TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town of Chapel Hill Standing Advisory Board Review

Achieving Council Goal 1E

UNC Chapel Hill School of Government and Town of Chapel Hill Communications and Public Affairs Department

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Town of Chapel Hill Standing Advisory Board Review

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Executive Summary

Consistent with the Council Goal to *define roles and responsibilities for advisory boards and commissions,* Town staff collaborated with the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government to design a research project to understand how standing advisory boards currently operate and to identify opportunities for improvement. Data was generated by 148 people completing online surveys, a review of 435 sets of advisory board action-minutes and three face-to-face workshops with advisory board members and Town staff who serve as Liaisons to the Town's advisory boards.

Online surveys were completed by six members of the Town Council, 66 staff members and 76 standing advisory board members. Key findings from the surveys include:

- Agreement between Council, staff and advisory board members on the contributions of Town advisory boards.
- Overall agreement among members of Council, staff and advisory board members that advisory boards should help achieve specific Chapel Hill 2020 goals.
- General agreement by advisory board members and staff liaisons on the extent to which individual advisory boards are fulfilling the charge given to them by the Town Council.
- Lack of agreement among advisory board members and staff liaisons regarding the contribution of individual advisory boards to the Town's development review process.
- Lack of agreement among advisory board members and staff liaisons on how well individual advisory boards adhere to Town policies and guidelines in their decision making.
- General agreement by advisory board members that they receive information in advance to prepare for meetings.
- Agreement by more than two thirds of advisory board members that they are quite or very satisfied with their service on Town advisory boards.

Three face-to-face workshops were held in December 2012; 35 advisory board members representing 14 of the Town's 19 standing advisory boards and 15 of 17 Town staff liaisons attended. Participants gave input on what advisory boards currently contribute to the Town and offered suggestions on how they could contribute more effectively in the future. Both advisory board members and staff liaisons agreed that advisory boards are contributing positively to the work of the Town. They also agreed additional training and guidance from Council would help focus advisory board work.

A document review of two years of advisory board minutes and related documents provided insights into the use of action minutes; level of adherence to Council charge; and the types of topics discussed at advisory board meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data from the online surveys, face-to-face workshops and document review, the Town could improve its work with advisory boards by:

- Providing greater clarity around the purpose and function of advisory boards.

- Strengthening feedback loops to improve advisory boards ability to provide useful recommendations to Council.
- Aligning advisory board work to Chapel Hill 2020 goals as appropriate.
- Continuing to expand and diversify membership on Town advisory boards
- Creating a methodology for considering advisory board work and performance within the priority budgeting process.
- Clarifying roles for advisory boards in the development process.
- Continuing and expanding training for advisory boards on both general and subject specific topics relevant to their work.

Overview of the Project

In the past, the development and growth of advisory boards in Chapel Hill has often taken place as a reaction to a specific community event or interest. The result is a system of 19 standing advisory boards with varying purposes, limited opportunities to interact with one another and Council, and inconsistent and inadequate tools for evaluating success.

In 2010, Council began to address this situation by adopting *Council Goal 1E: Define roles and responsibilities for advisory boards and commissions*. In the years since the creation of Council Goal 1E, the Town has continued to pursue a more strategic model of governance and operation. This is evident in the development of the Chapel Hill 2020 plan, the consideration of form based coding for development and the move towards priority budgeting.

This developing strategic model affects the roles and responsibilities of boards and commissions. The goal of a strategic, systems approach to decision-making raises new questions about the purpose of advisory boards and the type of advisory board system that will best assist the Town Council in governing with quality, responsiveness and efficiency.

Having identified these issues, Town staff collaborated with the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government to create a research project to analyze the current status of advisory board operations and deliver a data driven set of recommendations for Council consideration.

The following research questions were developed to guide this work:

1. What does the Town Council see as the contribution(s) of advisory boards?
2. Does the current advisory board system meet the expectation(s) identified through question 1?
3. Which governing body (federal, state, local) enables each advisory board?
4. Is there overlap between advisory board responsibilities with specific attention to development review?
5. Should advisory boards be explicitly charged with helping to achieve specific Chapel Hill 2020 goals?
6. What should the makeup and balance of advisory board membership be?

7. Are the resources allocated to supporting advisory boards appropriate given the Town's priority budgeting initiative?

In order to address these questions and develop appropriate recommendations, staff created a five-step project plan.

Project Plan for Council Goal 1E:
Defining Roles and Responsibilities for Advisory Boards and Commissions

The purpose of this report is to outline the methodology used for data collection, present and analyze the data and make recommendations to Council regarding next steps.

Phase One: Data Collection

From September 2012 to January 2013 quantitative and qualitative data was collected in partnership with the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government through a triangulated process which included the following methods:

- Surveys: customized online surveys for Council Members, advisory board members and staff,
- Face-to-face workshops: two for advisory board members and one for staff , and
- Document Review: a wide range of documents was reviewed including advisory board enabling legislation, minutes, priorities and training evaluation forms.

Additional information about the methodology used for each data set can be found in the sections below.

1. Surveys

In November 2012, the Project Team invited Council Members, advisory board members and Town staff to take a customized online survey which was created by Town staff in collaboration with the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government. The purpose of the survey was to gather a broad spectrum of individual stakeholders' opinions on issues such as advisory board effectiveness, membership diversity and the possibility of linking advisory boards more closely to the Chapel Hill 2020 plan. Copies of the survey questions appear in Appendix L and the combined survey results can be found in Appendix M.

As shown in Table 1, the survey response rate was significant. Among the advisory board members who responded, 21 percent are advisory board officers.

Table 1: Survey Respondents

Response Group	# Survey Respondents
Council Members	6
Advisory Board Members	76
Staff Liaisons	17
Other Staff	49
Total	**148**

While members from most standing advisory boards participated in the survey, there were a few boards from which few or no members participated. Staff who took the survey were also asked to indicate which advisory boards they supported so that they could be asked questions regarding the work of that board. Many of the 66 staff respondents support more than one advisory board which is why the number of staff responding for each advisory board in Table 2 appears high. A list of survey respondents by board appears in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Survey Respondents by Advisory Board

Advisory Board Name	# of Board Members Responses	# of Staff Responses
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board	7	12
Board of Adjustment	3	16
Cemeteries Advisory Board	3	13
Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership	0	17
Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission	2	14
Community Design Commission	4	14
Community Policing Advisory Committee	5	12
Greenways Commission	2	13
Historic District Commission	4	16
Human Services Advisory Board	4	16
Library Board of Trustees	5	11
OWASA Board of Directors	1	8
Parks and Recreation Commission	8	17
Personnel Appeals Committee	3	17
Planning Board	7	23
Public Housing Program Advisory Board	0	15
Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board	4	14
Sustainability Committee	6	17
Transportation Board	7	16

2. Face-to-Face Workshops

Two workshops were held on December 4th and 6th, 2012 at the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government for advisory board members. A third workshop for advisory board staff liaisons was held December 6, 2012 at Town Hall.

Representatives from 14 of the Town's 19 advisory boards came to one of the two standing advisory board members' workshops. A complete list of member attendees by advisory board appears in Table 3 below. For the staff liaison workshop, 15 out of the 17 staff liaisons attended. Of the two who were not present, one was absent due to illness and the other was unable to attend due to a work conflict.

Table 3: Advisory Board Members' Workshop Participation List

Town of Chapel Hill Advisory Board	Number of Participants
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board	5
Board of Adjustment	1
Cemeteries Advisory Board	0
Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership	0
Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission	2
Community Design Commission	2
Community Policing Advisory Committee	1
Greenways Commission	3
Historic District Commission	0
Human Services Advisory Board	4
Library Board of Trustees	3
Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) Board of Directors	0
Parks and Recreation Commission	1
Personnel Appeals Committee	1
Planning Board	1
Public Housing Program Advisory Board	0
Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board	4
Sustainability Committee	4
Transportation Board	3
Total Advisory Board Member Participants	35

The format of all three sessions was identical. Workshop participants interviewed each other and then in small groups, generated common themes around two questions: (1) What do Advisory Boards currently contribute to the Town? and (2) What would help Advisory Boards contribute more effectively in the future? Small group themes were posted and consolidated after which participants were asked to vote on their top priorities.

In the second part of the workshops, each group was presented with five key themes from their group's survey results and asked to provide additional feedback to assist the researchers in better

understanding the data. Both groups of advisory board members were given the same key theme presentation and the staff liaison group was given a different key theme presentation.

Additional information about the workshops including the workshop notes and copies of the presentations can be found in Appendix N.

3. Document Review

In addition to the surveys and workshops, the research team conducted an extensive document review. The table below lists the documents that were chosen and what the researchers hoped to learn by reviewing them. Links to all of these documents are included in the appendices.

Table 4: List of Documents Reviewed

Document Title	Purpose of Reviewing
Table of Advisory Boards' Enabling Legislation	To understand which boards are enabled by federal, state or county government and which are enabled by the Town of Chapel Hill.
Council Procedure Manual Section II.D. Council Appointed Boards and Commissions	To understand the Council's policies and procedures that govern the Town's advisory boards.
Table of Advisory Board Charges	To understand what standing advisory boards have been charged to do and identify areas of overlap between them.
Table of New Member Orientation Processes	To understand the subject and board specific training that new members are currently receiving.
Agendas and Evaluation of Annual Advisory Board Trainings 2011-2012	To understand the general training advisory board members are currently receiving on Town government, current Town initiatives, laws relevant to advisory boards and other topics relevant to all boards.
Status Report on Advisory Board Priorities FY2011-2012	To see if advisory boards' priorities are reflected in the Town's budget or work plan.
Status Report on Advisory Board Priorities FY2012-2013	To see if advisory boards' priorities are reflected in the Town's budget or work plan.
Review of Advisory Board Minutes FY2010-2011 and FY2011-2012	To understand what topics and issues were discussed and voted upon at advisory board meetings.
Report on Single Developer Review Presentation May 2012	To understand the results of the single developer review presentation as an option for revising the way in which advisory boards are involved in the development review process.
Staff Liaison Role Description	To understand the Town Manager's expectations of advisory board staff liaisons.

Phase Two: Key Themes

Phase Two is divided into six key themes. Each theme contains data from the document review, surveys and or workshops. The data answer specific research questions and raise additional questions about how the Town might improve the work of advisory boards. Options for data driven recommendations and next steps appear in Phase Three of this report.

The key theme sections are:

1. Purpose of Advisory Boards
2. Scope of Work
3. Collaboration and Tools
4. Membership
5. Effectiveness of Advisory Boards
6. Financial Impact

1. Purpose of Advisory Boards

Understanding both how advisory boards contribute to Council's ability to govern with quality, responsiveness and efficiency and the value that Council places on this contribution is central to understanding why Council has advisory boards. Once these pieces are understood, they can be used to inform the construction of an advisory board system in which each advisory board's charge, scope of work and evaluation measures are designed to support Council's expected outcomes.

This key theme section will attempt to answer the following research questions:

A. What does the Town Council see as the contribution(s) of advisory boards?
B. Does the current advisory board system meet the expectation(s) identified through question 1?
C. Which governing body enables each standing advisory board?

A. Contributions

In order to answer research question 1, the online survey asked Council members to assign a level of importance to each of nine potential advisory board contributions[1]. The majority of Council members responded by valuing all of the potential advisory board contributions as "Important" or "Very Important." The only differentiation between the valuations was the size of the majority. Four of the nine potential contributions were valued by 100 percent of respondents as "Important" or "Very Important", four had an 80 percent majority and one had a 60 percent majority. The high value Council placed on each of the potential advisory board contributions seems to indicate that members have a multidimensional view of what they would like to gain from advisory boards. Council's ranking of contributions made by advisory boards appears in Table 5 below.

[1] This survey used the nine potential advisory board contributions identified in *Creating and Maintaining Effective Citizen Advisory Committees* by Vaughn Upshaw, UNC Chapel Hill School of Government, 2010.

Table 5: Council Perceptions of the Importance of Potential Advisory Board Contributions

Potential Advisory Board Contributions	Percent of Council Members Indicating Important or Very Important
Engaging the public as partners in the process of governing Chapel Hill	100%
Linking to other resources and groups interested in addressing community issues	100%
Gathering information and perspectives to assist Council in governing and decision making	100%
Expanding public understanding of how local government works	100%
Tapping into the expertise of the public as subject matter experts	80%
Making the governing process more transparent	80%
Going beyond what Council can accomplish alone	80%
Improving communication between elected officials and the public	80%
Reducing the likelihood that government decisions will be challenged in court	60%

B. Meeting Expectations

Researchers examined the advisory board action minutes from FY2010-2011 and FY2011-2012 to determine the frequency with which advisory boards made each of the nine potential contributions. Table 6 (below) shows that the Town's advisory boards are achieving all of the nine contributions of advisory boards. However, there is a wide variation in the frequency with which each contribution is being realized. For example, only three of the contributions are taking place at more than 50 percent of advisory board meetings. Also, 100 percent of Council members valued "Expanding public understanding of how local government works" as "Important or Very Important" and yet this contribution is evident in only 14 percent of advisory board meetings' action minutes.

Table 6 : Frequency with which Contributions Appear in Action Minutes

Contribution Evident in Advisory Board Action Minutes	% of Minutes
Engaging the public as partners in the process of governing Chapel Hill	88
Gathering information and perspectives to assist Council in governing and decision making	70
Improving communication between elected officials and the public	59
Making the governing process more transparent	47
Linking to other resources and groups interested in addressing community issues	41
Reducing the likelihood that government decisions will be challenged in court	32
Expanding public understanding of how local government works	14
Tapping into the expertise of the public as subject matter experts	12
Going beyond what Council can accomplish alone	11

Advisory board members and staff liaisons attending the December 2012 workshops generated a list of contributions their advisory boards make to the Town and voted on the contributions they thought were most important. A ranked list of responses appears in Tables 7 and 8, below. It is worth noting that the contributions generated by workshop participants reflect the potential contributions identified by Upshaw that were used in the online survey. The complete lists of contributions generated at the workshops are included in Appendix N.

Table 7: Advisory Board Member's Perceived Contributions

Advisory Board Members' Perceived Contributions	# Votes
Provide recommendation on key issues to council on development projects	22
Long-range master planning	20
Raise Questions about policy changes, problems, interpretations, etc.	16
Enhances relationship between Town and its residents.	15
Provide/Gather citizen input	13
Review Process (of projects, proposals, policies, etc.)	12
Prioritize budgeting	11
Follows through on image Chapel Hill residents want	10
Advise staff and elected officials	10
Play a role in defining/addressing issues	10

Table 8: Staff Liaisons' Perceptions of Advisory Board Contributions

Staff Liaisons' Perceived Contributions	# Votes
Direct feedback and recommendations to Council and Boards on Town policy, regulations, programs, social services, Town decisions (from board to Council)	10
Advocacy for services of particular departments to Council, especially for non-mandated services (in a good way); citizens should have a voice through the Boards to Council; we don't necessarily want as much advocacy as possible "there's advocacy, then there's crazy advocacy"	9
Part of the Town's public participation/engagement strategy	8
"Sounding board" for policies, programs, practices; support body (from board to staff); check on practicality of regulations (test of wonkiness)	8
Vision; master plans, strategic planning, what do we want to look like going forward?	6
Due process for citizens for various issues	5

C. Enabling Legislation

The Town is enabled to create the following advisory boards by North Carolina General Statue:

1. Board of Adjustment (GS160A-388)
2. Community Design Commission (GS160A-451;GS160A-452)
3. Historic District Commission (GS160A-400.7)
4. Orange Water and Sewer Authority (GS 162A-5)
5. Personnel Appeals Commission (GS160A-165)
6. Planning Board (GS 160A-387; GS160A-361)

Although North Carolina General Statute enables Council to create these advisory boards, the Town is not required to establish them until it creates an environment which makes it necessary to have an identified body that is responsible for that area of work. For example, the Town must have an identified body that deals with historic districts because the Town has created historic districts within town limits. However, the body identified to be responsible for this area of work does not have to be organized as a separate board. Instead these responsibilities could be included in the scope of work of an appearance commission or planning board. Once the Town has decided to establish one of the boards enabled by North Carolina general statute, it is important to ensure that the board's structure and charge are consistent with the statute guideline.

Please note, GS 160A-387 states that the Town must have a planning board in order to exercise zoning power.

There are General Statutes that refer to Cemetery Trustees (GS160A 349.1) and a Parks and Recreation Commission (GS160A 354), but these statutes are not relevant to the Town's Cemeteries Advisory Committee or Parks and Recreation Commission because they do not perform the functions of the boards authorized by the statutes.

The Town Council created all other advisory boards not included in the list above by local resolution or ordinance. A complete table of advisory board enabling legislation can be found in Appendix A.

2. Advisory Boards' Scope of Work

Having looked at data regarding the contributions advisory boards may make and the value of these contributions as determined by Council, this section will look at the scope of work that Council has asked advisory boards to be responsible for completing. In doing so, the following questions will be posed by the project team as they review the data:

A. Are advisory boards fulfilling their charges?
B. Is there overlap between advisory board charges?
C. How do advisory boards' annual priorities influence their work and the work of others?
D. Does the involvement of advisory boards in development review lead to better decision making?

A. Charges

When determining if advisory boards are fulfilling the charges set for them by Council, perception can be as powerful as reality. Therefore, both stakeholder perceptions as well as more concrete data such as advisory board action minutes can offer important information as to whether or not advisory boards are fulfilling their charge.

The survey asked advisory board members and staff to give their perception of the extent to which their board is fulfilling the charge set for them by Council. Members were only able to provide an answer for the board(s) on which they serve and staff was only able to provide answers for advisory boards they support. Reponses from advisory boards were combined to make up 100%, regardless of how many people responded from any individual advisory board. Overall, advisory board members perceive their board(s) as fulfilling its charge to a "significant or great extent". There were four boards with members who perceived their board as fulfilling the charge to "some extent" and three boards had members who perceived their board as not fulfilling its charge or only doing so to a limited extent. A comparison of the perceived contributions from advisory board members and staff liaison appears in Table 9, below.

Table 9: Perceptions of the Extent to which Advisory Boards are fulfilling their Charge

Name of Town of Chapel Hill Advisory Board	% of Advisory Board Members responding by Advisory Board			Advisory Board Staff Liaison Response
	No or Limited Extent	Some Extent	Significant or Great Extent	
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board	0	14	86	No Response
Board of Adjustment	0	0	100	Significant Extent
Cemeteries Advisory Board	33	0	67	Small Extent
Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership	No Response			No Response
Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission	0	0	100	Significant Extent
Community Design Commission	0	33	67	Great Extent
Community Policing Advisory Committee	0	0	100	Great Extent
Greenways Commission	0	0	100	Great Extent
Historic District Commission	0	0	100	No Response
Human Services Advisory Board	No Response			Great Extent
Library Board of Trustees	0	0	100	No Response
Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) Board of Directors	0	0	100	No Response
Parks and Recreation Commission	0	0	100	Great Extent
Personnel Appeals Committee	0	0	100	Great Extent
Planning Board	0	33	67	Significant Extent
Public Housing Program Advisory Board	0	0	100	Some Extent
Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board	33	0	67	Significant Extent
Sustainability Committee	17	33	50	Small Extent
Transportation Board	0	14	86	No Extent

The Action Minutes for each board were evaluated against their charges to see how frequently each item in the charge was either on the agenda or voted on at a meeting.

- Seven advisory boards covered all elements of their charge both on their agendas and by voting (Board of Adjustment, Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission, Community Design Commission, Greenways Commission, Historic District Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Transportation Board).

- Six advisory boards covered most of the elements of their charge both on agendas and voting (Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, Human Services Advisory Board, Library Board of Trustees, Public Housing Program Advisory Board, Sustainability Committee, Planning Board).
- The Community Policing Advisory Committee covered half of the elements of their charge and the Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board covered 2 of 8 elements of their charge. However, it should be mentioned that the number of sets of minutes available for review from the Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board was small which may have impacted the veracity of this data point.

B. Overlap

A number of the Town's standing advisory boards have responsibility areas that overlap:

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, Greenways Commission, Transportation Board and Sustainability Committee
- Transportation Board and Planning Board
- Greenways Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission
- Historic District Commission and Community Design Commission
- Sustainability Committee with all advisory boards

The most overlap occurs in the review of new development projects

C. Annual Priorities

This section will look at how advisory boards annual priorities influence the work of the Council, advisory board and staff.

Every year in the fall, the Mayor invites advisory boards to submit their priorities for the next fiscal year. Upon reviewing the priorities, it seems that boards are interpreting this request in different ways. For example, some boards are submitting priorities that they want Council to fund while others are creating priority work areas that either the advisory board or staff will be responsible for achieving. This lack of consistency may indicate a possible misunderstanding about why advisory boards are being asked to submit priorities and who should be responsible for achieving them.

In order to gain a complete picture of how advisory board priorities impact the work of the Town and the work of advisory boards, advisory board action minutes were evaluated to see how frequently FY2010-2011 and FY2011-2012 priorities were discussed at meetings and staff were asked to provide status updates for the FY2011-2012 and FY2012-2013 advisory board priorities.

In the advisory board minutes reviewed, three boards had items on their agenda related to all of their FY2010-2011 and FY2011-2012 goals; Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission, Greenways Commission and Sustainability Committee. The following boards had items on their agendas related to some of their FY2010-2011 and FY2011-2012 goals: Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, Community Design Commission, Community Policing Advisory Committee, Historic District Commission, Human Services

Advisory Board, Library Board of Trustees, Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning Board, Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board and the Transportation Board.

The advisory board priorities status updates for FY2011-2012 and FY2012-2013 compiled by staff also had a great deal of variation in terms of achievement of the priority. However these reports do act as a feedback loop to advisory boards regarding the status of their priorities which is helpful to increasing advisory board members' understanding of the Town's processes for making progress as well as enabling them to see the impact or lack of impact their priority recommendations had on the work of the Town.

D. Development Review

Eighty percent of Council members who took the survey stated that the involvement of advisory boards in the Town's development process leads to better decision making. Only 20 percent of Council members indicated advisory boards did not contribute to the development process. Those who were supportive added that advisory boards "generally offer opinions and insight that are less politically motivated" and "I see the Advisory Board as being a link between the Town Council and the public."

The advisory board member survey and the staff survey asked those who serve on or support each committee if they thought their board's involvement in development review led to better decision making. The results revealed two important points:

- There is a significant difference of opinion between advisory board members and staff regarding the board's positive impact on the development process
- Across both response groups there is a high percentage of respondents who are unsure of their board's impact.

Table 10: Does Advisory Board Involvement in the Development Process Lead to better Decision Making?

Town of Chapel Hill Advisory Board	% of Advisory Board Members on Advisory Board in Question			% of Town Staff who work with the Board in Question		
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No	Not Sure
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board	71	0	29	33	25	42
Board of Adjustment	100	0	0	50	7	43
Cemeteries Advisory Board	67	0	33	17	17	67
Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership	No response			41	6	53
Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission	100	0	0	29	14	57
Community Design Commission	66		33	46	15	38
Community Policing Advisory Committee	80	0	20	36	27	36
Greenways Commission	100	0	0	25	8	67
Historic District Commission	100	0	0	13	13	73
Human Services Advisory Board	100	0	0	21	14	64

Town of Chapel Hill Advisory Board	% of Advisory Board Members on Advisory Board in Question			% of Town Staff who work with the Board in Question		
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No	Not Sure
Library Board of Trustees	60	0	40	36	18	45
Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) Board of Directors	0	0	100	38	13	50
Parks and Recreation Commission	88	0	13	31	6	63
Personnel Appeals Committee	100	0	0	21	21	57
Planning Board	83	0	17	50	5	45
Public Housing Program Advisory Board	No response			33	8	58
Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board	25	0	75	42	8	50
Sustainability Committee	100	0	0	38	8	54
Transportation Board	14	14	71	38	8	54

There were not any comments made by advisory board members regarding the role of advisory boards in the development review process, but staff did provide additional input.

Staff who thought that advisory boards improve development decision making made comments such as:

- "By providing relief to public for what may be construed as unreasonable actions or regulations. Also, Board serves as a forum to provide feedback to staff about Town actions and regulations that may serve as a guide to modify future actions and/or ordinance or code amendments"
- "When given the opportunity – provides valuable input and ideas for the inclusion of art and culture in municipal development and planning"
- "Input from the commission members is like feedback from the residents (hopefully) and may lead to better design that is consistent with what the residents like."
- "It provides a broader view of how developments can affect the quality of life in Chapel Hill…"

Staff who thought that advisory boards did not improve development decision making made comments such as:

- " Because Council goes around them"
- "Their feedback is too issue specific and doesn't take into account all of the factors influencing the development."
- "…More often than not, development proposals are viewed subjectively on the basis of each Commission member's individual tastes…"
- "Their decisions seem to be based on personal views rather than on the guiding documents approved by Council such as small area plans"

While it is unclear how advisory boards are affecting development decision making, the document review of action minutes indicated that the development review process is taking up a great deal of advisory board time. Development, small area, or state transportation plans were reflected in 45% of all

advisory board meetings' action minutes. This means that development review was either the primary activity or one of many activities during those meetings.

The review of advisory board action minutes showed that 100 percent of the Board of Adjustment, Community Design Commission and Historic District Committee meetings contained the review of a development, small area or state transportation plan. Other advisory boards whose action minutes frequently included such items included:

- Planning Board – 93%
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board – 67%
- Transportation Board – 62%
- Greenways Commission – 50%
- Parks and Recreation Commission – 42%

Alternatively, it is interesting to note the advisory boards in which little or no development review occurred during the two years for which advisory board meeting action minutes were reviewed:

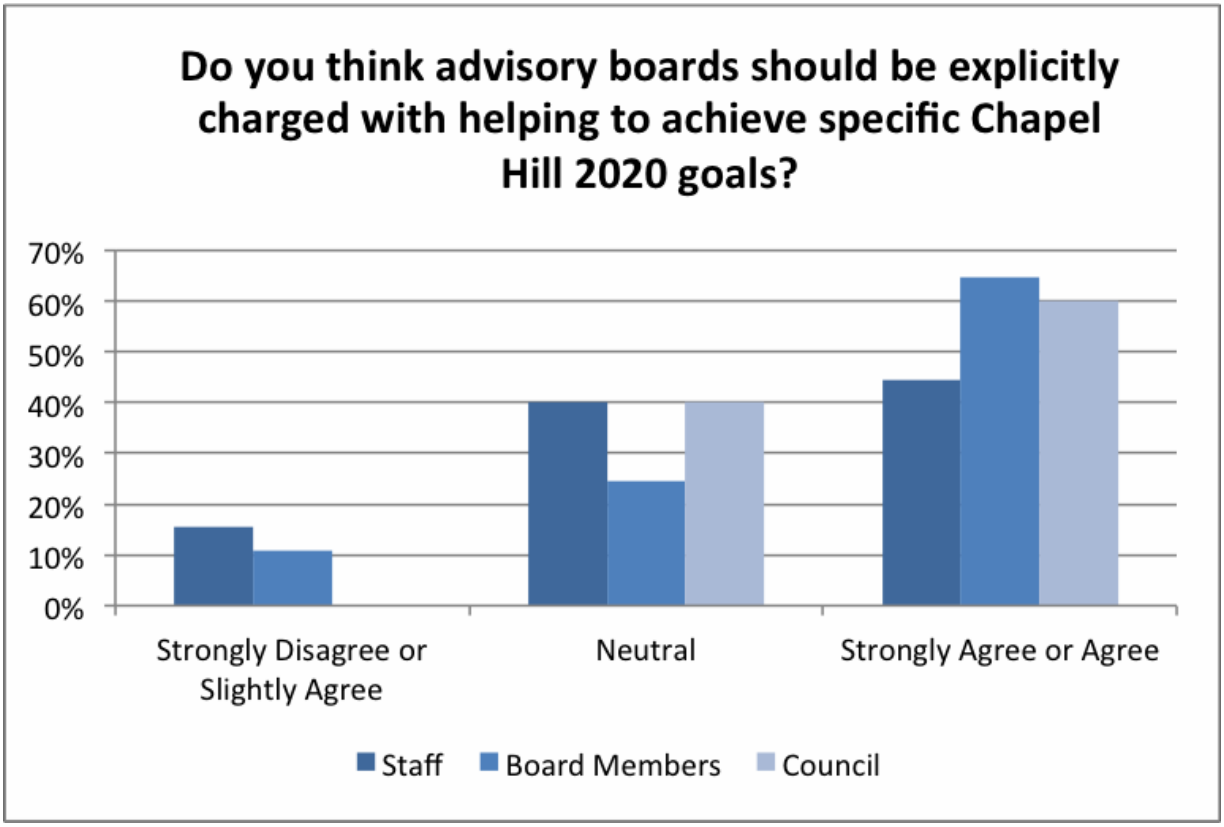
- Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission
- Sustainability Committee
- Community Policing Advisory Board
- Public Housing Program Advisory Board
- Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board
- Human Services Advisory Board
- Library Board of Trustees

Finally, the Cemeteries Advisory Board and the Personnel Appeals Committee were not included in this review due to reasons particular to each board.

E. Chapel Hill 2020 Goals

Across all respondent groups, those who took the survey overwhelmingly agreed that advisory boards should be explicitly charged with helping to achieve specific Chapel Hill 2020 goals. As shown in Figure 1, advisory board members were the respondents most strongly in favor of this idea.

Figure 1: Should Advisory Board Goals Link Directly to Chapel Hill 2020 Goals?



3. Collaboration and Tools for Completing Work

There were a number of places where Council, advisory board members and staff were invited to describe how existing Town policies are being used to guide advisory board work and what might be done to help advisory boards work more effectively and efficiently. The themes emerging from the data under collaboration and tools for completing work include:

A. How are Town policies and guidelines used in decision making?
B. What types of collaboration occur between advisory boards?
C. How do standing advisory boards work with Council?
D. How do standing advisory boards work with support staff and staff liaisons?
E. What training do advisory boards need to work more effectively and efficiently?

A. Use of Town Policies and Guidelines in Decision Making

Most of the issues and concerns that advisory boards are asked to comment on or address have Town policies and guidelines that should be utilized by advisory boards when making decisions or recommendations to Council. The survey asked both advisory board members and staff about the extent to which they perceived this was happening.

Table 11: Extent to which Advisory Board Members Perceive their Board's use of existing Town policies and guidelines to inform and shape their recommendations to Council

Name of Town of Chapel Hill Advisory Board	% of Advisory Board Members Responding			Staff Liaison Response
	No or Limited Extent	Some Extent	Significant or Great Extent	
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board	14	29	57	No Response
Board of Adjustment	0	33	67	Great Extent
Cemeteries Advisory Board	0	0	100	Some Extent
Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership	No Response			No Response
Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission	0	0	100	Great Extent
Community Design Commission	0	0	100	Some Extent
Community Policing Advisory Committee	0	0	100	Some Extent
Greenways Commission	0	0	100	Great Extent
Historic District Commission	0	25	75	Some Extent
Human Services Advisory Board	No Response			Great Extent
Library Board of Trustees	0	25	75	No Response
Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) Board of Directors	0	20	80	No Response
Parks and Recreation Commission	0	100	0	Great Extent
Personnel Appeals Committee	0	0	100	Great Extent
Planning Board	0	33	67	Significant Extent
Public Housing Program Advisory Board	0	17	83	No Extent
Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board	0	0	100	Significant Extent
Sustainability Committee	17	33	50	Small Extent
Transportation Board	14	14	71	No Extent

Please note that for the majority of advisory boards there is agreement between the perceptions of board members and staff regarding the extent to which Town policies and guidelines are being used in decision making.

B. Collaboration between Boards: Joint Meetings and Inter-Board Liaisons

While there are a small number of boards with liaisons from external entities such as UNC Chapel Hill or the Chapel Hill-Carrboro School System, there are only two Town standing advisory boards which have liaisons from other Town standing advisory boards; Cemeteries Advisory Board and the Community Design Commission.

The Cemeteries Advisory Board has one liaison from the Historic District Commission.

The Community Design Commission has one liaison from each of the following: Planning Board, Greenways Commission, Transportation Board, Sustainability Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission. However, the Parks and Recreation Commission does not appoint a liaison to the Community Design Commission because both groups meet on the same night.

Joint Meetings occasionally occur between standing advisory boards to discuss an issue of shared interest such as the pilot of a single developer presentation process. Boards are identified to participate in these meetings if the issue or development project being considered is relevant to their Council charge.

C. Working with Council: Liaisons, Recommendations and Feedback

Advisory boards and Council have two ways of interacting with one another that are outlined in the Council Procedures Manual and the board's enabling legislation; through the Council Liaison and recommendations from advisory boards to Council. The Council Procedures Manual clearly states that Council Liaisons are not required to attend advisory board meetings and this message is repeated at the annual advisory board training session in an effort to manage the expectations of advisory board members.

The Mayor does not serve as a Council Liaison to standing advisory boards, but he does serve as a resource to staff and advisory boards when issues arise on a board. The remaining Council members have divided Council Liaison responsibilities for these 17 boards so that four Council Members serve as liaison to one advisory board, three Council Members serve as liaison to three boards and one Council Member serves as a liaison to four boards.

Although outside the scope of the project, it is important to note that in addition to the Town's standing advisory boards, Council Members also serve as liaisons and board members to a number of Council, regional and adhoc committees which place demands on Council Members time and contribute to decisions regarding the allocation of standing Town advisory boards to Council Members.

Advisory Boards provide recommendations on a number of issues such as development and items specific to their charge. Both staff and advisory board member survey respondents and workshop participants commented that these recommendations are not used in Council's decision making.

Advisory board members also expressed frustration at the lack of feedback from Council regarding their board's recommendation especially when Council's decision was contrary to the recommendation of the board.

D. Working with Staff: Liaisons and Feedback

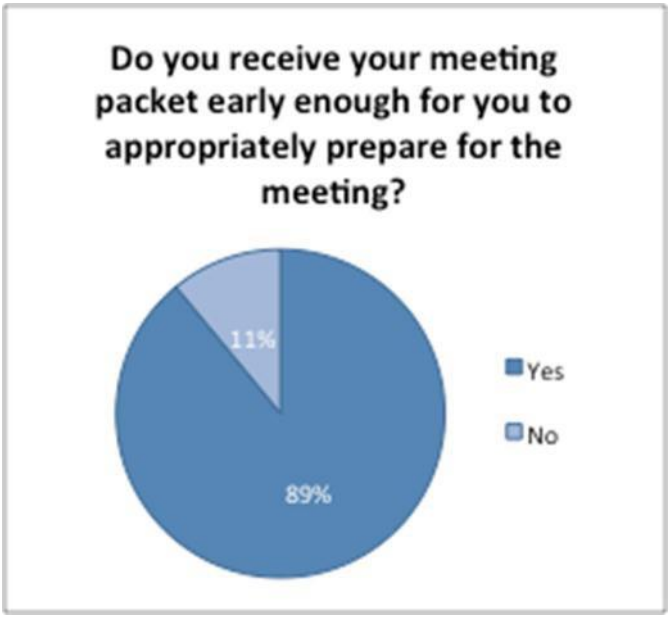
Two of the primary tasks of staff liaisons are to:

1. Prepare and distribute the meeting packet
2. Write and post Action Minutes

For more details about the responsibilities of staff liaisons please see Appendix E.

The surveys and workshops asked questions designed to understand if these tasks are being successfully completed. For example, advisory board members were asked if they received their meeting packets early enough for them to properly prepare for their meeting.

Figure 2: Perceived Timeliness of Packet Materials Prior to Meetings



The document review found that in FY2010-2011 and FY2011-2012 a total of 435 meetings were noticed on the Town's calendar. Of the 435 scheduled meetings:

- 103 were cancelled (24%)
- 240 took place, with minutes posted online (55%)
- 92 may have taken place, but minutes were missing (21%)

Staff investigated the 92 meetings for which there were neither action minutes nor clarity regarding if the meeting had taken place. Based on a second review of 444 noticed meetings, the revised results were updated as follows:

- 103 were cancelled (23%)
- 266 took place, with minutes posted online (60%)
- 46 may have taken place, but minutes were missing (10%)
- 20 were rescheduled (5%)
- 9 are not posted due to recommendation of the Town Attorney (2%)

A few advisory boards were not included in the review of action minutes. The Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership and OWASA Board of Directors have not been included in this list because the Town of Chapel Hill is not responsible for producing action minutes for those meetings. Additionally, the Town Attorney has recommended that the action minutes for the Personnel Appeals Committee not be posted on the web.

When asked to provide additional feedback during the December workshops with advisory board members, participants:

- Agreed some meetings are occasionally cancelled due to few agenda items or lack of quorum but were unconcerned about a lack of attendance.
- Raised questions about what counted as a cancelled meeting and whether reasons for cancellations were recorded in minutes.

Staff liaisons were also asked about why there were so many cancelled meetings. Staff liaisons were surprised by the number of cancellations and suggested the numbers failed to account for:

- Typical summer and holiday cancellations
- When the Board of Adjustment doesn't get applications it does not meet.

An important part of a staff liaison's role is to write action minutes which are the legal record that a meeting took place. In order for these documents to be effective it is important that they include a verbatim account of motions made as well as the vote of any action taken. In the last year, staff liaisons have received training on how to take minutes from the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government. Those staff liaisons that were not able to attend the training have had access to an online video of the session. As the graphs below show, there has been considerable improvement in the standard of advisory board action minutes with regards to both the recording of verbatim motions and votes.

Figure 3: Are Motions in Action Minutes Written Verbatim?

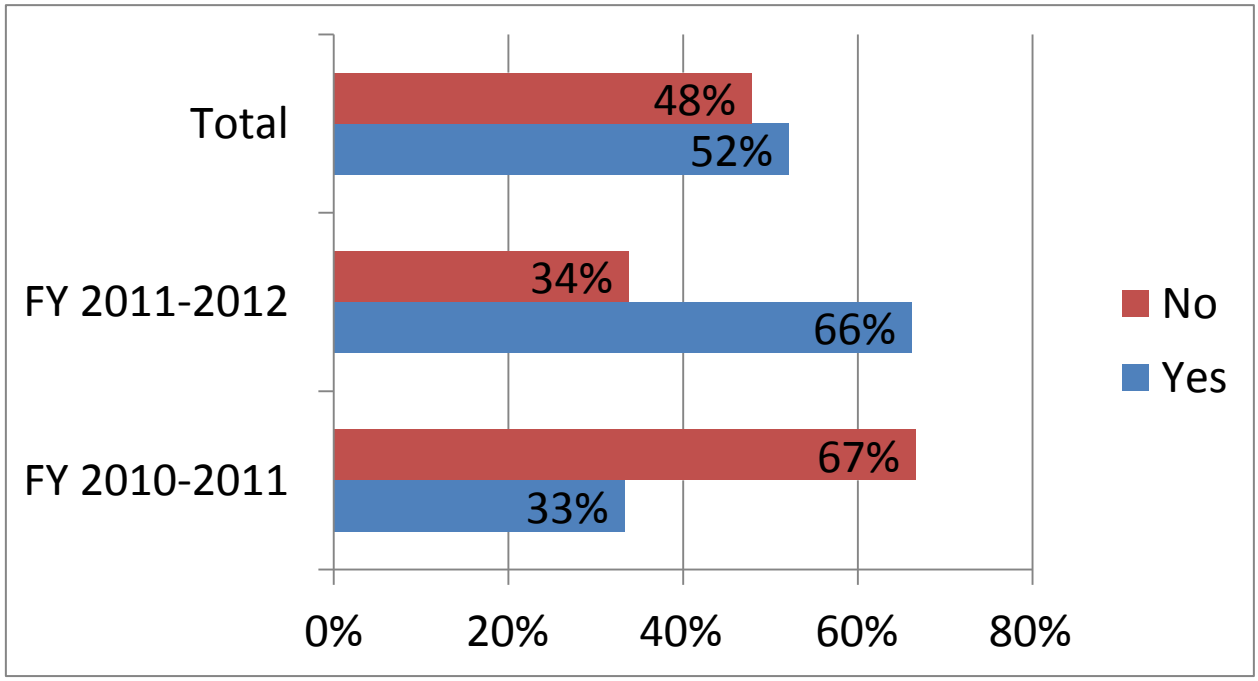
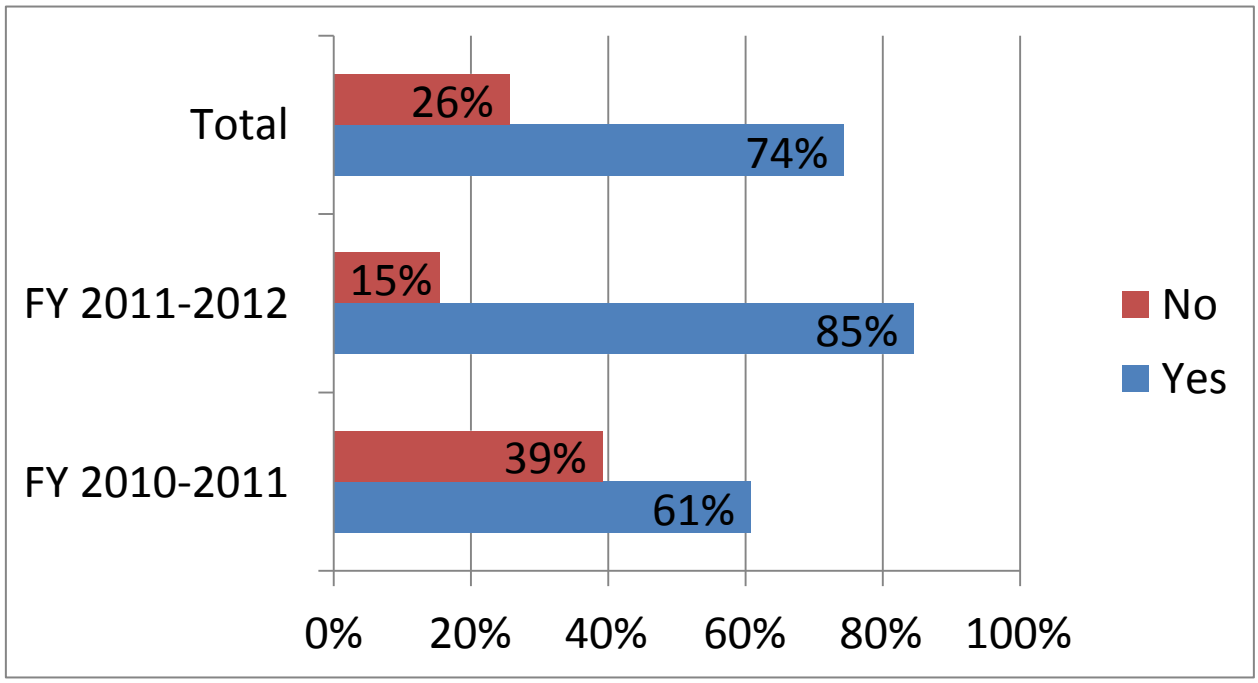


Figure 4: Are Votes Recorded Clearly including Board Member Names if Votes are Split?



During the workshop sessions, a number of staff liaisons spoke about how they manage meeting follow-up:

- "I think it's about right for what we've been asked to do, but I don't think I should be doing everything that I'm being asked to do. I'm taking too much time on advisory boards. We're doing a lot of administrative work that I don't think is a good use of my time or is reflected in my salary"
- "I spend way too much time loading things on the web. I make way too much to do that. But if I don't do it, who will?"

E. Training

The amount of funds allocated to provide training to advisory board members and their support staff is limited. The Communications and Public Affairs department has a $1500 annual training budget which it spends on a half-day advisory board training session and the Mayor's breakfast for advisory board officers both of which have occurred annually since 2011. At the advisory board members workshops some members thought this training should be offered more than once a year and others added that it should be mandatory. This training has been very successful with over 60 percent of participants strongly agreeing that the training will aid them in their role as an advisory board member. Also, 100 percent of participants from 2011 and 2012 would recommend the training to someone else.

It should be noted that the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government has donated its services to the Town through both its participation in the Town's annual training event for advisory board members as well as the training it has provided to staff liaisons with regards to the Open Meetings Law, public records management and taking action minutes. The Town cannot assume that these services will continue to be delivered pro bono in the future and may want to include anticipated costs in future training budget discussions.

The Planning Department has an additional $250 for training of Historic District Commission members and staff in accordance with the North Carolina General Statute regarding the certification of the board.

The orientation of new advisory boards members to the work of their specific board tends to be informal and organized by the board's staff liaison. The Town does not currently have a standard as to what material and information must be covered.

Advisory Board members ranked the following topics as important in the online survey, but note that the highest response was "I don't need any additional support in any of these areas":

- Knowledge of Town of Chapel Hill policies relevant to advisory boards -41%
- Knowledge of federal and state laws affecting advisory boards-33%
- Knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order- 17%
- Presentation and communication skills – 9%
- I don't need additional support in any of these areas 45%

At the December workshop, Advisory Board members suggested additional support would help in the following areas which were not listed in the online survey, such as:

- Creating spirit of welcome how to let everyone's voices be heard
- Team-building (interpersonal skills)
- Board-specific content training (Stormwater, Greenways, etc.)
- Managing expectations; understand pace at which things will happen
- History is important, we want to understand what a plan was meant to be and what the thinking around it has been
- Providing a master plan to preserve institutional memory of the Board

4. Membership

Membership issues came up repeatedly in the surveys, document review and workshops. The following four major areas were identified as important to creating and maintaining quality membership on Town Advisory Boards:

A. Eligibility criteria
B. Recruitment and appointment process
C. Diversity requirements
D. Commitment of members

A. Eligibility Criteria

A majority (60%) of Council members surveyed thought that there should be eligibility criteria for advisory board membership. Forty percent were not sure. Council members stated that these criteria should include: knowledge of the 2020 plan, somewhat involved with Council, no personal agenda, be a resident in good standing, interested in the issues at hand.

An even higher percentage (80%) of advisory board members surveyed stated that there should be eligibility criteria for advisory board membership. Only 20 percent stated "no" and none of these respondents gave any feedback as to what these criteria should be.

B. Recruitment & Appointment Process

During the workshop sessions advisory board members offered a number of strategies for improving recruitment. Their suggestions included additional ways to advertise, publicizing importance of boards on public radio, in the Chapel Hill News and using press releases to smaller newsletters in the community. They also thought the Town could do a better job promoting advisory board openings with local businesses that allow employees to allocate time to community service on time sheets. Additional ideas included expanding efforts to educate people in the community about what's going on in advisory boards; offering incentives for those who lack transportation or access to childcare and making the nomination process more open. For a full list of suggestions from the December workshops, see Appendix N.

The review of advisory board documents found that approximately 40 percent of advisory board meetings' action minutes included a membership-related issue. This statistic was shared with advisory board members and staff liaisons during their workshop sessions. A few participants stated that this seemed accurate for their board. However, in general the membership discussion was not of concern to workshop participants. People felt the statistics gave a false impression about how much time was spent on membership issues. Voting to add a new member, for instance, did not consume much time but showed up in the action minutes. Participants in the December workshops felt the frequency with which membership issues were mentioned in action minutes was appropriate.

Council members who took the survey stated that 60% of appointment guidelines are not applied evenly and fairly to all applicants. Only 20% of Council respondents said that appointment guidelines are applied evenly and fairly and 20% were not sure.

Almost all (95%) of standing advisory board members indicated that the appointment guidelines are applied evenly and fairly to all. Just 5% said that they are not applied fairly.

C. Diversity

The survey asked Council Members, standing advisory board members and staff how successful they thought advisory boards are at attracting members from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds, ages and life situations (single parents, renters, etc.). The results are shown in the three figures below.

Figure 5: Council Perceptions of Advisory Board Diversity

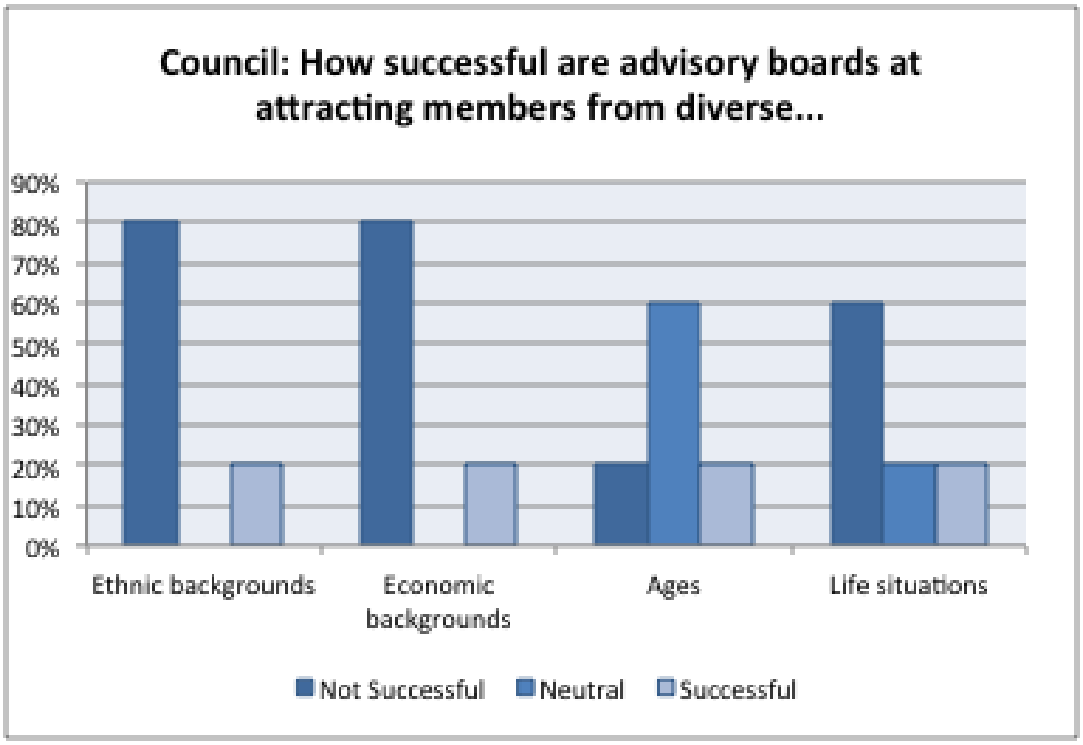


Figure 6: Board Members Perceptions of Advisory Board Diversity

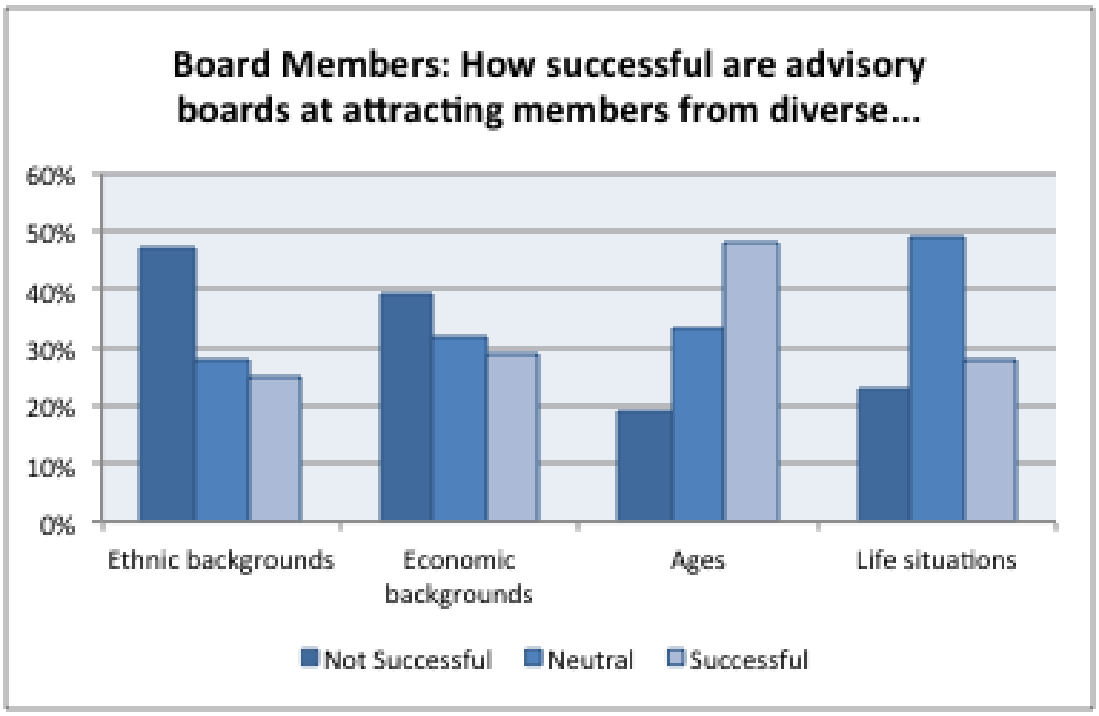
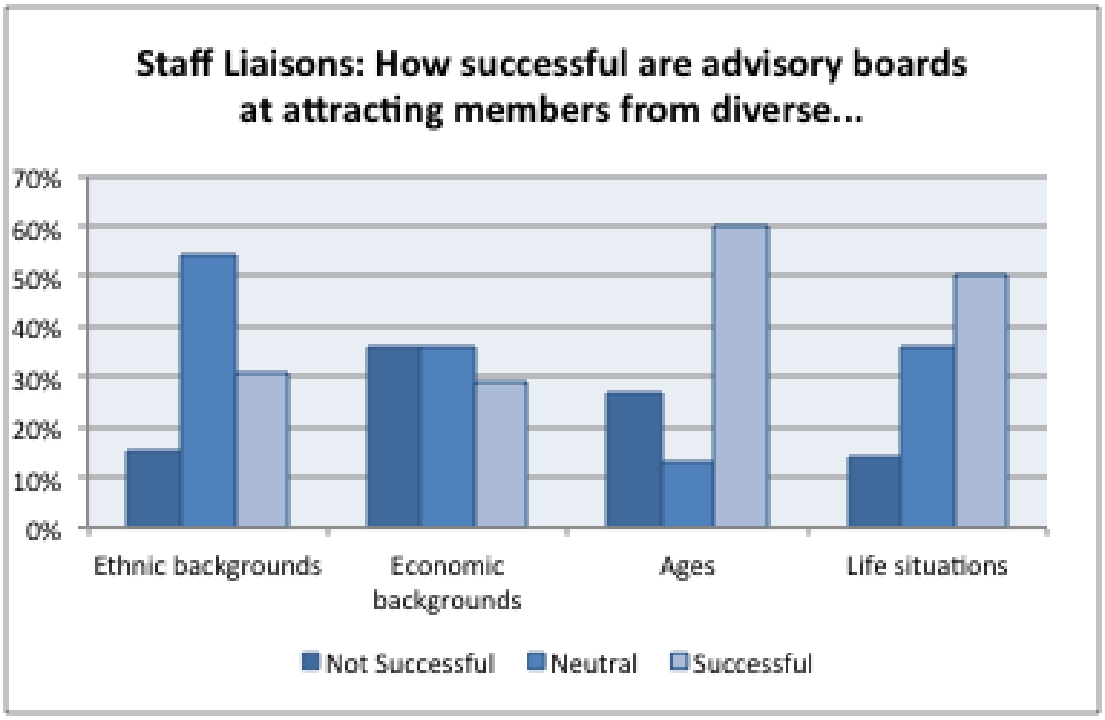


Figure 7: Staff Liaisons Perception of Advisory Board Diversity



Staff liaisons and advisory board members provided a variety of answers to the open ended question asking which groups are missing from advisory board membership. Their responses have been grouped according to key words.

Table 12: What groups do you think are missing from advisory boards?

Missing Groups	Board Members #	Board Members %	Staff Liaisons #	Staff Liaisons %
Number of Respondents Answering Question	*56*	*74%*	*11*	*69%*
Younger people (sub-30)	17	22%	2	13%
Low-to-moderate income residents	17	22%	4	25%
Students	2	3%	2	13%
Racial/ethnic minorities	29	38%	3	19%
Retirees	2	3%	0	0%
Renters	4	5%	0	0%
Young families and/or single parents	4	5%	1	6%
Don't know/"not a concern for my board"	9	12%	3	19%

At the December Workshop, staff liaisons' were asked to offer feedback on advisory board diversity. In response, the staff liaisons asked "How does the Town define balance?" Liaisons said "Council needs to provide some direction here." From the online survey, one person added that people employed by the three biggest employers in Chapel Hill should be included in the Town's criteria for diversity. Another respondent stated:

> "…We need more young people, non-whites, persons of low to moderate income, and renters. And above all else, more students. The current advisory board membership in this town is in no way an accurate reflection of our population."

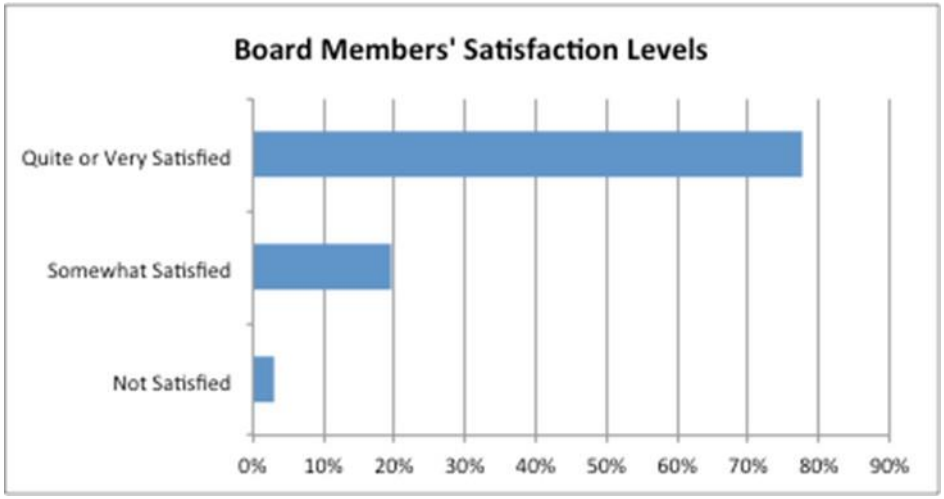
During the workshop session, advisory board members offered a number of strategies for improving diversity:

- Learn from the experience of board members from minority communities who have resigned or stopped attending advisory board meetings.
- Work with board members to create an environment that makes everyone feel like they belong
- Create new advertising messages (publicizing importance of boards; educating public; creating a false sense of elitism; emphasizing that it doesn't require a lot of effort to serve)
- Utilize diverse methods of recruitment: Public radio spots, public bulletin boards, press release to smaller newsletters, local businesses, allocate time to community service on time sheets, word of mouth
- Provide incentives (address lack of transportation; discount parks and rec; offer childcare)
- Make nomination process more open so boards don't self-perpetuate
- Clearer articulation of what the Board actually does so that people know what they're getting into
- Moving meeting locations outside of Town Hall
- Teaching people out in the community what's going on in advisory boards

D. Members' Commitment to Serve

Overall, the survey found that the majority of advisory board members are satisfied with their experience of serving on one of the Town's standing advisory boards.

Figure 8: Advisory Board Member Satisfaction Levels



On average, advisory board members self-reported that they spend 3.3 hours per week volunteering for their advisory board. The survey also found that 87 percent of advisory board members who responded felt that the amount of time they spent volunteering for their advisory board was the "right" amount. Another 9 percent of advisory board members said that the time spent was too little and 3 percent thought that it was too much.

5. Effectiveness of Advisory Boards

The perceived effectiveness of the different advisory boards varies by board and by respondent. A comparison of the Town's Advisory Boards' perceived effectiveness is shown in Table 12, below. The data illustrate the differences between Council Members', advisory board members' and staff liaisons' perceptions of how well each advisory board contributes to Council's work.

Overall Council's responses indicated that they think advisory boards are helpful to them in governing with quality, responsiveness and efficiency. However, the staff's and advisory board members' responses were more mixed in their feedback.

Table 13: To what extent does your advisory board help Council govern with quality, responsiveness and efficiency?

Name of Town of Chapel Hill Advisory Board	Advisory Board Response % No or Limited Extent	% Some Extent	% Significant or Great Extent	Staff Response	Council Response
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board	14	29	57	No Response	Significant Extent
Board of Adjustment	0	33	67	Some extent	Some Extent
Cemeteries Advisory Board	0	33	67	Some Extent	Some Extent
Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership	No Response			No Response	Great Extent
Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission	0	50	50	Some Extent	Great Extent
Community Design Commission	0	67	33	Significant Extent	Significant Extent
Community Policing Advisory Committee	20	0	80	Great Extent	Significant Extent
Greenways Commission	0	100	0	Great Extent	Significant Extent
Historic District Commission	25	25	50	Significant Extent	Some Extent
Human Services Advisory Board	No Response			Great Extent	Significant Extent
Library Board of Trustees	0	0	100	No Response	Significant Extent

Name of Town of Chapel Hill Advisory Board	Advisory Board Response % No or Limited Extent	% Some Extent	% Significant or Great Extent	Staff Response	Council Response
Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) Board of Directors	20	20	60	No Response	Significant Extent
Parks and Recreation Commission	0	0	100	Great Extent	Significant Extent
Personnel Appeals Committee	29	0	71	Significant Extent	Significant Extent
Planning Board	0	50	50	Significant Extent	Significant Extent
Public Housing Program Advisory Board	0	33	67	No Extent	Some Extent
Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board	0	50	50	Significant Extent	Significant Extent
Sustainability Committee	33	0	67	Small Extent	Significant Extent
Transportation Board	43	43	14	No Extent	Significant Extent

A subsequent question asked that Council members, advisory board members and staff evaluate the effectiveness of the Town's current advisory boards against each of the nine potential advisory board contributions. Table 14, below, provides an overview of perceptions of advisory board effectiveness by survey group. Please note the number in the table is the average responses by group on a 1-5 scale (where 1 = Not Effective and 5 = Very Effective).

Table 14: Average Perceptions of Advisory Board Effectiveness*

Perceived Effectiveness of Town Advisory Boards	Council (n=6)	Board Members (n=68)	Staff (n=15)
Tapping into the expertise of the public as subject matter experts	3.5	3.47	3.21
Engaging the public as partners in the process of governing Chapel Hill	3.5	3.13	3.36
Linking to other resources and groups interested in addressing community issues	3	3.18	3.00
Gathering information and perspectives to assist Council in governing and decision making	4	3.74	3.20
Making the governing process more transparent	3.5	3.72	3.73
Reducing the likelihood that government decisions will be challenged in court	3	3.48	3.21
Going beyond what Council can accomplish alone	4	3.93	4.00
Improving communication between elected officials and the public	3	3.18	3.46
Expanding public understanding of how local government works	3	3.03	3.29

When responses are compared between groups, the average group response values are quite close in range which indicates that all three response groups share a similar understanding of the level of effectiveness the advisory boards currently achieve regarding each of the contribution areas.

During the December workshops, advisory board members and staff liaisons were asked how advisory boards might contribute more effectively in the future. The ways that they might be more effective getting the highest numbers of votes are listed in Tables 15 and 16. The complete list can be viewed in Appendix N.

Table 15: How Advisory Boards Might Contribute More Effectively in Future - Members

Advisory Board Members' Suggestions	# Votes
More interaction between boards and council	19
Educate Public/Community on what we do . . . Outreach	17
More clearly defined mandates from council	17
More interaction between boards	17
Improve feedback loop back to advisory board from staff (Why were different priorities implemented or not implemented)	13
Need a defined role in policy development and refinement	12
More effective guidance/feedback from council on whether boards are meeting council needs/expectations	10

Table 16: How Advisory Boards Might Contribute More Effectively in Future-Staff

Staff Liaisons' Suggestions	# Votes
Connections: 2020-Council Goals, well defined nexus between board's purpose, council goals, and comp plan	13
Meaningful, timely, productive meetings	12
Active chair (engaged + supportive)	12
Greater advocacy skills on board	7
Clearly defined and attainable charge	6
Continuing Education (bringing in content speakers to educate board members on issues related to their purpose/charge)	4

6. Financial Impact

All survey respondents were asked if the Town should track the financial impact of advisory boards. Council Members, advisory board members and support staff all said yes by 80 percent, but staff liaisons only said yes by 56 percent. During the staff workshop, the facilitator asked participants why they were less supportive of tracking the financial impact of advisory boards. Respondents voiced a number of opinions including:

- Opposition to having to gather and send in more data every month
- "I think that's a very important question, especially when we're looking so carefully at how we're spending our time. We need to be able to say to people , you're getting this information at this cost"
- Maybe once every year or two, but not every month.

If the Town were to begin tracking the financial impact of advisory boards it would need to keep records of how much staff time was spent supporting advisory boards, the cost of all advisory board training, materials and postage.

In order to provide Council with preliminary data as to what these costs may be, data has been collected to estimate the current costs of staffing, materials and training for advisory boards.

A. Staff Time

Staff time is the most expensive advisory board cost, but, prior to this research, there was little data regarding the amount of staff time being spent supporting advisory boards. In order to provide Council with some information as to what this cost may be, the survey asked staff to self-report their estimate of how many hours per week they spend supporting advisory boards. Human Resource Development then provided hourly salary information for all staff liaisons; an average was taken of this number and multiplied by the number of hours for both the Staff Liaisons and other Staff groups. Benefits were calculated at 30% of salary.

Table 17: Staff Time & Employee Costs

*As Group	Hours Per Week	Employee Costs per year
Staff Liaisons	45.5*	$111,927
Other Staff	113.7*	$279,693
Senior Management Team	15.9**	$53,965
Total	159.2 or **3.98 FTE**	**$445,585**

The Action Minutes provided additional information about how some staff hours are being spent. According to the Action Minutes, 59% of all advisory board meetings were attended by staff other than the staff liaison. Of these meetings:

- 52% (30% of all meetings) involved one additional staff member
- 32% (19% of all meetings) involved two additional staff members, and
- 17% (10% of all meetings) involved three or more additional staff members

It is important to note that the Town would not save salary costs if staff were not providing support to advisory boards. Instead, these resources would be available to support another Town program or service.

B. Materials

Very little data was collected for this report regarding the cost of materials for supporting advisory boards. However, the Planning Department has been able to project that the annual cost of materials and postage for paper packets for the Planning Board, Community Design Commission and Historic District Commission, the annual cost would be $ 10,256.22.

Even without postage, the Town still allocates a number of resources to supporting advisory boards including:

- Paper
- Printing
- Video equipment
- Security
- Utilities

The Town does not currently track the cost of these resources.

C. Training

The Communications and Public Affairs Department's current advisory board training budget of $1500 is used to provide two annual events; the Mayor's breakfast for advisory board officers and the annual training session for all advisory boards. The Historic District Commission has a statutory requirement to train two members and a staff person annually. There is an approximate budget of $250 for this purpose.

However, given the interest in additional training as well as the identified training needs for advisory board members and staff, training costs may need to grow significantly in order to address both interests and need.

Phase Three: Recommendations to Council

Based on the data from the online surveys, face-to-face workshops and document review the Town could improve its work with advisory boards by addressing four key areas; Clarity of Purpose and Function, Diversity, Training and Fiscal Impact.

Clarity of Purpose and Function

1. **Providing greater clarity around the purpose and function of advisory boards:**
   It would be helpful if Council could discuss and agree on a ranking of potential advisory board contributions so that this information could be used to inform the construction of an advisory board system whose structure, subject area focus, charge and membership encourage their achievement.

2. **Clarifying roles for advisory boards in the development process**
   There is a significant difference of opinion between advisory board members and staff regarding the board's positive impact on the development process. Clarifying the role and value of advisory boards in the review process could be included in the rewriting of the Land Use Management Ordinance. Once this has been articulated, a further review could identify the most efficient and effective way to achieve this value.

   Advisory board charges should be rewritten to clearly state the purpose and expectation of a board's involvement in development review.

3. **Aligning advisory board work to Chapel Hill 2020 goals as appropriate.**
   Across all respondent groups, those who took the survey overwhelmingly agreed that advisory boards should be explicitly charged with helping to achieve specific Chapel Hill 2020 goals.

4. **Improving Recommendations through better feedback**
   Strengthening feedback loops could improve advisory boards' ability to provide useful recommendations to Council. Council could ask advisory boards to identify which Town policies and guidance informed their decisions so that this thought process is clear to all stakeholders.

In order for this to be successful, Council may also need to provide additional guidance regarding which policies it sees as central to the work of the board and how Council interprets those policies.

Diversity

Council, advisory board members and staff all expressed an interest in having greater membership diversity on advisory boards. However, further clarity is needed as to the meaning of diversity and how it is achieved.

1. **Creating a definition of diversity**
   In order to determine if the Town is successful in attracting a broad range of people to participate in advisory boards, the Town Council could define "diversity" and how it will be measured.

2. **How is diversity achieved: Harnessing the power of Membership and Outreach**
   Even if board membership is reflective of a wide diversity of people, it can be misleading to assume that the person serving on the board holds beliefs or opinions that are consistent with the group they have been selected to represent. Therefore, it may be helpful if thinking about diversity is not limited to advisory board membership, but also includes the role that advisory boards play in community outreach so a group of people from an identified stakeholder group may contribute to the conversation rather than only one person.

Training

1. **Continuing and expanding training for advisory boards on both general and subject specific topics relevant to their work.**
   Advisory board members stated that they are happy with the quality of the general training they are receiving from the Town, but they would like it to be offered more frequently and some felt that it should be mandatory for new members. However, Advisory board members stated that they would like more training on subject specific training relevant to the work of their board.

   Providing additional training opportunities will require a greater financial and staff commitment by the Town.

Fiscal Impact

1. **Creating a methodology for considering advisory board work and performance within the priority budgeting process.**
   The majority of Council, advisory board members and staff supported the idea of tracking the financial impact of advisory boards. Many felt that given the Town's shift to priority budgeting, it was important to understand the financial impact of advisory boards in relationship to their contribution to achieving the Town's goals.

Appendices

A. **Table of Advisory Boards' Enabling Legislation**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17531

B. **Council Procedure Manual Section II D: Council Appointed Boards and Commissions**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17530

C. **Table of Advisory Board Charges**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17529

D. **Table of New Member Orientation Processes**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17528

E. **Staff Liaison Role Description**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17527

F. **Agendas and Evaluation of Annual Advisory Board Trainings 2011-2012**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17526

G. **Status Report on FY2011-2012 Advisory Board Priorities**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17525

H. **Status Report on FY2012-2013 Advisory Board Priorities**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17524

I. **Report on Single Developer Review Presentation May 2012**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17523

J. **Advisory Board Minutes Survey Instrument**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17518

K. **Review of FY2010 and FY2011 Advisory Board Minutes**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17519

L. **Combined 2012 Advisory Board Review Survey Questions**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17520

M. **Combined 2012 Advisory Board Review Survey Results**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17521

N. **Advisory Board Member and Staff Liaison Workshop Evaluation Summary**
http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=17522