**Council Committee on Economic Sustainability Meeting Notes**

Attendees: Mayor Pam Hemminger, Council Member George Cianciolo, Council Member Michael Parker, Council Member Ed Harrison, Council Member Sally Greene, Council Member Nancy Oates, Roger Stancil, Flo Miller, Dwight Bassett, Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Ben Hitchings, Rae Buckley, Gene Poveromo, Meg McGurk, Steve Brantley, Gordon Merklein, Laurie Paolicell, Jeanne Brown, Catherine Lazorko, Kristen Smith, Aaron Nelson, Miles Spann, Fred Lampe, Charles Humble

8 to 10 a.m. Friday, June 3, First Floor Conference Room of Town Hall

The committee will not meet for the months of July and August.

**Update on Downtown 2020 Strategy**
Rae Buckley (Manager’s Office) provided an update on the Draft Downtown 2020 Work Plan that will be reviewed by the Council on June 27. The Work Plan -- reviewed by several boards, committees and commissions as well as interested community groups and individual stakeholders -- transforms ideas into actions that will be undertaken by Town staff and partners between now and the year 2020. The 2020 Downtown Strategy is a summary document providing an overview to create a more diverse downtown.

Comment: Let’s tell the story about our plans and actions to improve Downtown Chapel Hill including the new parking program. Let investors know – this is our vision; this is what we’re looking for.

Response: Laurie Paolicelli (Chapel Hill-Orange County Visitors Bureau) said she would work together with Meg McGurk and Rae Buckley to explore ways to bring the story to an audience beyond Chapel Hill in such outlets as *Garden & Gun Magazine* and elsewhere. Comment: Include the Arts Plan in the communications and storytelling.

Mayor Pam Hemminger said she has been talking to businesses about recent changes to make parking easier, improve alleyways, cleaning planter beds and adding greenery, and plans for enhanced lighting.

Town Manager Roger Stancil said that Rae is helping Town staff and community stakeholders to make connections to the varieties of improvements occurring downtown. We have a culture that is more team-oriented, and many staff are involved. Bond funds and other existing funds will be used to accomplish the action items within the Work Plan, and the Council will be asked to approve projects as they are developed.

The Committee endorsed the Downtown Work Plan and Strategy and asked that they be forwarded to Council for approval.

**Update on Previously Recommended Goals**

Mary Jane Nirdlinger received additional feedback on the proposal to create a new zone that would allow new types of spaces and rezone specific areas of Chapel Hill for light-industrial/research companies. A public hearing could be planned for fall 2016.

Question: Are there any conversations occurring that would tell us whether rezoning will be taken advantage of?

Dwight Bassett (Manager’s Office) said that while he is having conversations with developers, the rezoning does not guarantee that the land would be redeveloped. Potential sites for the rezoning include the Millhouse Road property or a 44-acre tract near Carol Woods. A “context map” could be developed to provide more understanding of land uses in the area and potential impacts. The intent is not to promote housing in the new zone.

Question: How do we ensure that the new zone does not allow for new residential development?

Ben Hitchings said options are to prezone areas that make sense for light industrial and also to consider individual projects that will drive rezoning. Generally, residential use would not be permitted in this type of zone.

Mayor Hemminger said we need many options for potential incentivizing. We need to create more office/business space and ensure it’s affordable. We need to better understand business and development interests. Dwight said he routinely meets at Launch to visit with entrepreneurs and to keep a pulse on their interests and challenges. Sometimes creative solutions tailored to meet specific interests are better than a broad plan.

The Committee endorsed the new zone concept and requested that it be forwarded for Council consideration and public input.

**Discussion on June 2 joint meeting with County Commissioners**

Steve Brantley (Orange County Economic Development) said that the discussion among Town of Chapel Hill and Orange County elected officials on June 2 was more a concept discussion -- exploring what incentives other cities offer and brainstorming options. We may not come up with the complete plan all at once, but take small steps toward incentivizing particular things. Steve said that what the Town of Chapel Hill is doing via the Economic Sustainability Committee – meeting on a monthly basis and holding public conversations – is a positive effort toward advancing economic development goals.

Town Manager Stancil said that continued collaboration among managers at Orange County and the towns of Hillsborough and Carrboro are proving beneficial to create economic strategy and incentives. Roger said that creating a joint policy would take into account rules for where cities/counties can put funding. A good example is the Rogers Road Partnership. The Town cannot put funds toward the design of a sewer system outside municipal limits, but it can put funds toward a community center when Town residents will use the facility.

**Other comments**

Aaron Nelson (Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce) said that they are creating a Summer Business Census. The census will include the names/contacts of businesses, number of employees, and other pertinent info. Aaron also announced a June 28 tour to Northern Virginia to explore the Bus Rapid Transit system established there.