



Town of Chapel Hill

HISTORIC TOWN HALL COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 12, 2017, at 12:00 p.m.
Chapel Hill/ Orange County Visitors Center
501 West Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Meeting Minutes

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

1. Opening

a. Roll Call

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

Staff Present: Megan Dale, Travis Myren, Laurie Paolicelli.

b. Approval of December 14, 2016 Minutes

Minutes Approved

c. Approval of Agenda

Agenda Approved

2. Public Comment

No comment.

3. Business

a. Chapel Hill/ Orange County Visitors Bureau Presentation

Background: The Visitors Bureau staff will provide an overview of the Visitors Bureau's mission, services, current facility, and operating needs, as well as best practices of local and regional Visitors Centers.

Action Item: Following the Visitors Bureau's presentation, the committee will discuss potential benefits and challenges of locating the Visitors Bureau in Historic Town Hall.

➤ Action Taken: The committee received and discussed the presentation and toured the Visitors Bureau's current facility. No action was taken.

The Visitors Bureau presentation provided an overview of the organization's mission, goals, and services, as well as trends among visitors centers in the Triangle and nationwide.

The Visitors Bureau is located at 501 West Franklin Street and has a staff of six. Staff assists with questions, provides guidance, and refers visitors, area newcomers, and residents to local businesses, restaurants, hotels, etc. in Orange County. The Visitors Center experiences higher foot traffic on Saturdays, holidays, and evening events.

UNC is the primary draw for visitors to Chapel Hill and to the Visitors Center, and coordination with UNC's Visitors Center is important. Visitors on vacation in the area are the fastest growing group that walk in to the Visitors Center. In addition, the Visitors Center sees a significant number of visitors who are considering retirement in North Carolina.

Although occupancy in Chapel Hill is at an all-time high, the number of visitors walking into the Visitors Center is decreasing, likely as more visitors access information at UNC's Visitors Center or online.

Durham's Visitors Center is seeing more walk-ins as a result of moving to a more prominent location. A national trend in Visitors Centers is incorporating technology, but printed materials/ brochures and in-person assistance remain important to visitors as well. Another trend is to co-locate Visitors Centers with other agencies.

The Chapel Hill/ Orange County Visitors Center represents the entire county and its towns. The committee discussed the need to consider whether a history museum or historical society would focus solely on Chapel Hill or multiple jurisdictions.

b. Other Committee Discussion

4. Public Comment

No comment.

5. Adjournment

Meeting Materials

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Visitors Bureau Presentation

White Paper – The Bentley Building

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.