



Town Council
Meeting Minutes - Draft
April 16, 2026, 8:30 AM
Library, Meeting Room B

<p>For interpretation or translation services, call 919-969-5105.</p>	<p>ဘာသာပြန်ဆိုခြင်းနှင့် စကားပြန်ခြင်းအတွက် (၉၁၉) ၉၆၉ ၅၁၀၅ ကိုဖုန်းခေါ်ပါ။</p>	<p>如需口头或书面翻译服务, 请拨打 919-969-5105。</p>	<p>လာတက်ကတိကျသည့် မှတ်တမ်းများကို အတိအကျအောင် ကိုယ်တိုင် ခြားနားပါ။</p>	<p>Para servicios de interpretación o traducción, llame al 919 969-5105.</p>
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WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND GROUP PICTURE

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

ATTENDEES

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

Other Attendees Present: NC House Representative Allen Buansi, NC House Representative Renee Price, NC Senator Jonah Garson, Central Pines Regional Council Executive Director Lee Worsley, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Local Relations Director Ivy Taylor, and North Carolina League of Municipalities Director of Urban Affairs Seth Palmer.

Staff Present: Town Manager Theodore L. Voorhees, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clerk, Chief of Staff Jeanne Brown, Mobility and Greenways Manager Bergen Watterson, Communications and Engagement Director Susan Brown, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Economic Development Director David Putnam, Assistant Police Chief Joshua Mecimore, Sustainability Manager John Richardson, Community Relations Manager Shay Stevens, Assistant Affordable Housing Director Emily Holt, Transit Director Brian Litchfield, and Town Clerk Brittney Hunt.

Legislative Breakfast Handout(s)

[26-0113]

CHAPEL HILL MAYOR: UPDATE ON COMPLETE COMMUNITY

Mayor Anderson provided a comprehensive update on Chapel Hill’s progress toward its Complete Community goals, framing the conversation within the Town’s ongoing recovery from Tropical Storm Chantal. She described the extensive work undertaken over the past year to repair damaged greenways and public infrastructure, re-house displaced public housing residents, and support local businesses in reopening after the storm.

She reviewed Chapel Hill’s efforts to grow housing supply-including missing middle housing-and noted that LUMO rewrite efforts are in the final phase and expected to advance toward adoption later this fall. She emphasized that modernized land-use regulations will support a predictable development environment, diversified housing opportunities, and statewide goals for housing

and infrastructure readiness.

Mayor Anderson also highlighted investments in key infrastructure and mobility initiatives including the North-South Bus Rapid Transit project and the “Everywhere to Everywhere” greenway system, both central to the Town’s multimodal future. She noted that continued collaboration with UNC at Chapel Hill, particularly around Carolina North and stormwater resilience, remains essential.

Mayor Anderson closed her remarks by stressing the importance of state-local partnership, particularly the preservation of local authority over property taxation, which she described as essential for fiscal sustainability and the ability to maintain core services.

CHAPEL HILL STAFF: UPDATES ON TOWN INITIATIVES AND KEY TOPICS

Economic Development Director David Putnam provided an update on Chapel Hill’s economic development strategy, noting a focus on strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem and preparing the workforce of tomorrow through partnerships such as Propel NC. He emphasized the need to diversify Chapel Hill’s economic development toolkit and highlighted emerging workforce demands. Mr. Putnam discussed Launch Local, a new collaborative program with Carrboro and Launch Inc. designed to support main-street businesses and local entrepreneurs through technical training and capacity-building.

Assistant Chief Joshua Mecimore outlined the Police Department’s current priorities, including concerns related to permitless concealed carry legislation and its potential impact on officer safety. He highlighted Chapel Hill’s 50-year history of embedding social workers in public safety operations and described the expansion of the CARE Team and peer support programs. The department continues to strengthen diversion and support initiatives to keep residents out of the court system and to help them thrive. Chief Mecimore also identified the need to address predatory towing practices, advocating for reasonable and clearly disclosed fees. He concluded by noting continued expansion of the co-responder model and coordinated crisis response with Orange County.

Sustainability Manager John Richardson thanked legislators for supporting C-PACE, which Chapel Hill is now using to advance sustainability and resiliency upgrades for local buildings. He described opportunities emerging from Duke Energy’s evolving programs, including the Clean Transition Tariff and Non-Residential Power Pair program, both of which could accelerate Chapel Hill’s renewable energy transition without burdening taxpayers. He also reported that the Town remains ahead of its greenhouse gas reduction target, now 32% below 2005 levels.

Mobility and Greenways Manager Bergen Watterson acknowledged the strong partnership with NCDOT and CDOT, thanking them for their coordination on crosswalk and sidewalk improvements that advance the Town’s Safe Routes to

School and Vision Zero goals. Ms. Watterson noted groundbreaking on several sidewalk projects in areas with high pedestrian injury rates, as well as progress toward three federally supported mobility projects: the Fordham sidepath, the Bolin Creek Greenway extension, and additional multimodal enhancements.

Transit Director Brian Litchfield emphasized the need for increased state transit operating assistance, noting that SMAP funding has remained flat for more than 20 years, with most funds directed to Charlotte. Chapel Hill currently receives about \$3 million to support its transit system, and long-awaited improvements to NC-54 bus stops are now underway after years of seeking federal funding.

Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark provided updates on planning and affordable housing initiatives, including recently adopted LUMO amendments that expand missing-middle opportunities and ongoing development on Town-owned land at Trinity Court and Homestead Gardens. Ms. Clark highlighted the Town's efforts to break ground on projects initiated as early as 2016, emphasized continued redevelopment of public housing sites, and closing of funding gaps through state programs and community partnerships. She also referenced upcoming amendments needed to support homeownership programs and other affordable housing tools.

TOWN MANAGER: LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AND FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATES

Town Manager Theodore Voorhees discussed the Town's fiscal challenges and the need for partnership with the General Assembly to ensure sustainable revenue options. He explained that property taxes remain the Town's only flexible revenue lever, and proposed state caps or limits would severely restrict Chapel Hill's ability to maintain police, fire, transit, sanitation, and street maintenance services.

Mr. Voorhees pointed to other states-particularly California-as cautionary examples where limits on local property taxation led to long-term negative impacts. He emphasized the need for targeted, needs-based tax relief rather than broad restrictions that undermine local control. He also highlighted the Town's innovative partnerships with universities and local businesses, noting that Chapel Hill is working creatively within existing constraints but needs flexibility to meet community expectations.

STATE LEGISLATORS: GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRIORITIES AND UPDATES

Representative Allen Buansi opened by addressing the ongoing delay in the adoption of the state budget, noting that North Carolina is the only state in the country that had not yet passed a budget for the year. He emphasized that this lack of clarity reduces departmental dependability, affects salary adjustments for state employees, and Medicaid funding obligations. He described budget passage as his top priority. He also raised concerns about proposed property tax levy limits, noting that such limits lack specificity and would disproportionately harm municipalities like Chapel Hill that rely heavily on property tax revenue for

essential services.

Representative Renee Price emphasized the importance of investment in public education, particularly increased pay for teachers, state employees, and retirees, who have gone years without meaningful raises. Ms. Price highlighted the need for improved public safety and mental health resources and referenced successful models such as the HEART program in Durham. She also underscored the importance of Medicaid expansion for rural communities and voiced concerns about proposed tax reforms that could reduce revenues needed for core services.

Senator Jonah Garson discussed the transition of staff responsibilities and the need to establish an effective communication cadence with Chapel Hill during and outside of the short session. He provided updates on storm recovery efforts, emphasizing the gaps in available federal and state funding and the importance of continued legislative action. He noted uncertainty around upcoming committee assignments but indicated a commitment to supporting storm-impacted residents.

Council members and legislators engaged in open discussion around the impact of Tropical Storm Chantal, including unmet needs for homeowners and renters and limitations in FEMA and state assistance programs. Legislators outlined constraints around how state funds can be used-particularly the prohibition on using state recovery funds for privately owned residential losses-and acknowledged the need for more flexible tools.

Delegation members also highlighted concerns about the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit tax reform bill, affordable housing loopholes exploited by non-profit ownership structures, and bipartisan recommendations to close such loopholes to restore local tax revenue. Discussion broadened to delayed budget negotiations, with legislators noting disagreements between House and Senate leadership and concerns about the fiscal shortfall that became evident once negotiations became public.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS: QUICK UPDATES

UNC Local Relations Director Dr. Ivy Taylor reiterated UNC's commitment to strong partnership with the Town, highlighting shared priorities around Franklin Street safety, mental health support, and continuity of care for discharged patients. She discussed the University's plans to partner with Orange County on a day-center lease and emphasized the importance of collaborative problem-solving around individuals experiencing homelessness. Dr. Taylor also provided updates on Carolina North planning, noting that its housing component is intended to support not only students but also the broader community. Enrollment funding remains uncertain due to the delayed state budget.

NCLM Director of Urban Affairs Seth Palmer provided an overview of state-level legislative trends affecting municipalities, including significant attention to property tax authority, land-use regulation reforms, Diversity, Equity, and

Inclusion initiatives, and technical corrections to statutes affecting background checks for programs serving youth. He reported significant misalignment between House and Senate priorities, leading to unclear direction on several key policies.

Central Pines Regional Council Executive Director Lee Worsley described regional planning challenges, noting that the region has grown to nearly 4 million residents while the Regional Planning Act has not been updated since 1968. Mr. Worsley emphasized the need for new state investment in aging services-particularly ombudsman programs-which remain understaffed despite steep increases in the population aged 85+. He encouraged stronger collaboration and state support for regional planning and aging services programs.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 am.