



Town Council
Meeting Minutes - Draft
May 20, 2026, 6:00 PM
RM 110 | Council Chamber

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

ဘာသာပြန်ဆိုခြင်းနှင့် စကားပြန်ခြင်းအတွက် (၉၁၉) ၉၆၉ ၅၁၀၅ ကိုဖုန်းခေါ်ပါ။

如需口头或书面翻译服务，请拨打 919-969-5105。

လားတံကတိကျိုးထံမှတစ်ဆင့် လာတံကွဲကျိုးထံအတမ်းစာအရိပ် ကီးဘတ် ၉၁၉-၉၆၉ ၅၁၀၅

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

WELCOME to a COUNCIL MEETING!

We're glad you're here. Want to know more about the meeting logistics, see <https://www.chapelhillnc.gov/Welcome-to-a-Council-meeting>

ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Mayor Jessica Anderson, Mayor pro tem Camille Berry, Council Member Wesley McMahon, Council Member Melissa McCullough, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Theodore Nollert, Council Member Louie Rivers, Council Member Amy Ryan, and Council Member Elizabeth Sharp

OTHER ATTENDEES

Town Manager Theodore Voorhees, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Interim Town Attorney Jim Baker, Communications and Engagement Director Susan Brown, Zoning Administrator Corey Liles, Senior Planner Charnika Harrell, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Business Management Assistant Director Matthew Brinkley, Assistant Affordable Housing Director Emily Holt, Public Works Director Lance Norris, Economic Development Director David Putnam, Community Sustainability Manager John Richardson, Police Captain Gabe Shinn, Fire Marshal Heather Robinson, Assistant Town Clerk Matt DeBellis, and Town Clerk Brittney Hunt.

OPENING

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Proclamation: National Public Works Week

Council proclaimed May 17-23, 2026 as National Public Works Week in the Town of Chapel Hill. Council Member Rivers invited Public Works Director Lance Norris to the podium for the proclamation and group photo. Council honored the Public Works team for their essential role in maintaining roads, sidewalks, stormwater systems, public building, solid waste services, and the Town's vehicle fleet, expressing gratitude for the team's dedication and positive attitude, especially during challenging conditions.

1.01 Proclamation: Asian-American and Pacific Islander Month

Council proclaimed May 2026 as Asian-American and Pacific Islander Month in the Town of Chapel Hill. Mayor pro Tem Berry invited residents from the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community to the podium for the proclamation and group photo. The proclamation highlighted the significant contributions of AAPI community members to the Town and the nation, and emphasized the importance of fostering understanding and appreciation for their rich and diverse cultural heritage.

2. Proclamation: Affordable Housing Month

Council proclaimed May 2026 as Affordable Housing Month in the Town of Chapel Hill. Council Member Miller-Foushee invited Affordable Housing partners and staff to the podium for the proclamation and group photo. The proclamation reaffirmed the Town's commitment to safe, stable, and affordable housing and highlighted ongoing partnerships with regional organizations. Council encouraged residents to learn about and support affordable housing initiatives.

2.01 Proclamation: Community Home Trust Day

Council proclaimed June 15, 2026 as Community Home Trust Day in the Town of Chapel Hill. Council Member Miller-Foushee invited members of the Community Home Trust to the podium for the proclamation and group photo. The proclamation celebrated Community Home Trust's 35th anniversary and the milestone of 300 permanently affordable homes created and preserved for local residents.

3. Proclamation: Historic Preservation Month

Council proclaimed May 2026 as Historic Preservation Month in the Town of Chapel Hill. Council Member McCullough invited members of the Historic District Commission to the podium for the proclamation and group photo. The proclamation highlighted the Town's commitment to safeguarding historically significant sites and districts, honoring the individuals and groups who have contributed to preserving Chapel Hill's architectural and cultural heritage.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

3.01 Mayor Jessica Anderson

Mayor Anderson shared several announcements including recognition of Heat Awareness Week, reminders about the upcoming Orange County Memorial Day Celebration, and the next Regular Council meeting scheduled for June 10, 2026.

3.02 Council Member Wes McMahon

Council Member McMahon discussed recent Planning Commission meeting highlights and the importance of aligning Council priorities with staff work on the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO). Town Manager Theodore Voorhees confirmed that further discussion on these topics is scheduled for the June 17, 2026 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Public Comment Period allows the public to address Council on items not on the printed agenda. To speak, please sign in at the Clerk's desk with your name and email. When called, step to the podium, adjust the microphone, and state your name for the record. Comments are limited to 3 minutes (or 2 minutes if more than 14 speakers). Large groups are asked to select a spokesperson. Council does not act or deliberate on items raised during this time.

Jerry Marakatos thanked the Town for its long-term support of community media efforts and emphasized the ongoing importance of accessible, high-quality local media resources in an evolving journalism landscape.

PJ Miller, Community Home Trust homeowner, shared appreciation for the stability and accessibility that affordable homeownership provides, especially for residents on fixed incomes.

Bridgit Adamou, President of the Board of Directors for Community Home Trust Board, highlighted the organization's 35-year milestone and its impact in preserving permanently affordable homes, thanking the Town for continued partnership.

Tom Jepsen, Chapel Hill Historical Society, expressed gratitude for Town support of historic preservation and encouraged further integration of preservation priorities into funding and grant programs.

Brieann Mendez spoke about the critical role of affordable rental housing in maintaining safe, stable living conditions for seniors and residents living on limited incomes.

Talib Madyun shared his experience with The People's Channel, noting the value of its media training and community broadcasting opportunities, and urged continued support for the organization.

Linda Fajardo described how Community Home Trust provided life-changing stability as a single mother and educator, thanking the Council for sustaining affordable homeownership opportunities.

Dennis Dowdy outlined The People's Channel's educational and youth-focused programming and requested operational support to maintain services amid decreasing external funding.

CONSENT

All items on the Consent Agenda are considered routine, to be enacted by one motion without discussion. Council member(s) may request discussion of an item. If such motion passes, then the item is removed from consent and considered separately.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Council Member Ryan, seconded by Council Member Miller-Foushee to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

4. [2026-2027 HOME Investment Partnerships Program Annual Plan.](#)

The Council adopted R-1 approving the 2026-2027 Home Investment Partnership Program Annual Plan.

5. [Past Work Session Minutes](#)

The Council approved the October 29, 2012 Work Session minutes, November 6, 2013 Work Session minutes, January 6, 2014 Work Session minutes, March 6, 2014 Work Session minutes, and May 8, 2014 Legislative Breakfast minutes.

6. [2025 Closed Session Minutes](#)

The Council approved the 2025 Closed Session minutes.

7. [April 29 and May 6, 2026 Meeting Minutes](#)

The Council approved the April 29 and May 6, 2026 minutes.

DISCUSSION

8. [Open the Public Hearing on the FY 2026-27 Recommended Budget](#)

Business Management Director Amy Oland presented the FY 2026-27 Recommended Budget, totaling \$169.7 million for all funds. Ms. Oland noted the budget represents a 3.4% increase over the previous year and proposes no property tax increase.

Ms. Oland highlighted workforce investments, including a 4% market pay increase, a 0.75% retirement contribution increase, and rising employee medical insurance costs. She also summarized justifications for three new positions (Fleet Technician, Library Experiences Associate, and Destination Coordinator), and noted additional compensation-related adjustments included implementing the Fire Pay Study and skills-based pay for inspectors.

Ms. Oland discussed the 1% decrease in the Transit and Parking Fund, the 4% increase in the Housing Fund, and the 23% increase in the Stormwater Fund. She also reported a late notification from Orange County proposing to eliminate the Town's \$621,323 annual library funding over a two-year

period, prompting staff to begin analyzing options such as non-resident library fees and potential service-hour reductions.

Council Member Miller-Foushee requested additional information regarding the People's Channel's agreements and current funding.

George Barrett, speaking on behalf of the Marion Cheek Jackson Center and the Orange County Affordable Housing Coalition, urged the Town to continue prioritizing affordable housing funding even amid local and regional budget pressures.

Council members asked clarifying questions regarding the feasibility of reducing or delaying hiring for new positions, particularly the library position, balancing workforce investments with potential service impacts, and the timeline for discussing related policy items after the County's budget decisions.

Manager Theodore Voorhees responded that staff would not move forward with hiring the library position until the County funding situation is clearer, and hiring for the Destination Coordinator may also be paused as staff reassesses potential partnerships and evolving tourism leadership.

Several Council members emphasized prioritizing retaining part-time library staff and preserving service hours before adding new positions, should County funding be reduced. Council further commented on concern about the County's decision-making, suggestions to reach out to County Commissioners directly, and questions about how to approach potential mid-year budget adjustments.

A motion was made by Council Member Miller-Foushee, seconded by Mayor pro tem Berry to close the public hearing. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

9. Climate Action Plan Update.

Community Sustainability Manager John Richardson presented an update on the Town's Climate Action and Response Plan, which is now reaching its five-year update cycle. He explained that the update is not a full rewrite but a refinement of priorities, informed by the Town's progress, updated data, technological advances, and emerging climate-related needs. Mr. Richardson outlined a public engagement process scheduled for May-July, followed by data analysis and plan development in August-October, grounded in the IAP2 consult model, which emphasizes listening, acknowledging community feedback, and reporting on how it influences decisions.

Mr. Richardson reviewed the plan's core priority areas including buildings and energy, transportation and land use, waste, wastewater, and natural resources, and climate resiliency. He highlighted examples of ongoing or upcoming work in each category such as rooftop solar expansion,

energy-efficiency projects in Town facilities, electrification programming, greenway buildout, the north-south BRT, composting expansion, Leave Your Leaves, stormwater initiatives, heat action planning, and resilience hub development. He solicited Council feedback on possible public engagement questions and areas of emphasis for the next five years.

Council members asked about modeling transportation emissions impacts, youth engagement strategies, and coordination with the University. Several Council members emphasized the importance of resilience alongside mitigation, and others encouraged using community volunteerism, youth councils, service clubs, and congregations to strengthen engagement and outreach. Council also requested more robust metrics concerning tree canopy, stormwater, and natural area preservation to better inform planning and conditional-zoning decisions. Council emphasized clear public messaging, realistic options during engagement, and the need to support both mitigation actions and climate resilience efforts.

Mr. Richardson noted that high-level messaging and engagement materials will be shared with Council before going to the public and reaffirmed that staff will incorporate Council direction into the engagement and update process.

This matter was received and filed.

10. Public Hearing: Project Stark Tower Incentive Agreement

Economic Development Director David Putnam presented the proposed incentive agreement for Project Stark Tower (Blue Sky Robotics). Mr. Putnam noted the project is expected to create 152 jobs with an average wage of \$77,000 and invest \$1.5 million in personal property over five years. He also provided details on the incentive agreement package including up to \$261,000 in parking credits and a \$57,000 cash grant, both distributed over five years and contingent on performance.

Council members asked questions regarding projected revenue impacts, the structure of the parking incentive, and the benchmarking process used to confirm that projected jobs meet the Town's wage targets. Council sought clarification about the risk level to the Town in the event that the company fails to meet its performance requirements. Mr. Putnam confirmed that the agreement includes clear accountability provisions and that payments would cease if the company does not meet its commitments.

Council members stated that they view the project as a meaningful addition to the downtown ecosystem and noted the importance of attracting high-quality employers that provide well-paying jobs.

A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Berry, seconded by Council Member McMahon to close the public hearing. The

motion carried by a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Berry, seconded by Council Member McMahon to adopt R-2 authorizing the Town Manager to sign the Project Stark Tower Incentive Agreement. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

ZONING ATLAS AMENDMENT(S)

Zoning Atlas Amendment: The Zoning Atlas Amendment, to change the zoning designation on this property, is Legislative. The Council receives and considers public comment on the merits of the proposed rezoning, including opinions, when making Legislative decisions.

11. Conditional Zoning Modification Application for 11 White Oak Drive

Senior Planner Charnika Harrell introduced Bryan Harris, representing the applicant. Mr. Harris presented the requested modification to a previously approved conditional zoning district (CZD 20-204-6) for 11 White Oak Drive. He explained that the originally approved building height limit of 62 feet conflicts with the measured height of certain sloped roof segments, due to a combination of grading conditions on the steep site and differences between Town LUMO height-calculation requirements and State Building Code methods. Mr. Harris noted that the majority of the building remains well below the height limit and that only portions of the sloped roofs exceed it by approximately 4-7 feet. He emphasized that the modification does not alter building massing, setbacks, number of units, or shadow impacts.

Mr. Harris described the architectural intent behind the varied rooflines-specifically, that sloped segments were used to break up the building massing and satisfy design expectations established during the original rezoning. He noted adjusting roof pitches at this stage would require redesign and cause project delays, and the applicant requested approval of the height modification to maintain the intended architectural design.

Council members asked questions regarding design alternatives, roof pitch modifications, and the implications of approving additional height. Council members expressed concern about setting precedent for applicants discovering height miscalculations after rezoning approvals, sensitivity to prior public concerns about building height on White Oak Drive, and noted that articulation through varied rooflines can improve design quality and avoid monolithic massing. Ms. Harrell confirmed the Community Design Commission had reviewed the modification and responded favorably.

A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Berry, seconded by Council Member Miller-Foushee to close the public hearing. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Council Member Miller-Foushee, seconded by Council Member Nollert to adopt R-3, finding that the application for the modification is reasonable and consistent with the comprehensive plan. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 - Mayor Anderson, Council Member McMahon, Council Member McCullough, Council Member Miller-Foushee, Council Member Nollert, Council Member Rivers, Council Member Ryan, and Council Member Sharp

Nay: 1 - Mayor pro tem Berry

A motion was made by Council Member Nollert, seconded by Council Member Miller-Foushee to enact O-1, approving the application for modification. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 - Mayor Anderson, Council Member McMahon, Council Member McCullough, Council Member Miller-Foushee, Council Member Nollert, Council Member Rivers, Council Member Ryan, and Council Member Sharp

Nay: 1 - Mayor pro tem Berry

APPOINTMENTS

12. Appointment(s) to the Community Design Commission

The Council appointed Kelly E. Mills and Racheal Tushabe to the Community Design Commission for a term beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2029.

CLOSED SESSION (AS NEEDED)

A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Berry, seconded by Council Member Ryan, that the Council enter into Closed Session as authorized by General Statute Section 143-318.11(a)(6). The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Council recessed into Closed Session at 8:51 p.m.

A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Berry, seconded by Council Member Miller-Foushee to adjourn the Closed Session and Council meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.