



TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

November 2013
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www.townofchapelhill.org

On the Front Burner



Rog

Column from Town Manager
Roger L. Stancil

I recently issued a Conflict of Interest Policy Guidance. I did this because, as a result of their review of a grievance, the Personnel Appeals Committee recommended that I provide more clarity to the Town's employees about conflict of interest. Based on some feedback from the guidance I first wrote, I issued a revised document.

Employees in a core operating division of the Town had questions about how the guidance I had provided affected how they do their job. They asked to meet with me to understand my thinking and share their interests with me. We met and identified our common interests. As a result, I will soon be issuing another revision of the Conflict of Interest Policy Guidance. This revision will be much shorter and I believe it is straightforward and clear for people trying to understand expectations. That should be our goal in all such policy communications.

I am telling this story because it is a great example of how I want us to work together if we are to make this a great place to work based on our Values. If your supervisor or department head or I do or say something, or make a decision, that does not seem to be consistent with our Values or is difficult to understand, let's talk about it. Only two things can come of that. You will share information that will change my thinking or I will share information that helps you understand what I was thinking. In this case, we accomplished both and the result is far superior to where we started.

It works.

Larry Tucker

Senior Engineering Coordinator

When Larry Tucker began working for the Town more than 32 years ago, building inspectors, engineers and planners worked closely in a small, collaborative team. This former model may return as the Town considers new ways to organize staff to better serve the community's needs for inspections, code and zoning enforcement, and planning and engineering reviews (see pg. 4).

Back then, the team of surveyors, inspectors and planners worked from the third floor of the original Town Hall building on Columbia Street. When the engineering division was created in the 1970s, Chapel Hill was a growing college town. Larry notes that street miles have grown from 95 when he started with the town to 165 today. "Today our focus is different, as so much of the infrastructure is already in place. Growth now occurs as infill development."

Having grown up on a tobacco farm in eastern North Carolina, Larry left home to pursue architecture study at UNC-Charlotte but changed his major to earth sciences. After graduating, one of his first jobs was working on the Falls Lake Dam on the Neuse River with a geotechnical consulting firm. He immediately felt he found the right career in public service. "I wanted to give back, help make government work."

Today he serves as the Town engineering representative on sidewalk and bike path projects, and various parks and recreation, public works, parking services, and Chapel Hill Transit projects. He ensures developers meet the Town's design and construction

Value in the Spotlight

Safety



Catherine Lazorko photo

regulations. On his journeys around town, he can view any number of roads, bridges, retaining walls, or stormwater structures, confident of their quality and test of time. "It's reassuring that they're holding strong after many years," he says.

Of his tenure with the Town, Larry reflects: "I never thought I'd stay here as long as I have, but I really enjoy my job and most of all the pleasure derived from working with such a dedicated, supportive group of co-workers and friends."

Larry and his wife Kat live in Bynum with two dogs and two cats, and a flower garden out front. In his free time, he enjoys cooking Indian cuisine, traveling and serves as a live performance recording engineer for various bands including the Old Ceremony and Megafaun, among others in the Rock and Americana genre.

—Story By Catherine Lazorko

COMING UP

Friday, Nov. 22: Arbor Day Celebration, 10 a.m., Chapel Hill Public Library

November 28-29: Town Holiday and Network Project (see Intranet).

Friday, Dec. 6: Last day to submit entries for the Word Project. See page 4 for more.

Saturday, Dec. 14: Holiday Parade, 10 a.m. - noon. chapelhillholidayparade.com



Employees who are veterans were honored at the Nov. 11 Council business meeting. (See pg. 2)

In Brief



Thank you, Veterans! Assistant Police Chief **Jabe Hunter** accepted the proclamation on behalf of all employees who are veterans. Special thanks to the Color Guard: Lt. **Joshua Mecimore** and Officer **Patrick Gilchrist** (Police), Fire Equipment Operator **Luis Rodriguez** and Firefighter **Jaime Palacios**.



Sarah Jorda Wagner (Library) and her husband Pete welcomed

twin girls Lupe and Abby on Nov. 1. Lupe was born first and weighed in at 5 lbs. 8 oz. and Abby weighed 4 lbs. 7 oz.



Jim Orr (Parks and Recreation) will serve as Interim Director of the Parks and Recreation Department starting Jan. 1,

2014, after Butch Kisiah's retirement. Jim has a long history of service in the recreation industry and has been on the recreation side and the facilities side of parks and recreation.



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Town employees join in the fun on Halloween! Pictured above from Town Hall are (l-r) **Marcela Waters, Jeanette Coffin, Brian Callaway, Megan Wooley** and **Betty Byrd. Maggie Hite** (right) gets a little spooky at the library.



Lisa Edwards (Fire) was celebrated as a Hometown Hero with a Village Pride Award from WCHL on Nov. 6. She was recognized for her work to support the Pink Heals campaign,

which raises awareness for cancer research and funds for the Lineberger Cancer Center. She provides support for the campaign in many ways, including distributing information, taking photos, and doing whatever else is needed to make events happen. **Byron Greeson** (Fire) is the leader of the Pink Heals Campaign for the Fire Department.

Supervisors and employees can now access information and forms about the **Employee Performance Management and Development System** (EPMDS) off the front page of the Intranet site. Just click on "EPMDS." Information is categorized as Employee Resources, Forms and Supervisor Resources. Also HRD will be scheduling Supervisors NEOGOV training for EPMDS in January 2014. Look for the emails in early December to sign up.



Rick McIntyre, Assistant State Fire Marshal, thanked the Fire Department, especially **Dace**

Bergen, Pat Spencer, and Kamie Edwards, for presenting the fire safety puppet show "Johnnie Joins the Fire Department" at the North Carolina State Fair in October.

Updates from Wellness@Work: Thanks to everyone who participated in the **Health Risk Assessment Fairs!** If you don't have an appointment for your review, call the clinic at 919-968-2796. If it has been more than six months since your last HRA, schedule an appointment now.

Flu shots are now available from the clinic during walk-in hours (every afternoon from 1 to 2:30 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 10 to 11 a.m.). If you do not have a UNCH medical record number, obtain one prior to coming to the clinic by calling 919-966-1234.

The **Maintain Don't Gain Holiday Challenge** starts Nov. 25. Avoid holiday weight gain with this six-week program (Nov. 25-Dec. 31), with practical tips, recipes and other information to help you successfully navigate the holiday season. Sign up at www.ESMMWeighLess.com.

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Green Tips

ALL TOGETHER NOW!

Single stream makes recycling easier.

Starting over the next few weeks, participants in the Orange County Government Offices recycling collection program will no longer have to separate recycling — all paper, magazines, newspaper, phonebooks, cartons and junk mail can be mixed together with plastic bottles and jugs, metal cans, aluminum foil, glass bottles and jars. This applies to all Town of Chapel Hill public buildings.

Back of the House Single Stream.

Some public buildings may choose to continue to provide “dual stream” recycling to their customers if they prefer to have cans and bottles separate from paper in their lobbies and seating areas, as long as all employees know that the recycling will be collected all together now in a single stream in the “back of the house.”

No Plastic Bags. Remember that plastic bags are not permitted in the government buildings recycling program, unless they are being used to hold shredded paper. Plastic bags can be recycled at local grocery stores. The only plastics that are permitted in the government buildings recycling program are plastic bottles (that is a container with a neck), or plastic tubs and cups marked with a #2, 4 or 5. All containers should be empty (no liquids!) and bottles should be emptied and caps put back on.

Flatten that Cardboard. Remember that corrugated cardboard must be emptied and flattened and recycled in the designated dumpsters outside office buildings.

Mix it up. Previously, paper was kept separate from bottles, cans and jars because it was thought that the separate and baled paper would retain more value than if it were mixed with other recyclables. As it turns out, the value of the separate and baled paper does not compensate for the cost of baling and additional staff time.

If you have questions, comments or concerns, please contact the Solid Waste Management Administrative office at 919-968-2788 or recycling@orangecountync.gov.

—John Richardson, Office of Sustainability

SMT Notes

SMT notes are posted on the Intranet within a day or two of the SMT meetings. Access the notes from the intranet at <http://intranet> by clicking on “Published Documents” on the left-hand side of the page, then clicking on “SMT Meeting Notes” under the “Teams” column.

Compliments



Halle Amick thanked the **Police Department** for assuring pedestrian safety at the crosswalk on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Deborah Yancey (Transit) was complimented by a passenger for being pleasant, keeping the bus on time and keeping passengers safe.

Wallace Alston (Transit) was commended by a passenger for being courteous, cheerful, safe and on time.

Sylvester McCullen (Transit) was complimented by Lauren G. E. Ryan for doing a wonderful job.

Lois Jean Houpe complimented **the Library** on Facebook: “The best Children’s staff in NC.”



by Jim Huegerich and Faith Thompson
R.E.S.P.E.C.T. – what does it look like to you? You are not only important to the Town, you are essential! You are the face of town government.

This month’s “Ask the Ombuds” focus is on Safety, defined as: we strive to maintain our own mental and physical well-being and the well-being of those around us. We are dedicated to a work environment that minimizes risk of injury or accident. We are also dedicated to an environment that provides for honest and courteous discussion of workplace issues without fear of repercussion.

Our commitment to Safety is demonstrated when we consistently strive to make sure that all employees have the tools, resources and supports to do their job without injury or accident, but also the tools, resources and supports to be who they are, regardless of position or background.

We have heard many different stories about perceived safety concerns, both physical and mental, in our organization. Employees feel unsafe given the tools, supports and resources they have been given to do their jobs and when they have voiced these concerns to their supervisors the situations and their concerns have remained unaddressed. Seeing no effort to address their safety concerns employees have felt they have no recourse but to choose between learning to live with a continued

Kumar Nepalli and **Shelton Burnette** (both Traffic Engineering) were thanked by Bruce Sampsel for replacing a stop sign and trimming tree limbs to improve visibility.

The Fire Department C-Shift, Station 2, was thanked by Beverly Beal for assisting in a medical emergency.

Amy Harvey (CaPA) and **Peggy Paumer** (Manager) and other staff were thanked by Mary Jane Nirdlinger for assisting with preparations for a joint School Board/Council meeting.

Mary Blevins and **Johnny Parker** (both Fire) were thanked by Diane McArthur for assisting with a malfunctioning fire alarm system.

Tom Fewel expressed his gratitude to the **Public Works Department** for the new sidewalk on Estes Drive between Burlage Circle and Franklin Street.

Sandy Webb and **Richard “Rerun” Roberts** (both Transit) were thanked by Linda Alexander for helping her look for lost items.

heightened level of concern for safety and making enough noise to bring attention to their concerns. Yet, in their eyes this is no real choice because the trade-off is fear of being disciplined for insubordination, blacklisted or terminated.

We have heard from employees in every department that emotional Safety is a real concern. They share that it is difficult for them to believe that the Town values Safety when:

- Values are used against them in disciplinary actions and evaluations, while at the same time apparently unequally applied to those in power
- Encouraging and enabling employees to speak to power only fuels distrust because supervisors and managers hold power over their jobs and their livelihood, therefore, those in power hold the keys to retribution and retaliation
- Employees feel devalued. They are hesitant to offer their ideas or input due to historically having no opportunity or having their ideas and input be dismissed
- Difficulty trusting both their supervisors/managers and the Town Administration because the rules change all the time and feeling powerless and devalued
- Past hurts/wrongs have not been adequately and/or openly addressed so many employees are mistrustful of anything new

When we work as a team of employees seeking and supporting policies and actions equitable for all, our R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Values become real! What steps are you willing to take to make the value of Safety real for you and those around you?

Get Your Creative On

Third Annual Word Project

Town of Chapel Hill Employee Poetry/Lyric Writing Contest

In honor and celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Town employees, are you a poet and don't even know it? Get your creative on. Write a poem/lyric in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and maybe you could win some cash for the holidays. Poems should emphasize the values espoused by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Brotherhood, Non-Violence, Justice, Morality or Action), be based on the life of Dr. King, or reference any direct quote from Dr. King. All poetry forms will be accepted — metered verse, haiku, free form, musical lyric, etc.

Winners will have their poems/lyrics displayed on bus cards in Chapel Hill Transit buses from mid-January through March 2013. Winners will also have the opportunity to read/perform their poems/lyrics at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Employee Celebra-

tion, tentatively scheduled for Jan. 17, 2014 at the Hargraves Center. All poems will be printed to posters that will hang in Town Hall throughout February.

Entries will be judged by special guest judge Phillip Shabazz, noted North Carolina poet, author, and educator. He has been a visiting writer or artist-in-residence at numerous educational institutions, including UNC-Chapel Hill, Elon, Duke, Winthrop, Warren Wilson, and Appalachian State and countless High Schools across the state.

Winning entries will receive the following awards:

First Place — \$100

Second Place — \$50

Third Place — \$25

Honorable Mention — \$15

Entries must be received by Friday, Dec. 6.

Entries can be submitted by email to jyork@townofchapelhill.org or in person



at the Parks and Recreation Administrative Office, 200 Plant Road.

The Word Project is organized and sponsored by the Town of Chapel Hill Public & Cultural Arts office in conjunction with the Chapel Hill Transit, Parks & Recreation and Public Works Departments.

The Chapel Hill Public and Cultural Arts Office, Chapel Hill Transit, Parks & Recreation Department and the juror, reserve the right to accept or deny any entry for any reason including, but not limited to, appropriateness for display in public space.

Our Organization — Learning, Growing, Adapting to Community Needs

Changes are underway that are expected to shape our Town organization into a nimble workforce for the future that meets the interest of the community. Some of the changes for the proposed Planning and Sustainability Department and Housing and Neighborhoods Department are still being considered. Employee input in the form of questions and concerns is welcomed and encouraged. As these changes take shape, more information will be provided.

Technology Solutions Department

The Information Technology Division of Business Management has become a separate Department of Technology Solutions. This change took effect on Nov. 11, per the direction of Town Manager Roger Stancil. John Bjurman will be the director of the department and will report directly to Deputy Manager Flo Miller. Technology is a strategic solution to some of the challenges we face in operations and customer service. The change in name and reporting relationships puts the leadership of our technology

department in closer contact with the Manager's Office and Policy and Strategic Initiatives.

Proposed Planning and Sustainability Department

Planning and Sustainability will include Inspections, Long Range and Current Development Planning, GIS and analysis, policy and code development and transportation planning. Matt Sullivan, as Interim Executive Director for Planning and Sustainability, will have responsibility for managing the division and following through on organizational discussions and hiring processes.

Proposed Housing and Neighborhoods

This new department, led by Interim Executive Director Loryn Clark, will include Community Services, Town-wide affordable housing efforts, Community Development Block Grant program administration and public housing administration and



maintenance.

Your Ideas!

Many of you have shared your thoughts and concerns about this process, and we encourage you to stay involved. We need your participation to make this effort a success. Please contact Matt Sullivan, Mary Jane Nirdlinger or Loryn Clark by phone or email with your ideas. You may also forward your comments in interoffice mail or place your comments in the suggestion boxes located in the Housing Maintenance Crew Room at Public Works, Housing Administration (Caldwell Street), and Town Hall (Planning and Inspections/Engineering).