

**DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION
OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2014, AT 6:00 PM**

Council Members Present: Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt, Mayor pro tem Sally Greene, Council Member Donna Bell, Council Member George Cianciolo, Council Member Matt Czajkowski, Council Member Ed Harrison, Council Member Maria Palmer, and Council Member Jim Ward.

Council Member(s) Absent: Council Member Lee Storrow.

Staff members present: Town Manager Roger Stancil, Deputy Town Manager Florentine Miller, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, Public Information Officer Catherine Lazorko, Mayoral Aide Mark McCurry, Planning Director J. B. Culpepper, Assistant to the Town Manager Jason Damweber, Interim Executive Director for Planning and Sustainability Matt Sullivan, Business Management Director Ken Pennoyer, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Principal Planner Phil Mason, Library Director Susan Brown, Interim Assistant Planning Director Loryn Clark, Transit Director Brian Litchfield, Development Manager Gene Poveromo, Budget Manager Matt Brinkley, Assistant Library Director Mark Bayles, Assistant Library Director Meeghan Rosen, Maintenance Assistant Jason Greene, Police Officer Rick Fahrer, Fire Marshal Dace Bergen, and Acting Town Clerk Amy Harvey.

1.Approve Agenda. (no attachment)

Mayor Kleinschmidt called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

MAYOR PRO TEM SALLY GREENE MOVED, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER JIM WARD, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0) .

2.Update: Development Review Process. (no attachment)

Interim Executive Director for Planning and Sustainability Matthew Sullivan provided an overview of the Town Manager's direction to review the Town's planning and sustainability functions. He explained that the effort was not focused on major development projects, but instead on improving day-to-day permitting and review processes so that homeowners and community members could more effectively navigate general building, zoning, and plumbing permit requirements.

Principal Planner Phil Mason introduced the presentation, noting that the Town had implemented a number of internal and external improvements since 2007 in alignment with the CH2020 vision and Council goals. He stated that meaningful progress required updates in three complex areas—technology, organizational structure, and regulatory tools. Mr. Mason explained that addressing these areas would support improved customer service aligned with Town values, strengthen staff satisfaction and job performance, and allow the Town to deliver services more efficiently, transparently, and predictably. He added that these improvements would also support economic development and sustainable land use across Chapel Hill.

Council Member Bell arrived at 6:23 p.m.

During the discussion, Council members asked questions regarding potential reductions in review time and associated fees. Mr. Mason noted that a more streamlined process should naturally reduce processing time. Town Manager Roger Stancil added that the Town's fee structure is based on cost recovery and that a review of fees would be appropriate as process improvements continue.

Council members also asked how this work related to the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) update. Mr. Mason confirmed that the process improvement initiative and the LUMO review were separate efforts, while Mr. Sullivan added that the two efforts inform one another. Council members requested that simple explanatory summaries be added to the beginning of LUMO sections, and Mr. Stancil noted that the first phase of the LUMO update would emphasize increased simplicity and clarity.

Council members asked about feedback mechanisms. Mr. Mason explained that a public survey was already in place and that additional performance measures would be used to track progress and ensure continual improvement. Council members suggested enhancements for user feedback on the Town's website, including options for staff follow-up when visitors are unable to find needed information.

Mr. Sullivan highlighted several recent operational improvements. He noted that the Town now uses a joint building and zoning application, reducing duplicative steps for applicants. He also described the multi-departmental development review team, which enables staff from multiple departments to review and discuss applications together rather than sequentially across separate offices.

Council members asked about the availability of 3-D modeling software to support development review. The Town Manager responded that while staff had access to some software and had personnel capable of using it, additional resources would be needed to fully implement and manage the system. He noted recent progress on technology improvements, including support for the LAMA permitting system. Council members acknowledged the functionality already available but requested periodic updates on whether previously approved system enhancements were meeting expectations.

Council members also asked about funding levels for permitting and technology upgrades and how these investments advanced the Town's program goals. Several members emphasized the importance of incorporating feedback loops as systems evolve and recognizing when processes require adjustment.

Mayor Kleinschmidt commented that incremental rollouts—such as releasing parts of the application system in stages—were well received by the community and supported ongoing learning. Mr. Sullivan reiterated that improvements to the customer service experience remained the highest priority.

3.Update: Library Operations. (no attachment)

Library Director Susan Brown provided an update on current library hours and operations. She reviewed how funds from the previous year had been used and shared information about ongoing programs and initiatives. Ms. Brown expressed appreciation on behalf of the library's users for the continued support shown to the library, particularly during and after its construction. She reported that the library continued to serve a high volume of readers and that staff remained focused on delivering books and early literacy resources to young children by visiting schools, daycares, and other community locations.

Ms. Brown noted that, in addition to traditional literacy, digital literacy had become an essential part of their work. She described the services offered through the digital media lab, including claymation video creation and assistance with transferring personal photos. She also acknowledged the existence of a digital divide within the community and explained that the library provided direct assistance while partnering with organizations such as the Compass Center to support users with needs the library could not meet alone. She commented that the Chapel Hill Public Library was increasingly serving as a community convener and emphasized the importance of reaching residents outside of the library building. Ms. Brown concluded her update with an overview of anticipated activities and initiatives for the next six months.

Council Member Harrison asked about the benefit of maintaining a high number of library users and whether a larger user base provided operational advantages similar to those seen in transit ridership models. Ms. Brown responded that while the library benefited from favorable service-population calculations, partnerships were generally more significant when applying for grants.

Council Member Ward asked about outreach efforts in public housing neighborhoods. Ms. Brown reported that the library had a presence at service fairs and was coordinating with the housing director to explore additional opportunities, though much of their outreach continued to occur through schools, daycares, and early childhood programs. Council Member Ward encouraged continued efforts to reach residents who might not otherwise access library services.

Council Member Cianciolo asked whether the increase in activity reflected greater use by existing cardholders or an increase in the number of cardholders overall. Council Member Palmer raised concerns about transit access to the library, citing an example of a resident who spent two hours traveling by bus. Ms. Brown acknowledged the issue, stating that she wanted to support long-term solutions for those who faced such challenges, but noted that part of the problem involved public perception. She explained that buses did not stop directly at the library entrance but passed nearby, and she expressed interest in exploring creative ways to improve access.

Council Member Palmer also asked about services for non-English speakers and the availability of world language resources. Ms. Brown stated that the library had relevant materials and was working to translate card applications into Spanish.

4.Review of Council Feedback on Priority Based Budgeting. (no attachment)

Margaret Henderson introduced a presentation prepared jointly by herself and Sarah Forbes. She reviewed the process used to gather feedback, explaining that interviews conducted in November and December included a mix of individual interviews and paired conversations. Ms. Henderson emphasized that priority-based budgeting (PBB) does not replace the Town's budgeting process but is intended to serve as a tool for evaluating how well resources align with priorities. She noted that Council members had expressed a desire for greater transparency, particularly regarding how services are grouped within priority areas and how individual Council members rank those priorities. She explained that Council hoped to create opportunities to share the reasoning behind their rankings and to learn from each other throughout the year-round budget process. Ms. Henderson stated that staff would continue working to design strategies that effectively inform and engage the community. She asked whether it would be useful for Council to set aside dedicated time to clarify values and determine the sequencing of major projects.

During the subsequent discussion, Council members reflected on the Budgetopolis activity, values identification, and how the exercise supported conversations about priorities. They discussed the need to refine values into a smaller set of core principles that could help guide decisions and improve understanding among Council members. Several members commented on the importance of recognizing trade-offs, noting that every priority carries a cost and that clarity about individual motivations may support stronger collaboration. Council members also discussed the usefulness of sequencing major projects, stating that understanding which initiatives were most essential could reduce instances of reopening prior decisions.

Council members reflected on how past budget discussions aligned with major Town initiatives. Some noted that the previous year's process left them uncertain about how projects were prioritized and how Council's goals connected to budget decisions. Others suggested aligning this work more closely with the CH2020 plan to better reflect community values. There was additional discussion of the need for clearer communication about long-term obligations, such as the financial impacts of major capital projects.

Several Council members expressed appreciation for hearing each other's interests more explicitly and observed that individual context can shape how members approach complex issues. Members also noted the importance of distinguishing between Council goals, budget objectives, and broader community themes, and suggested consolidating these into a more understandable framework. The group discussed opportunities to empower Council members to champion specific areas and to connect Council priorities with measurable budget outcomes.

Ms. Henderson shared observations from the Town's multi-year experience with PBB. She noted that although significant time and staff resources had been invested, she did not see strong evidence that PBB had meaningfully improved decision-making. She observed that the process had not consistently illuminated trade-offs or aligned decisions across the organization. She also spoke about her experience attending a PBB session at the National League of Cities conference, where communities using the model successfully demonstrated clearer identification of priorities, costs, and spending patterns. Ms. Henderson explained that PBB is most effective when it enables communities to see where resources are being spent on lower-priority items and

consider whether reallocation is appropriate. She expressed frustration that the Town did not seem closer to that point now than two years prior.

Council members and Town Manager Roger Stancil continued the discussion by reflecting on past budget cycles. Several noted that while much of the budget is stable and uncontroversial, Council has lacked a clear understanding of how the final recommended budget is shaped by ongoing discussions. They expressed concern that both Council and the public have limited visibility into how spending aligns with priorities, contributing to confusion and reduced sense of ownership.

Mr. Stancil acknowledged the feedback, noting that the system created to support PBB had not met expectations. He explained that the simultaneous demands of the CH2020 process had further complicated implementation. He stated that staff planned to work on simplifying terminology, clarifying priorities, and improving transparency. He reported that creating program categories and assigning values to them had been helpful for staff internally, and he described plans to provide Council with information and a model ahead of their retreat. He shared that the Town was consulting with centers for priority budgeting and that internal staff teams had been identifying major budget challenges. He stated that staff would work to summarize themes, timing considerations, and values-related issues to support more productive conversations.

Mayor Kleinschmidt concluded by noting that additional discussion would occur prior to the Council retreat and encouraged members to contact staff with questions so that meeting time could be used efficiently.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

MAYOR PRO TEM SALLY GREENE MOVED, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER JIM WARD, TO CONTINUE THE WORK SESSION ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 2014 AT 6:00 P.M.. THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY (8-0) .