

**DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION  
OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2016, AT 6:30 PM**

**Council Members Present:** Mayor Pam Hemminger, Council Member Jessica Anderson, Council Member George Cianciolo, Council Member Sally Greene, Council Member Ed Harrison, Council Member Nancy Oates, Council Member Maria Palmer, and Council Member Michael Parker.

**Staff members present:** Town Manager Roger Stancil, Deputy Town Manager Florentine Miller, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, Public Works Director Lance Norris, Long Range and Transportation Planning Manager David Bonk, Manager of Engineering and Infrastructure Chris Roberts, Interim Battalion Chief Paul Moss, Emergency Management Coordinator Barry McLamb, Fire Chief Matthew Sullivan, Senior Engineer Chris Jensen, and Fire Captain Bill Blankenship.

**1. Update: Chapel Hill's Response to Flooding. (no attachment)**

Fire Chief Matt Sullivan provided an overview of the flooding challenges in Chapel Hill. He presented images of areas that had repeatedly flooded in 2013 and 2015 and explained how historical development patterns—particularly in areas annexed with limited infrastructure—continue to affect stormwater behavior. Chief Sullivan discussed topographical limitations that prevent lowering certain areas, noting that Jordan Lake's elevation is only marginally lower than the Town's, which limits engineering solutions. Council members asked questions about potential infrastructure improvements, such as deeper culverts, but Chief Sullivan emphasized that while improvements can help, flooding cannot be entirely engineered away.

Manager of Engineering and Infrastructure Chris Roberts presented FEMA flood zone information and discussed the differences between 25 year and 100 year flood events. Mr. Roberts reviewed watershed characteristics that contribute to flooding in locations such as Camelot Village and explained situations where mitigation may not be feasible. Council asked questions about flood frequency, the likelihood of larger scale mitigation, and the possibilities of changing stormwater standards to reduce long term risk.

Emergency Management Coordinator Barry McLamb described the FEMA mitigation and buyout program, noting the Town's 25 percent financial responsibility and the challenges associated with grant timing. Mr. McLamb briefed the Council on community outreach efforts, the County's new neighborhood preparedness initiative, and upcoming grant opportunities—specifically referencing Tinkerbelle Road and Camelot Village properties. He showed images of affected structures and explained that while pipe replacement and other infrastructure adjustments help, they are insufficient on their own to fully resolve flooding risks.

Council members asked about relocation assistance, property valuation, and how stormwater improvements may intersect with broader community concerns such as affordable housing. Mr. McLamb and staff noted that buyouts involve lengthy timelines and strict conditions. Staff also discussed watershed studies and potential collaboration with UNC and Carrboro to address regional drainage. Council raised questions about mold remediation, public education on

stormwater best practices, and the need for signage in flood prone areas. Staff reiterated that stormwater management requires long term planning and sustained investment.

Interim Battalion Chief Paul Moss, and Swift Water Rescue representative, provided an overview of the Town's rescue capabilities, including equipment, team training, and partnerships with regional agencies. Mr. Moss highlighted specialized training completed by personnel and the value of interagency coordination. Council asked questions about community volunteer engagement, and staff explained the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program and new county initiatives to support local readiness and neighborhood level emergency planning.

## **2. Update: Building New Sidewalks. (no attachment)**

Manager of Engineering and Infrastructure Chris Roberts presented a detailed update on proposed sidewalk construction projects supported by bond funding. He explained the need for professional sidewalk design due to slope, permitting, drainage, and other engineering considerations that exceed in house capacity. Mr. Roberts reviewed ten prioritized project areas, outlined preliminary cost estimates, and discussed opportunities to coordinate sidewalk construction with aging infrastructure improvements.

Council discussed specific locations, including Homestead Road, Smith Middle School access, Weaver Dairy Road, Piney Mountain Road, Ephesus Church Road, Willow Drive, and Seawell School Road. They raised questions about project timing, potential impacts of North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) projects, opportunities for future connectivity, and methods to avoid conflicts with historic features, tree roots, and stormwater systems. Staff agreed to incorporate Council feedback into upcoming design stages.

Council members also discussed broader concerns about sidewalk maintenance, long term funding needs, and strategies for ensuring new sidewalks are not neglected. Staff noted that bond funds could be used for maintenance in coordination with the Town's bike pedestrian team. Council also discussed possible partnerships with transit to prepare for future bus shelters, as well as opportunities to integrate public art or coordinate with school projects.

Staff were asked to explore whether volunteers could assist with sidewalk vegetation maintenance. Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos noted the need to manage liability and ensure volunteers avoid private property but said such options could be explored further.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.