

Council Committee on Economic Sustainability Meeting Notes
May 4, 2018
Chapel Hill Public Library, Room A

Attendees: Council Member Michael Parker (Chair), Mayor Pam Hemminger, Mayor Pro Tempore Jess Anderson, Council Member Allen Buansi, Council Member Hongbin Gu, Council Member Nancy Oates, Council Member Rachel Schaevitz, Council Member Karen Stegman, Flo Miller, Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Loryn Clark, Chris Blue, Dwight Bassett, Ben Hitchings, Jeanne Brown, Rae Buckley, Sarah Poulton, David Finley, Beth Vazquez, Meg McGurk, Steve Brantley, Ed Harrison, Fred Lampe, and John Quintero

Chair Michael Parker opened the meeting at 8:08 a.m.

Updates

(Please see slides linked throughout for additional information.)

[Parking¹](#)

- Chief of Police and Executive Director for Community Safety Chris Blue gave an update on parking, including increased parking capacity, installation of new pay stations, downtown ambassadors, the Park Mobile app, and new messaging strategies
- In response to a question from Mayor Pro Tempore Jess Anderson, Chief Blue suggests that Council members refer business owners with concerns about employee parking to him or to Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership Executive Director Meg McGurk
- Mayor Pro Tempore Anderson suggested doing targeted outreach with parents
- In response to a question from Council Member Karen Stegman about ticketing and monitoring, Chief Blue responded that Chapel Hill has a pretty low number of enforcement officers for a municipality of this size
 - Park Mobile app allows people to feed the meter from anywhere
 - Town offers a first ticket forgiveness program and grants reasonable appeals
- Council Member Nancy Oates asked about the lot behind the Franklin Hotel; Chief Blue clarified that the property owner has leased the entire lot to the Town now that development plans have slowed
- Council Member Rachael Schaevitz asked about the use of UNC lots on the weekends; Chief Blue said those lots are identified on the website as an option after hours and on weekends
- Council Member Schaevitz also asked about plans to draw attention to the CVS and Wallace decks; Chief Blue acknowledged an opportunity in the redesign of the pedestrian walkway to improve signage
- Mayor Pam Hemminger noted that the Town has moved from two-hour to three-hour parking

[Economic Development²](#)

- Economic Development Officer Dwight Bassett gave a high level overview of the commercial development strategy and the focus for economic development, provided several updates, reviewed the marketing strategy, and reviewed new inquiries

¹ <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showdocument?id=39437>

² <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showdocument?id=39439>

- In response to a question from Council Member Allen Buansi about the North Carolina Opportunity Zones Program, Mr. Bassett provided the example of an older development off Hillsborough Street:
 - Some of the lower buildings are in the flood zone, and the owner has talked about redeveloping, going more vertical closer to the street
 - Mr. Bassett said this could be a great opportunity to use the Opportunity Zone to encourage the property owner to provide low-income or affordable workforce housing
- Mayor Hemminger shared some takeaways from the Triangle J Council of Governments Mayors & Chairs Meeting, including that fifty percent of North Carolina is now non-native

Planning and Zoning³

- Planning and Development Services Director Ben Hitchings reviewed new projects coming forward and reminded the Committee of the Development Activity Report on the Town website
- Concept Plans
 - Coley Hall coming to the Planning Commission on June 5
 - Dunkin Donuts Drive-Thru
 - New multi-family project (140 multi-family dwelling) at Erwin Road coming to the Community Design Commission in May
 - 2200 Homestead was presented to the Community Design Commission in late April; presentation coming to the Council in June
- Special Use Permits (recommended that Council not talk with folks outside of the public hearing)
 - 11 Sixty 5 Weaver Dairy Road (mixed-use, three-story office; just went to Planning Commission; slated to return to Council June 13)
 - Active Adult Retirement (Homestead Road, 190 apartments; public information meetings in December & January; currently in staff review; not yet scheduled for review by advisory boards and Council)
 - CASA Merritt Mill (24 1-bedroom units; finishing up staff review and will be coming to Council soon)
 - Chapel Hill Cooperative Preschool (Planning Commission denied request to extend the period of approval for the original site plan; appeal to the Board of Adjustment was delayed; Special Use Permit track still in staff review, likely to return to Council in the fall)
 - Mayor's Office is working on a blanket email to community members who have inquired about the project
 - In response to a question from Council Member Hongbin Gu, Mr. Hitchings provided a brief explanation of how projects come forward
 - Chapel Hill High School (163,000 SF expansion; returns to Council May 23)
 - Columbia Street Annex Mixed Use (in staff review)
 - Eastowne UNC Healthcare (153,000 SF medical office building; being reviewed by the Community Design Commission in a special meeting on May 7; comes to Council on May 23)

³ <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showdocument?id=39443>

- Mr. Hitchings also briefly reviewed a new project in the Light Industrial Zone, development agreement projects, Blue Hill District projects, projects under construction, and special projects
 - The Kickoff & Idea Exchange for Charting Our Future takes place May 10th from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at the Franklin Hotel

Business

[Update on County Economic Development Activities](#)⁴

- Orange County Economic Development Director Steve Brantley gave a presentation on Orange County Economic Development Activities, including:
 - Orange County LocalFest (Fall 2018)
 - Orange County Economic Summit (Fall 2018)
 - Current tourism programs
 - Entrepreneurial and incubator support
 - Business recruitment
 - Loan and grant programs
 - Financial support to small businesses
 - Programs in agricultural economic development

Other Committee Discussion

- Mayor Pro Tempore Anderson asked Mr. Bassett for an update on efforts to assist Lacock's Shoe Repair
 - Mr. Bassett said the Town worked with the Chamber and the Chapel Downtown Partnership to put together an opportunity for Lacock's that would meet their needs, but a decision hasn't been made
- Mayor Pro Tempore Anderson highlighted the need to better tell the story about our efforts to retain small, local businesses
- Council Member Gu remarked that it's exciting so many projects are being built and asked how we can better explain what value this development brings to the Town
 - Mr. Hitchings said we can approach this question qualitatively
 - For example, the Future Land Use Map effort is intended to build agreement on where things should go in the community and then align our standards to direct activity to those places
 - Mr. Hitchings said this question can also be approached quantitatively through impact analyses (Assistant Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger agreed to follow-up with additional information)
- Fred Lampe said he'd like to challenge the Council to think about what can be done so that the development that is occurring is not so ugly, whether it's regulation or direction to staff

Motion to adjourn at 9:56 a.m.

⁴ <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showdocument?id=39441>