

**DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION  
OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2013, AT 6:00 PM**

**Council Members Present:** Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt, Council Member Donna Bell, Council Member Matt Czajkowski, Council Member Laurin Easthom, Council Member Sally Greene, Mayor Pro Tem Ed Harrison, Council Member Gene Pease, Council Member Lee Storrow, and Council Member Jim Ward.

**Staff members present:** Town Manager Roger Stancil, Deputy Town Manager Florentine Miller, Parks and Recreation Maintenance Assistant Jason Greene, Budget Manager Matt Brinkley, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Assistant Director of Business Management Jeanne Tate, Planning Director JB Culpepper, Organizational Effectiveness Coordinator Rae Buckley, Assistant to the Town Manager Jason Damweber, Sustainability Officer John Richardson, Director of Business Management Ken Pennoyer, Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey, and Director of Communications and Public Affairs/Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver.

**1. Approve Agenda. (no attachment)**

Council Members Ward and Easthom moved to approve the agenda.

Council held a moment of silence in memory of those lost in the 9/11 bombings.

COUNCIL MEMBER JIM WARD MOVED, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LAURIN EASTHOM, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0) .

**2. Setting the Course for the 2014-2015 Budget.**

Business Management Director Ken Pennoyer opened with an overview of the Town's priority-based budgeting approach, emphasizing the importance of aligning the annual budget with long-term community goals and the CH2020 themes of development, safety, accessibility, community stewardship, and governance. He explained how 88 Town programs had been evaluated against 25 objectives and noted that staff would need Council direction on whether to maintain or revise those objectives, as well as guidance for a new round of public engagement.

Council Members expressed significant interest in revisiting and refining the budgeting process. Several members noted that last year's experience revealed challenges—particularly the complexity of evaluating so many programs and the difficulty the public had in understanding the structure and terminology of priority-based budgeting. Council acknowledged that while the Town should continue focusing on big-picture goals, the process needed to become more intuitive, transparent, and accessible to residents. Some Council Members raised concerns that the current approach was overly abstract and did not always help them understand the real impact of programs. Others felt that the framework lacked meaningful public dialogue, resulting in limited community awareness of how budget decisions were made. There was agreement that stronger communication tools—such as an online citizen's budget guide—would help residents grasp major budget drivers and trade-offs.

Council also discussed the importance of ensuring that public feedback reflects the voices of

Chapel Hill taxpayers and that program comparisons avoid fostering unnecessary competition between basic Town services. Members emphasized the need to identify which programs were essential, which ones supported high-level goals, and where opportunities might exist to adjust funding or scale services. Several members expressed interest in exploring alternative models or bringing in outside expertise to help streamline the process. There was also acknowledgment that dealing with 88 individual programs was impractical and that a more manageable structure would support clearer decision-making. Council agreed that they were not abandoning their priorities but rather seeking a more effective way to evaluate progress, engage the community, and align resources with strategic outcomes.

The budget discussion concluded at 6:55 p.m.

### **3. Discuss Council Interest in LUMO Revisions.**

- a. Schedule
- b. Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs)
- c. Trade-offs and New Directions

Consultant Lee Einsweiler from Code Studio provided an overview of upcoming zoning-related events and introduced the concept of a new zoning approach Chapel Hill was exploring. He explained that the goal of the proposed system was to deliver consistent public benefits even as development patterns changed. He described two new zoning designations under consideration—WX and WR—which included different height allowances. Mr. Einsweiler emphasized the importance of having consistent standards on both sides of a street to create predictable, cohesive development patterns.

Using a color-coded map, he highlighted areas designated as walkable frontages versus vehicular frontages and acknowledged that some residents had expressed concern that the new zoning framework might diminish certain qualities of their neighborhoods. He reviewed the types of public benefits expected from the new approach, explaining how these benefits were currently achieved in the Ephesus form district, focusing on the role of parking requirements, street design, and building form rather than residential density.

Mr. Einsweiler asked Council whether they were ready to move forward with the proposed direction. This prompted a broad discussion about the implications of form-based zoning. Council Members raised questions about future development outcomes, energy efficiency, building heights, and the long-term character of affected areas. Several Council Members expressed uncertainty about how the new regulations would play out in practice and whether the community fully understood what the proposed changes would mean. Mr. Einsweiler responded that improved street connectivity would help traffic conditions and that the flexibility of form-based zoning could allow individual sites to be developed in ways that balanced public benefits with market feasibility. He emphasized that the approach was intended to guide, rather than dictate, the evolution of an area—preserving stable development patterns where they existed and helping improve areas where current patterns had deteriorated. He noted that form-based zoning is often used to transition auto-oriented corridors into more walkable environments and suggested that the Town consider incorporating a design review component to help reinforce quality.

Council Members discussed whether the proposed zoning could result in buildings that were taller than desired and whether additional setbacks or stepbacks would be expected. Some expressed concern about ceding too much control over design details and the potential loss of leverage in negotiating site-specific improvements. Questions were also raised about how the

new framework would support affordable housing and whether other communities had successfully used incentives in similar zoning systems.

Mr. Einsweiler acknowledged that form-based zoning rarely incorporates strong incentive programs and noted limitations in existing tools such as neighborhood conservation districts. He recommended undertaking a broader, long-term update to modernize citywide zoning regulations and create new baseline districts better aligned with Chapel Hill's evolving needs.

Council Members sought clarification on the strengths of neighborhood conservation districts, the role of infill development, and how these changes might be applied in other parts of town. The discussion reflected both interest in the potential benefits of the form-based approach and lingering concerns about predictability, urban design outcomes, and long-term community impacts.

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.