



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Booker Creek Working Group Meeting Notes

Chair John Morris
Chair Pamela Schultz
Vice-Chair Jeanette Bench
Doug Frederick
Antonia Sebastian (absent)
Shugong Wang (absent)

Noel Myers (absent)
Chad Pickens
Miguel Rojas Sotelo
Michael Dupree
Louie Rivers

Monday, June 6, 2022

6pm

Virtual Meeting

1 Roll Call and Announcements

Pamela Shultz called roll.

2 Spotlight on Environmental Equity presented by Shenekia Weeks, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer for the Town of Chapel Hill

Shenekia Weeks discussed how the group can apply an equity lens to the recommendations by engaging the community in decision-making and honoring the lived experiences of community members. Weeks shared a framework the working group can use to ensure that recommendations are socially and environmentally just. The [OneOrange framework](#) has been adopted by all of the Councils in Orange County.

Weeks discussed the lowest and highest forms of community engagement with the group, from inform to empower. Weeks also shared a three step process the working group can use to decide which form of community engagement is best for their goals. Weeks also discussed the Racial Equity Assessment Lens, which can be used at various stages in a project. This Lens has seven considerations that will ultimately contribute to the working group's recommendations. Weeks emphasized that the frameworks discussed are thorough, yet generic, and do not esteem academic knowledge over lived experiences.

Maggie Chotas moderated Q&A following Weeks' presentation.

Jeanette Bench encouraged the group to not forget the disabled community. Bench also suggested the group first consider the most vulnerable community members and work to address flooding issues for lower-income communities.

Weeks encouraged the group to consider how recommendations impact communities that have been harmed historically by decision-making around flood mitigation.

Michael Dupree shared that Durham struggled with the first two levels of engagement, informing and consulting, in the beginning of his project with the county. He pointed out that once they made connections with community leaders, Durham county's community engagement became more effective.

Louie Rivers pushed back against the idea of having community leaders and suggested bringing people onto the committee with the expectation that they will bring their own perspectives rather than the perspective of a group of people. Rivers also suggested that the group engage heterogeneous aspects of the Asian and Hispanic communities.

4 Possible Recommendation regarding regulatory options for managing impervious surface, presented by Chris Roberts (Town staff), Judy Johnson (Town staff), and Jeanette Bench

Working group member Jeannette Bench invited Judy Johnson from the planning department and Chris Roberts from the stormwater department to provide context for the tentative recommendation to change a portion of the stormwater ordinance in the Town's [Land Use Management Ordinance \(LUMO\)](#). This proposed change would require developers to plan for the 100-year storm rather than the 25-year storm.

Chris Roberts shared the current stormwater runoff requirement for new development in the LUMO: "Post-development runoff rate shall not exceed the runoff rate of the site pre-development for 24-hour storm events (1-year, 2-year, and 25-year storms)." To provide context for Bench's recommendation, Roberts discussed design differences in planning for the 25-year storm versus the 100-year storm at Weavers Grove. Roberts pointed out a couple of differences in design. For example, the wall height, detention area, and volume of runoff controlled will increase. The project cost would also increase by around \$55,000.

Judy Johnson from the Planning department discussed the process for changing an ordinance. She informed the group that a LUMO rewrite is a multi-year project that the Town is in the beginning stage of. However, she said that text amendments happen 6-10 times a year and the level of proposed changes vary. Johnson shared the process: public information meeting and staff review, planning commission review and recommendation, public hearing (call for hearing and legal ad), and council action. Johnson said that this could happen very quickly. Usually each step takes a month, but larger projects can take longer.

Following staff presentations, Jeanette Bench proposed that the group recommend increasing the runoff requirement in LUMO to plan for the 100-year storm.

Discussion followed beginning with Mike Dupree. Dupree asked staff if there is a state law that would prohibit the Town from having a stricter requirement than state law. Town staff do not think this would be a problem at the moment.

Pamela Schultz shared that Cary regulates to the 100-year storm and asked staff about Carrboro, Durham and Raleigh. Staff said that they would research Carrboro, Durham, and Raleigh's requirements and share back with the group.

Working group members inquired about what a 100-year storm event is. Chris Roberts said that the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#) determines how many inches constitute each flood event. 7.06 to 8.19 inches in 24 hours constitutes a 100-year storm in Chapel Hill.

Louie Rivers inquired how often NOAA updates the estimates. Allison Weakley, Town staff, pointed out that one of the caveats of these estimates are that they are based on historical estimates. Rivers stated that, with climate change considered, planning to a 100-year storm seems smarter than planning to a 25-year storm.

Maggie Chotas asked what the Group's next step should be in considering a recommendation like this. Bench recommended that the Group vote to put this recommendation on the tentative list of recommendations to be fleshed out over the summer.

Working group members used a 5-point scale to indicate support for Bench's recommendation. All group members voted either 4 or 5, strongly supporting that the recommendation will be added to their short list of tentative recommendations.

4 Possible Recommendation inspired by Cary example presented by John Morris

John Morris recommended that the Town follow Cary's model of making stormwater improvements a top priority. Morris sees this recommendation as a way for the Town staff to go beyond the short-term, actionable recommendations that the group will provide.

Morris stated that Cary's prioritization of stormwater improvements was headed up by their Town manager and six committees that were assigned to different tasks having to do with stormwater improvements. Morris suggested that the Town could follow this model and customize it to their own interests and "proportionalize" to its size. Each committee would involve staff from different departments. Morris also added that Cary accomplished changing to the 100-year storm standard after adopting this program.

Morris hopes modeling Cary's program will serve as a roadmap to involve stakeholders in carrying out the other recommendations in the report.

Discussion followed, beginning with Louie Rivers. Rivers suggested the Town think about who shares our watershed and think about coordination across jurisdictional lines. Allison Weakley, Town staff, pointed out that the [Booker Creek watershed](#) is entirely within Chapel Hill's

jurisdiction, so what happens in the Booker Creek watershed is up to us. However, this is not true for Bolin or Morgan Creek. Rivers asked Weakley whether they coordinate with partners on the other creeks. Weakley said that they have regular meetings with adjacent entities and jurisdictions.

Bench expressed concern about recommending open-ended Town-wide committees rather than concrete recommendations that can be implemented.

Pamela Schultz shared that the Stormwater Advisory Board has three seats opening up and encouraged working group members to apply. Schultz suggested that the Stormwater Advisory Board can help move this initiative forward.

The group voted to put this recommendation on the short list. The group supported moving the recommendation for further consideration and development over the summer.

5 Working Group Timeline & Report Planning, presented by John Morris

Regarding the Working Group's timeline, John Morris said that the group will meet on June 27, then break for the summer. Maggie Chotas has volunteered to be the assembly point and combine all of the separate sections of the report. Morris said that recommendations will be general, without detailed budgets, but will be useful for the Town. Morris volunteered to help with the Mecklenburg County and Cary-inspired recommendations and asked the group to volunteer to help with other recommendations.

The process: after additional work over the summer, the group will meet in the Fall to consider the draft report and make modifications before sending it to the Town council.

Amy Ryan suggested using the [Reimagining Community Safety Task Force Report](#) as a template. The final template will be given to the Working Group at the next meeting.

6 Public Input

Julie McClintock expressed support for the Working Group's recommendations. McClintock also expressed concern about the Town's Design Manual Standards in addition to the LUMO standards. The Design Manual Standards include the specific methods developers must use to control stormwater. McClintock expressed concern that this is an element of stormwater management that neither the Town nor Council pays attention to. McClintock expressed support for a model like Cary's in the form of working groups that tackle specific issues. McClintock suggested that the Working Group recommend changing the standards for not only new development, but also redevelopment, in the LUMO.

7 Adjourn