



Town of Chapel Hill

HISTORIC TOWN HALL COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 9, 2017, at 4:00 p.m.
Chapel Hill Historical Society, Lower Level of Chapel Hill Public Library
100 Library Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Meeting Minutes

Members: Council Member Sally Greene (Chair), Moses Carey, Joel Curran, Richard Ellington, Josh Gurlitz, Commissioner Penny Rich, Alan Rimer, Lee Storrow and Chela Tu.

1. Opening

a. Roll Call -

Members Present: Council Member Sally Greene (Chair), Joel Curran, Richard Ellington, Josh Gurlitz, Commissioner Penny Rich, Lee Storrow and Chela Tu.

Members Absent: Moses Carey, Alan Rimer.

Staff Present: Megan Dale, Travis Myren.

b. Approval of January 25, 2017 Minutes

Minutes Approved

c. Approval of Agenda

Agenda Approved

2. Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

3. Business

a. Other Committee Discussion

The committee discussed the upcoming meeting schedule.

On Wednesday, February 22nd, the committee will visit the City of Raleigh museum and meet with the museum director, Ernie Dollar.

On Thursday, March 9th, the committee tentatively plans to visit the Durham History Hub to meet with the museum director, Katie Spencer.

The group will discuss museum costs at the Wednesday, March 22nd meeting and hear from two speakers, Emily Kass, former Ackland Art Museum Director, and Eric Muller, a UNC Law professor with experience starting a visitors center and history museum.

To determine the feasibility of locating a visitors center, history museum, and historical society in one building, the group will continue to review and discuss expectations of the type of museum and associated general operating costs.

The committee discussed that their recommendation to the Town Council may be conceptual, regarding whether the visitors center, history museum, and historical society could work well together in the same space without knowing renovation costs.

The committee discussed the importance of community involvement in building a museum.

b. Chapel Hill Historical Society

Background: Richard Ellington will provide an overview of the Chapel Hill Historical Society's mission, services, and space and operating needs. The committee will begin discussing the potential benefits and challenges of locating the Chapel Hill Historical Society in Historic Town Hall.

Action Item: Begin discussing potential benefits, challenges, and questions of locating the Chapel Hill Historical Society in Historic Town Hall.

- **Action Taken:** The committee received and discussed the presentation. No action was taken.

The Chapel Hill Historical Society recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. The nonprofit organization is led by a volunteer board with one staff member. Since its creation, the historical society has been involved in establishing historic districts, identifying and marking historic buildings in downtown Chapel Hill, offering 8-9 programs and lectures each year, assisting individuals with research on local history, and compiling information and publications. A major annual program, "Town Treasures," recognizes Chapel Hill residents who have made important contributions to the community.

Future goals include offering more children's programs; digitizing the newspaper collection; developing a business membership program; continuing to collect, catalog and digitize materials; developing policies for accessions and archival management; and finding a permanent home for the organization.

The Chapel Hill Historical Society has been located on the lower level of the Chapel Hill Library for about 2 years, and it was formerly located in the old Chapel Hill library at 523 East Franklin Street. The physical space includes a meeting area, an office, space for individuals to conduct research, and storage space for exhibits and bound copies of the Chapel Hill Newspaper. The historical society has a no-charge lease with the Town for the space.

The historical society collaborates with the Library and functions as the local history section. The historical society works well being co-located with a similar organization and has found the Library to be a good fit.

c. Continue Committee Discussion of Museum Essays and Discussion Guide

The committee discussed the importance of connecting with the community if a museum was located in Historic Town Hall. There was an interest in researching other communities' creative approaches to display historic collections and exhibits in high-traffic areas. The committee also discussed the implications of having multiple nonprofits with similar focus areas in the Chapel Hill community.

4. Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

5. Adjournment

Meeting Materials

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Sacred Grove Essays on Museums

“Thinking About Starting A Museum” Discussion Guide

“The Future of Museums” Article

“Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures” Report

Opportunity Statement: The Inter-Faith Council for Social Services is proceeding with plans to vacate Historic Town Hall. A recommendation is needed regarding the future use and occupancy of this building.

Goal: A Historic Town Hall Committee will represent the interests of the Town of Chapel Hill and Orange County to consider the opportunity to renovate the Historic Town Hall building at 100 West Rosemary Street as a Visitor's Center, a History Center, or both for possible occupancy by the Chapel Hill and Orange County Visitor's Bureau, Chapel Hill Historical Society, and/ or Chapel Hill Museum.

Public Charge: The Historic Town Hall Committee pledges its respect to the public. The Committee asks the public to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous manner, both with the Committee and with fellow members of the public. Should any member of the Committee or any member of the public fail to observe this charge at any time, the Chair will ask the offending person to leave the meeting until that individual regains personal control. Should decorum fail to be restored, the Chair will recess the meeting until a genuine commitment to this public charge is observed.