



Legislation Text

File #: [18-0868], Version: 1

Establish a Task Force to Consider the Possible Future Use of the Varsity Theater as a Performing Arts Center.

Committee Members:

Mayor Pam Hemminger
Mayor Pro Tem Jessica Anderson
Council Member Michael Parker
Council Member Donna Bell

Committee:

Council Naming Committee

Overview: The purpose of this item is to establish a task force to consider the possible future use of the Varsity Theater as a community performing arts center.



Recommendation(s):

- That the Council adopt the resolution, establishing a process, task force, and charge to consider the possible future use of the Varsity Theater facility at 123 East Franklin Street as a community performing arts space

- That the Task Force will be comprised of the following seats, including Council Members Rachel Schaevitz and Michael Parker, appointed as Task Force Co-Chairs.
 - Rachel Schaevitz - Council Member
 - Michael Parker - Council Member
 - Marlon Torres - NC Arts in Action and Downtown Resident
 - Don Tise - Architect and Downtown Business Owner
 - Emily Kass - General Manager of the Chelsea Theater and former Director of the Ackland
 - Justin Haslett - Managing Director of Playmakers Theater and chair of the CH Cultural Arts Commission
 - Hardy Butler - Downtown Entrepreneur
 - Kaze Thomas - Downtown Business Owner and Artist
 - Gerald Bolas - Arts Consultant and former Director of the Ackland
 - Mandey Brown - Downtown Business Owner
 - Sharon Rothwell - NC Arts Commission
 - Greg Overbeck* -Downtown Business Owner
 - Brenda Womble* - Member of the local arts community.
 - To be Determined- Downtown Partnership representative
 - Justin Simmons, Chamber of Commerce and Varsity Theatre user
 - Dan Cefalo, artist, former Cultural Arts Commission chair
 - Paul Shareshian, current leaseholder and operator of Varsity Theatre

*= tentative

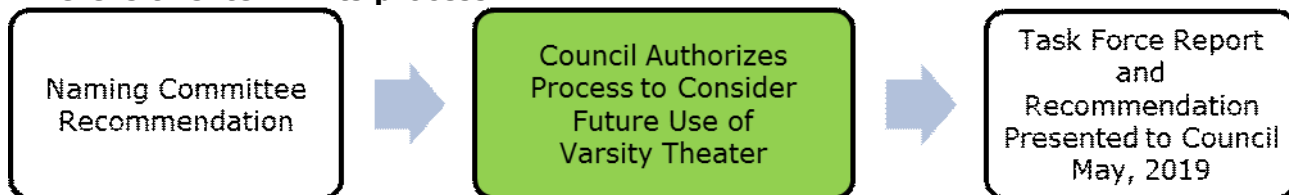
- The task force would be charged with determining the following:
 - What would be the vision for such a venue? What types of programming would be appropriate and desired by our community?
 - How would such a venue meet community needs, reflect community values, and attract a wide range of individuals to the Downtown and what would be the economic impact on the Downtown?
 - What would be the costs of this conversion for both acquisition and necessary refurbishment - and how long would it require? How would these costs be paid for and what kinds of partnership(s) might be feasible?
 - What would be the business model of the new entity in terms of ownership, ongoing management, and ability to be financially secure and self-sustaining?
- That following the task force's report to the Council in May 2019, the work of the task force will be deemed complete and the task force will be discharged

Key Issues:

- The Varsity Theater is located at 123 East Franklin Street and has served as a movie theater since the Sorrell building was built in 1927. The owners of the Varsity Theater indicate that it may be up for the sale in the near future. At the same time, there is an expressed need and desire for public spaces and infrastructure devoted to cultural arts.
- Town of Chapel Hill and Orange County staff will partner on the process by preparing for meetings and gathering and providing information for decision-making. Staff members Susan Brown (or designee), Town of Chapel Hill, Katie Murray, Orange County Arts Commission, and Laurie Paolicelli, Chapel Hill Orange County Visitors Bureau, will be assigned as liaisons between the task force and Town and County staff.

Fiscal Impact/Resources: No fiscal resources are required to establish this process, with the exception of staff resources.

Where is this item in its process?



Council Goals:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Create a Place for Everyone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Develop Good Places, New Spaces
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Support Community Prosperity	<input type="checkbox"/>		Nurture Our Community
<input type="checkbox"/>		Facilitate Getting Around	<input type="checkbox"/>		Grow Town and Gown Collaboration

Attachments:

- Resolution

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A COUNCIL TASK FORCE TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBLE USE OF THE VARSITY THEATER AT 123 EAST FRANKLIN STREET AS A COMMUNITY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (2018-10-24/R-3)

WHEREAS, the Council has an interest in enriching the cultural arts in Chapel Hill and enhancing the social and economic vitality of our Downtown; and

WHEREAS, the Chapel Hill Town Council wishes to explore the feasibility of converting the Varsity Theater on East Franklin Street into a community performance venue that could host a range of performance types including, but not limited to, music, theater, dance, and film. In addition, it could also serve as a setting for community meetings and discussions; and

WHEREAS, the Council has determined that it desires additional consideration and input from community members and stakeholders regarding the possible future of the Varsity; and

WHEREAS, in order to conduct this exploration, the Mayor wishes to establish the Varsity Theater Task Force to explore the community desire for this type of cultural amenity and the feasibility of managing this type of venture.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill that the Council establish the Varsity Theater Task Force to consider the possible use of the Varsity Theater at 123 East Franklin Street as a community performing arts center.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force will be comprised of the following seats, including Council Members Rachel Schaevitz and Michael Parker, appointed as Task Force Co-Chairs.

- Rachel Schaevitz - Council Member
- Michael Parker - Council Member
- Marlon Torres - NC Arts in Action and Downtown Resident
- Don Tise - Architect and Downtown Business Owner
- Emily Kass - General Manager of the Chelsea Theater and former Director of the Ackland
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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force would be charged with determining the following:

- What would be the vision for such a venue? What types of programming would be appropriate and desired by our community?
- How would such a venue meet community needs, reflect community values, and attract a wide range of individuals to the Downtown and what would be the economic impact on the Downtown?
- What would be the costs of this conversion for both acquisition and necessary refurbishment - and how long would it require? How would these costs be paid for and what kinds of partnership(s) might be feasible?
- What would be the business model of the new entity in terms of ownership, ongoing management, and ability to be financially secure and self-sustaining?

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that following the task force's report to the Council in May 2019, the work of the task force will be deemed complete and the task force will be discharged.

This the 24th day of October, 2018.

The Agenda will reflect the text below and/or the motion text will be used during the meeting.

PRESENTER: Mayor Hemminger, Naming Committee Chair

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council adopt the resolution to establish a task force to consider the possible future use of the Varsity Theater as a community performing arts center.