

01-11-2023 Town Council Meeting

Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #16: Appointments to the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board

ITEM #17: Appointments to the Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board

Council Question:

It appears that both the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board and the Stormwater Management Advisory Board are lacking diversity in at least considering the racial makeup of the members, and that continues with the applications being considered as each applicant is white/Caucasian. This has been a stated concern of the Council since 2021, if not well before then. What are we doing to address lack of diversity — especially race — in our advisory boards that has been well identified but not yet resolved? Does the staff require resources that would allow them to be more effective in this effort?

Staff Response:

In spring we will start another advertisement and social media campaign to seek diverse advisory board applicants and return to 2019 advertising levels of about \$2,000. We will also continue to work with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer.

Council Question:

Have there been any other applicants for the ESAB regional seat?

Staff Response:

No.

Council Question:

The information sheet on Stormwater board make-up states that: Board representation shall include five (5) members who are owners of single-family residential property within Chapel Hill - but we changed that requirement in the last few years to include renters as well as homeowners, in other words, just be residents. Have we fully implemented that change? I checked the application and it still comes up as a requirement for that board. Can staff please ensure that our board application, recruitment and other materials are all updated accordingly? I would also propose that we freeze any new appointments until this can be updated and communicated to the public and allow time for new recruitment efforts to be implemented.

Staff Response:

The Council amended the SMUAB membership to include residential renters in November 2021. The staff has and continues to include all Chapel Hill town residents when validating the applications.

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While we did make the change in several places, we did not update the seat category on the application or the ballot template. This was an oversight and we are making the necessary changes to better reflect the seat description in plain language.

The Council may defer appointments for additional advertising to all Town residents. Alternatively, Council may proceed to appoint one or more seats, as there are four current vacancies for this 9-member board. We do not recommend freezing new appointments as three additional vacancies are expected between now and June 30, 2023.