

**EXCERPT OF NOTES OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL  
RETREAT  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2017**

**Defining Significant Issues and Challenges.**

The Council used the remainder of the retreat to develop a process for creating a long-range strategic plan that will build on the current processes for identifying and acting on council goals and also address the community's most significant challenges. The Council vetted the following list of significant issues or challenges they believe will face the Chapel Hill Community in the next 5-10 Years:

**Themes:**

**Affordability**

- Can Chapel Hill, with its limited resources, have any significant effect on the lack of affordable housing?
- Increased cost of entry to Chapel Hill and what it does to our community.
- Preserve and create housing options for working and middle class, municipal workers and other modestly paid people who keep the town functioning
- Affordability and Affordable Housing
- Affordability. This community offers very little opportunity for and support for young people starting up without significant parental backing. Lots of low-wage jobs that don't pay enough to live in CH or even out in the County, especially since our transportation system doesn't serve all low-income housing. Of course, there isn't enough affordable housing to start with. We need lots of dense and basic multi-family housing.
- Context-sensitive development for major transportation nodes which is fully accessible for all income levels and for all types of mobility
- The challenge is to strengthen our support for the poor and marginalized.
- Strategy to address challenge of strengthening support for poor and marginalized: Get our arms around the size and scope of the housing issue. Recognize and articulate to the community that the solutions can't be absorbed by the developers alone, or even mostly. Recognize that partnerships and subsidies and ambitious planning is required. We need to understand the Rosen report. We need to push for the county-level planning that, so far as I know, has not begun. Council needs to stay involved in staff discussions re public housing, whether/how to redevelop using RAD model, as well as other initiatives to support public housing residents.

**Competitive Advantage**

- Competitive Advantage of CH in relation to other municipalities
- Can Chapel Hill get back/retain its "mojo?" What needs to be done make sure that CH attracts young people – singles and families – in the face of increasing competition from Durham, Cary, and, most likely Chatham Park. Can we attract and retain innovative, entrepreneurial residents and businesses? What are realistic expectations in that regard? And can we do so in a way that promotes equality/equity?

- We lack training programs and career paths for our non-university young people and adults needing to earn a decent living. And we need to support Orange County Living Wage.
- Carry out the priorities of the arts master plan, which involve community outreach and engagement. The arts master plan correctly recognizes that the arts are not a luxury; rather, they are key to achieving the ideal of an inclusive community where everyone's voice is heard. Take advantage of the talents and energies of the Cultural Arts Commission

### **Managing Growth/Quality of life interests**

- Planning for growth
- Crowding impacts on services and quality of life like traffic, public safety, etc.
- Clear vision for the physical future of Chapel Hill. I mean a picture. A drawing. Something people can see. Then we need to put the zoning in place that supports that vision. There is a limit to the amount of space we have that can be developed or redeveloped. The things we build tend to have lifespans of many decades.
- Is Chapel Hill willing to accept increased traffic as a cost of increased growth?
- Reduce traffic jams; address traffic impact before approving new development
- Prioritize green space, bikeways, trees, beauty of town
- Need to offer alternatives to traditional car-based transportation through investments in our transit system, bicycling, and others. We can no longer road-build our way out of traffic and congestion. We will need to find alternatives going forward.
- As Chapel Hill becomes almost fully built out, how will we reconcile the need/desire for growth, development, and evolution on the one hand and neighborhood preservation/conservation on the other?
- Completing infrastructure projects for mobility without single-occupant motor vehicles in a fully useable and timely manner (e.g projects of adopted bicycle facility plan and future adopted pedestrian facilities plan)
- Human-scale development in places appropriate for our community, considering both past and future
- Full coordination with the UNC-CH master planning process
- Continue to work for creative strategies to support public transit at all levels.
- Environmental issues
- Mitigate stormwater runoff and flooding

### **Economic Development/Tax Base**

- Without significantly increasing its new housing stock, can Chapel Hill hope to lure developers to speculatively build large office buildings?
- Fiscal Sustainability (Diversify tax base, create jobs....)
- Increase the commercial tax base relative to residential; make room for businesses, not more apartments for people who work out of town
- Aging of our housing stock, particularly single family homes. Our housing stock is becoming increasingly non-competitive (from a cost/quality standpoint) with our surrounding communities. The advantage we've had for families in terms our schools is diminishing. If the historical strength of our real estate market erodes, it could impact our tax base over time.
- Optimal use of Town real estate assets

## **Diversity/Social Justice**

- Protecting the Rights and Safety of Residents
- Addressing racial equity in policy decisions.
- Keeping our diversity in all forms
- In the face of what appears to be increasingly conservative governments at both the national and state levels, will we be able to retain our commitment to social justice and at what financial and political cost?
- Racism and discrimination. Call it health disparities, achievement gap, unequal justice or whatever, we have it all in Chapel Hill. And we seem to think we don't, because we don't fly the Rebel flag.
- We need accessible, affordable health care. This is a HUGE issue for many families. It may reach a crisis point without Obamacare.

## **Communication/Decision Making**

- Should Town Council base its decisions on the opinions of its most vocal citizens?
- Need to get feedback from all our constituents and not just the powerful/influential.