness; 60 percent for Town Department needs; 10 percent for Human Services and community partners; 5 percent for community-based projects. The Town intended to put some money toward digital access as well, she said.

Mayor Hemminger alerted legislators to a situation regarding an area of Town that was located in Durham but was in Chapel Hill's planning jurisdiction. She said that a developer wished to build about 1,000 homes on a large tract of land there, but that Orange Water and Sewer Association (OWASA) was not interested in serving the tract. She pointed out that a bill that would give landowners the right to ask for annexation from anyone they wished had passed the NC House and was in the Senate. Both Chapel Hill and Durham were concerned about the effects of such a bill and were willing to work together to find a better solution, she said.

STATE UPDATES

1. *Senators and Representatives*

Representative Alston confirmed with Mayor Hemminger that Senate Bill 425 was the one she had mentioned regarding annexation. She asked about the history of SMAP funding, and Council Member Parker provided some background but referred her to Town Transit Director Brain Litchfield for more details. She confirmed with Town Attorney Ann Anderson that the burden in the Anti-Dooring Ordinance would be on the Town to prove intent or at least culpability. She expressed enthusiasm about AH projects being built on Town property and asked for a timeline on those.

Representative Alston confirmed with Mayor pro tem Stegman that the Town's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance required that developers include space for those with an area median income (AMI) of between 60 and 80 percent. The Town works with its AH partners to try and serve the lowest AMIs possible, Mayor pro tem Stegman said, adding that homelessness in Orange County had increased by 40 percent over the past couple of years.

Mayor Hemminger pointed out that more information was available on Town AH projects and goals at: chapelhillaffordablehousing.org.

Senator Foushee asked for samples of the legislation and/or ordinances that Mayor pro tem Stegman had mentioned. She also requested status updates on where projected AH units and tiny homes would be located.

Representative Insko confirmed with Council that Orange County and the other towns had climate action plans as well. Mayor Hemminger pointed out that the Town was in the process of replacing all its lights with LED using climate tax funds that it received from Orange County.

Representative Meyer and Mayor Hemminger discussed the annexation legislation that she had mentioned, and he offered to talk former Representative Paul Stam and others about it. Attorney Anderson offered to send Rep. Meyer the relevant language and to discuss the legal details with him.

3. *League of Municipalities*

Executive Director Beau Mills provided information on Metro Mayors' 31-member organization and its focus on metro and urban issues. He said that North Carolina's future depended upon the success of its urban areas. The Chapel Hill delegation had always been a leader in advocating for urban issues, he said.

Mr. Mills pointed out that states had recently received unprecedented support from the federal government through CARES, ARPA, and a bipartisan Infrastructure Bill. This had presented a once-in-a-generation opportunity for local communities to do extraordinary things regarding equity, economic development, transportation and more, he said.

Mr. Mills said that Transportation would be at the top of Metro Mayors list in the next legislative session. He explained that SMAP was a reoccurring funding source that had been reduced about five years ago. It had taken four years to bring that back to its previous level, he said, adding that Representative Insko had been a leader in achieving that. Metro Mayors would continue trying to protect that funding source, he said.

Mr. Mills said that the NC Department of Transportation's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) had been facing financial challenges that had resulted in projects being pulled off the list. However, Metro Mayors saw an opportunity to work with the NC business community on devoting as much as \$500 million in Sales and Use Tax to the Transportation budget with the goal of developing an urban transit system, he said. He thought the Senate would soon introduce legislation on that topic, he said.

Mr. Mills noted that AH had become a statewide issue for the first time ever. He said that Metro Mayors was enthusiastic about HB 367, which would help revitalize communities and improve the quality of the naturally occurring AH across the state.

2. Metro Mayors

Erin Wynia, Director of Governmental Affairs for the NC League of Municipalities, said that the League had been hearing about difficulties with water extension and other problems associated with areas between jurisdictions. Legislators were interested in passing statewide bills that would address local issues, and the League looked forward to working with the Town on that going forward, she said.

Ms. Wynia noted that Property Bill HB 367 had passed the NC House last year and said that the League and others had been working to have the Senate pass it in the next session. That bill would provide an easier legal path for resolving ownership issues regarding vacant properties or properties that have multiple owners, she said.

Council Member Miller-Foushee asked delegation members for feedback on a Housing Supply Action Plan that the White House had just put out. Representative Alston said that she had scanned it and thought it included some interesting ideas regarding financing, but the others had not yet received it.

Council Member Miller-Foushee said that she had been pleased to see the interaction between transit and housing in the Action Plan. The plan affirmed some of the things the Town was doing, such as using its own land to help with AH costs and proposed doing that at the federal level, she said. She noted that the Plan addressed issues regarding mobile homes. The federal Action Plan was very ambitious but looked promising, she said.

Representative Meyer said that the White House and the Governor's Administration were in weekly contact. He would talk with the latter about the Housing Plan and report back to the Council, he said.

Council Member Anderson pointed out that it would be helpful for the Town to know what was happening at the state level that might impact its efforts to assess its housing needs, develop its "complete neighborhoods" initiative, and rewrite its Land Use Management Ordinance. She asked if there were things that might come up in the short session that could positively or negatively impact the Town.

Ms. Wynia replied that many factors seemed to be indicating a short session with four to six weeks of intense law-making followed by adjournment but keeping the session open to December. The League was seeing evidence of less activity than would normally be the case at the start of a short session, she said.

Representative Meyer agreed. The main bills seemed to be about sports betting, medical marijuana, the budget, and Medicaid expansion, he said. He pointed out that those were all Senate priorities. The House was using them as leverage by refusing to move them unless the Senate negotiates on major budget priorities, he said. He said that Medicaid expansion was the one most likely to happen in a short session but not until after the election.

Mayor Hemminger commented on how it was the Council's last meeting with Representative Insko's, who had represented the district admirably and fought for the values the Town holds dear. It was apparent in her work that she cared about everyone, said the Mayor, and Council Members gave a round of applause.

Mayor Hemminger thanked all members of the delegation for their work, and she commented on how much the Town valued and counted on support from Metro Mayors and the League of Municipalities.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 a.m.