



Town of Chapel Hill
AMERICAN LEGION TASK FORCE
Tuesday, June 6, 2017 2:00 p.m.
Chapel Hill Town Hall, 1st Floor Meeting Room
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Draft Minutes

Members: Rachel Schaevitz (Chair), Neal Bench (Vice-Chair), Mayor Pam Hemminger, Council Member Donna Bell, Council Member Nancy Oates, Michael Andrews, Dan Cefalo, Joan Guilkey, Pat Heinrich, Ryun Miller, Laurie Paolicelli, Scott Radway, Lew Brown (alternate), Wesley McMahon (alternate)

Staff Liaison: Corey Liles

1. Opening

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Rachel Schaevitz, Chair

a. Roll Call

Members Present: Rachel Schaevitz (Chair), Neal Bench (Vice-Chair), Mayor Pam Hemminger, Council Member Donna Bell, Council Member Nancy Oates, Michael Andrews, Dan Cefalo, Joan Guilkey, Pat Heinrich (by phone), Ryun Miller (by phone), Laurie Paolicelli, Scott Radway, Wesley McMahon (alternate)

Members Absent: Lew Brown

Town Staff Present: Corey Liles, Laura Selmer

Consultant Staff Present: Dan Jewell, Elizabeth Wilcox

b. Approval of Minutes for the May 9, 2017 Meeting

➤ Action Taken: Minutes Approved

c. Approval of Agenda

➤ Action Taken: Agenda Approved

2. Announcements

Vice-Chair Neal Bench stated that although it is the Council's intent to sell off a portion of the American Legion parcel, the task force has not yet taken a position on the amount of land to sell for commercial uses. Joan Guilkey offered that the task force may have a preference to make the whole property a park, however there was not agreement on that position. Ryun Miller noted that the task force serves in an advisory role rather than as a decision-making body.

Mayor Pam Hemminger shared that there is an opportunity for a matching grant with an outdoor fitness company interested in installing outdoor gyms and fitness parks. This opportunity will be further explored with Parks & Recreation staff to provide more information. The Mayor met with representatives of the Chinese Cultural Center proposal to discuss their interests in the property. Additional inquiries continue as interest in the property remains high. She also mentioned conversations that are ongoing with the neighboring Lindquist property and their interest in selling to the Town. Additionally, the Mayor highlighted her interest in creative placemaking after attending The Triangle Smart Cities Summit in Raleigh.

3. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

4. Business

a. Town-wide Priorities for Parks & Recreation

Background: At the previous meeting, the task force received a presentation from members of the Parks, Greenways & Recreation Commission on recommended uses for the American Legion site, along with proposed characteristics of various facilities. Staff were subsequently asked to provide more information on Town-wide priorities for parks and recreation facilities, based on the capacity and demand for existing facilities and programs.

Action Item: Receive information.

- Action Taken: Corey Liles presented information on the 2015 priorities developed by the Department of Parks & Recreation, along with the current status of Parks & Recreation bond funds and the applicability of national standards. The task force discussed how this information may guide the development of the American Legion property. No action was taken.

Mr. Liles explained that priority projects are based on the recommendations of the 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan. There are additional priorities, not applicable to the work of the task force, that involve maintenance of existing facilities. Jim Orr, Director of the Department, provided clarification in a memo, noting that while priorities are influenced by national standards, local context and public input are weighted more heavily. An estimated \$3.4 million in bond funds remains for town-wide Parks & Recreation projects, after accounting for issued bonds and reserved funds for administrative offices.

Ms. Guilkey and Wesley McMahon reviewed the presentation from members of the Parks, Greenways & Recreation Commission provided at the May 9 meeting, highlighting the recommended uses for the American Legion site.

Scott Radway asked the project consultants to consider possibilities for interim uses of the property until long range goals are attainable.

Dan Cefalo highlighted an additional need for the community clay studio to expand.

b. Visitors' Bureau Research Study Findings

Background: Laurie Paolicelli will present a summary of a research project commissioned this year by the Chapel Hill / Orange County Visitors Bureau to study the feasibility of a public assembly facility, sports fields or other visitor-oriented development for the purpose of driving new tourism, hotel room nights and economic impact to Chapel Hill and Orange County. The summary outlines the key findings associated with Phase One of a two-phased study. Phase One focuses on the potential market demand and potential development scenarios. Paolicelli will review key details surrounding the research, analysis and conclusions.

Action Item: Receive information.

- Action Taken: Laurie Paolicelli presented the purpose of the Visitors Bureau Study and the Phase One findings concerning indoor recreation facilities that could support tourism and economic development. The task force discussed how this information may guide the development of the American Legion property. No action was taken.

Ms. Paolicelli explained that the research project was commissioned by the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors' Bureau regarding feasibility and market demand for visitor oriented facilities. Research indicates an unmet market demand for sports and recreational tourism. A particular demand for pickleball is growing among older demographics, typically with disposable incomes, which represent a key population for tourism attraction. For any recreation facilities built by the Town, the Visitors' Bureau would recommend a memorandum of understanding in which the Bureau would have the ability to organize and advertise tournament events. Indoor facilities may offer more opportunity for regional tournament events, since year-round use is possible.

Michael Andrews noted that noise impacts should be considered for a large scale pickleball facility, considering the noise spillover of existing courts at Ephesus Park. Indoor courts could remove this concern or, as the Mayor noted, higher walls could be built. Additionally, size limitations may not be conducive to the needs of large-scale national tournaments.

Mr. McMahon expressed concern that accessibility for lower income and local community members could be a challenge for activities that appeal to higher-earning demographics.

Mr. Miller noted that pickleball courts are non-permeable surfaces that could have an environmental impact impact the property, and that striking a balance of local use and tourism attraction should be a priority.

c. Principles for Development

Background: At the May 9, 2017 meeting, task force members drafted a set of development principles intended to capture the qualities and characteristics that are important for any development on the American Legion site. The current list has 11 potential principles. Staff have drafted descriptions to help explain the meaning of each principle.

Action Item: Refine and finalize the list of principles for development of the American Legion site.

- Action Taken: The task force reviewed the draft principles with descriptions and suggested various edits. The task force approved the following principles: A Community Gathering Space for Everyone, A Network of Walkable Paths, Support for Healthy Lifestyles, and Functional Vehicular Access.

Edits were suggested by various task force members for principles addressing parking, impacts on the neighborhood, partnerships with the school and others, and the pond. Principles addressing green construction and Legion Rd frontage were tabled for consideration at the next meeting. Task force members were asked to provide additional feedback to staff via email.

d. Synthesis of Charrette Sketches

Background: Small groups at the April 8 charrette produced seven concept sketches for development of the site which are included in the Draft Design Charrette Report. There were many common features shared by the majority of the sketches. The project consultant has developed a single sketch that incorporates these common features into a more general layout of proposed land uses, to be presented for consideration by the task force.

Action Item: Provide feedback on the generalized sketch to the consultant.

- Action Taken: Task force members expressed concern about having a vote on the sketch, and the consultant staff suggested that it be included in the report as a summary of the charrette input rather than a recommendation of the task force. Further discussion of this topic was tabled for a future meeting due to time constraints.

The project consultants briefly discussed the generalized sketch for proposed land uses, which was feedback from the April 8 charrette. Task force discussion highlighted the need to either adopt the sketch with a vote and include it as a recommendation to Council, or to present it clearly noted as a summary of the charrette input.

e. Outline of Report

Background: The draft report includes background information on the American Legion property, concept sketches with descriptions, and a summary of common themes from charrette public input. The task force has discussed adding sections on development principles and items for future

consideration. Finalizing an outline of the report will allow the consultant to complete a second draft for the June 14 task force meeting.

Action Item: Review items to be included in the Report to Council and identify any additional information to include.

➤ Action Taken: Discussion of this topic was tabled for a future meeting due to time constraints.

f. Other Task Force Discussion

No other items discussed.

5. Public Comment

No additional public comments.

6. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Next Meeting: June 14th, 2017

Meeting Materials

- [Draft Minutes of the May 9, 2017 Meeting](#)
- [Parks Master Plan Future Development Priority List](#)
- [Draft List of Development Principles](#)
- [General Land Use Sketch](#)
- [Draft Report Outline](#)

Opportunity Statement: The Town purchased the 36-acre American Legion Post 6 property in March of 2017. A consultant engaged by the Town will be leading a public engagement process to produce conceptual options for future use of the property that reflect the community's interests. The Task Force is a body representative of the community that can offer feedback on the design work done by the consultant and assist with finalizing the report for Council consideration. The Task Force can also advise on next steps in the overall planning process. This contribution is needed to help the Town achieve Council Goals and determine the most fitting and appropriate uses of the American Legion Property.

Goal: The American Legion Task Force will participate in the public engagement process and work with the project consultant to develop future land use recommendations for the American Legion property, along with next steps in the planning process, that uphold the Council's Guiding Principles for development of the property.

Resources:

- Project Web Page: <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/americanlegion>
- Board Web Page: <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/town-hall/government/boards-commissions>
(Scroll to American Legion Task Force)

Unless otherwise noted, please contact [Corey Liles](#) in the Office of Planning & Sustainability for more information.