

**DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION
OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2013, AT 6:30 PM**

Council Members Present: Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt, Council Member Laurin Easthom, Council Member Sally Greene, Mayor Pro Tem Ed Harrison, and Council Member Jim Ward.

Council Member(s) Absent: Council Member Donna Bell, Council Member Matt Czajkowski, Council Member Gene Pease, and Council Member Lee Storrow.

Staff members present: Town Manager Roger Stancil, Deputy Town Manager Florentine Miller, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, Parks and Recreation Maintenance Assistant Jason Greene, Assistant to the Town Manager Jason Damweber, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Parks and Recreation Director Butch Kisiah, Library Director Susan Brown, Public Information Officer Catherine Lazorko, Acting and Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey, Chair of CHCCS Board of Education Michelle Brownstein, Vice Chair of CHCCS Board of Education Jamezetta Bedford, CHCCS Board of Education Member James Barrett, CHCCS Board of Education Member Mia Day Burroughs, CHCCS Board of Education Member Mike Kelley, CHCCS Board of Education Member Gregory W. McElveen, CHCCS Board of Education Member Annetta Stokes Streater, Superintendent of CHCCS Tom Forcella, and Assistant Superintendent of CHCCS Todd LoFrese.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Update on Chapel Hill 2020.

Mayor Kleinschmidt called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. The joint session was convened by Mayor Kleinschmidt and Chair of CHCCS Board of Education Michelle Brownstein, and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to strengthen collaboration, share information, and identify opportunities for alignment between the Town's Chapel Hill 2020 comprehensive plan and the school district's long-range planning efforts.

Council Member Lee Storrow and CHCCS Board of Education member Gregory McElveen entered at 6:35 p.m.

Town Manager Roger Stancil provided introductory remarks, explaining that the Town's comprehensive planning effort had increasingly overlapped with issues central to the school district, especially around facilities, community engagement, and long-term growth. He noted that schools often serve as natural gathering places for community input and thanked CHCCS for its ongoing support.

Director of Policy & Strategic Initiatives Mary Jane Nirdlinger offered an overview of the Chapel Hill 2020 process, highlighting its nine months of extensive community engagement across 64 meetings. She emphasized that the public often views schools and local government as interconnected, making joint conversations important as both organizations shift from planning to implementation. She shared updates on the focus areas under discussion, including recent work related to the Estes Drive area.

Jamezetta Bedford, Vice Chair of the CHCCS Board of Education, updated the group on school-related conversations occurring in the Rogers Road area, identifying the Greene Tract

and ETJ expansion as key topics. She also described the district's bike plan project and its relationship to community mobility discussions.

2. Update on Long Range Strategic Plan.

Assistant Superintendent Todd LoFrese provided an overview of the district's current priorities, student demographics, and general school environment.

CHCCS Superintendent Dr. Tom Forcella followed with a detailed presentation on the district's long-range plan. He described five major areas of strategic focus:

- Instructional improvement, particularly through technology and strengthened problem-solving curricula;
- Closing achievement gaps, with an emphasis on ensuring at least one full year of academic growth for students;
- School culture, including expanded outreach into the community and deeper engagement with families;
- Professional development, supported through delayed openings, substitute coverage, and alternatives to traditional teacher workdays; and
- Accountability, with broader use of data to evaluate progress districtwide.

Dr. Forcella explained that the plan included 28 total strategies, 11 of which were targeted for implementation that year.

Mr. LoFrese then presented findings from the recent facility assessment, noting extensive aging infrastructure across the district's schools. He outlined three potential investment approaches:

1. Basic remediation and repair (~\$4 million),
2. Renovations and capacity upgrades to bring facilities to the standard of new schools (~\$9 million), or
3. A combined approach (~\$14 million).

He also discussed drop-off congestion at schools and the need to address design-related traffic challenges.

3. Update on Areas of Collaboration.

Director of the Chapel Hill Public Library Susan Brown shared information about the library's youth-focused programs and partnerships with schools. She highlighted initiatives such as teen book clubs, school outreach efforts, summer reading collaboration, and new literacy programs like the Book Walk.

Parks & Recreation Director Butch Kisiah described how parks and recreation programs connect with students when the school day ends. He emphasized the need for unified expectations around behavior, mentoring, and academic support. Mr. Kisiah noted several shared-use facilities—such as Rashkis Gym and Scroggs Soccer Field—and emphasized opportunities to strengthen joint planning, including at potential future school sites. Director of Student Equity & Volunteer Services Greg Meyer provided an update on volunteer involvement across CHCCS, noting that approximately 1,400 volunteers support students, including through tutoring and the Blue Mentor Advocate Program. He also described community-based academic support such as the Hargraves Center tutorial program and highlighted recent literacy-focused events.

Community Connection Program Manager (CHCCS) Darren Bell discussed efforts to address the digital divide by providing computers, internet access, and family-oriented workshops. He emphasized the importance of expanding broadband access for at-risk students who are not living in public housing and noted ongoing collaboration with the Town to explore community-wide connectivity solutions. Chief Technology Officer (CHCCS) Ray Reitz presented on technological infrastructure needs, referencing the district's fiber ring and emphasizing the need for increased bandwidth capacity, both for educational requirements and for potential shared efficiencies with the Town. CHCCS Coordinator of Health Services Stephanie Willis discussed student wellness programs, including substance-use prevention efforts such as mock crash events and student assistance programs that rely on close coordination with community partners.

Town staff and school officials also jointly highlighted the need to expand youth engagement. A Town representative described plans for a youth initiative to gather input from students on services, opportunities, and community concerns. Staff from both organizations noted the importance of improving outreach to young people, especially after CH2020 revealed gaps in student participation.

Executive Director of Housing & Community Loryn Clark raised concerns about how growing residential density—particularly affordable housing developments—would impact school capacity. She asked how the Town and district could collaborate more strategically around projected growth.

School Board Chair Michelle Brownstein acknowledged the challenge, citing land availability and construction timelines as major constraints. She encouraged continued joint planning with Orange County and more frequent communication across boards.

Board Member Annetta Streater emphasized the connection between student wellness and recreation programming, particularly with respect to accessible indoor and outdoor space. She framed parks and recreation offerings as important tools for supporting student mental and physical well-being.

Council Members and school officials discussed land banking, future school sites, and the need for early coordination on developments such as Greene Tract, Carolina North, and Obey Creek. Several participants noted the importance of stabilizing school populations to avoid frequent redistricting and emphasized that early notification of large housing proposals would support better forecasting.

Board Member James Barrett encouraged continued big-picture conversations between the organizations, noting that broader planning issues were more critical to them than parcel-specific decisions.

The group also discussed walk zones and school transportation challenges, particularly along Estes Drive. Town and school staff emphasized the need to encourage walking where possible and to manage school-related traffic effectively.

Several participants expressed support for regular joint meetings. CHCCS representatives noted that sharing an annual set of key data points—growth projections, demographic trends, facility status—would help the Town align its planning efforts.

Before adjournment, Council Members asked about strategies for addressing student driver safety (including texting and driving education) and about long-term planning for pre-K classroom space. School staff provided updates on related programming and existing facility limitations.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.