



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)

Tom Henkel
Chad Pickens
Miguel Rojas Sotelo
Michael Dupree
Louie Rivers

Shugong Wang (absent)

Monday, May 22, 2023

6pm

Virtual Meeting

1 Roll Call and Announcements

Maggie Chotas called roll. Jeanette congratulated Antonia for having a baby.

2 Welcome

The mayor and chairs welcomed the group and expressed gratitude for everyone who has been involved in the Working Group: Town officials, staff, working group members, and chairs.

3 Appreciation to the Town staff for their support

The chairs expressed gratitude for Stormwater staff who have been involved in the Working Group.

4 Summary and results of the review of the Report by Tetra Tech

John Morris shared a summary of the results of a review of the Working Group's draft report by Tetra Tech, a consultant that reviewed the report and determined that the group's recommendations were sound. Morris noted that the report includes significant introductory material and recaps the material learned in the Working Group meetings. He also emphasized that the report recommends complementary actions to the stormwater department's current activities – it is not intended to be a replacement of the stormwater plan.

John Morris recapped key recommendations in the draft report, highlighting the first, third, sixth, seventh, and eighth recommendations in the report. Morris noted that the recommendation numbers do not indicate prioritization. The table of recommendations in the executive summary lists the dates in which the Working Group tentatively approved the recommendations. The group organized the recommendations in this chronological order so readers can easily find the respective meeting for each recommendation if they wish to hear the discussion that led up to the recommendation.

Morris directed the group to the draft report's Section 4.5: 2 Key issues, which discusses the group's answer to two key questions: Should these recommendations apply Town-wide? What effect will our recommendations have on affordable housing?

Maggie Chotas opened the floor for questions. There were no questions regarding Morris' summary, so the group moved to the discussion portion of the meeting.

5 Motion to send the report to the Town Council for their Consideration and Action

Maggie Chotas opened the floor for discussion before the vote to move the report to Council:

Miguel Rojas-Sotello noted the importance of incorporating environmental justice considerations throughout the report.

Louie Rivers said he has two points of issue with the draft report. 1) Rivers said it would be nice to incorporate EJ across all of the recommendations. Some note that EJ cuts across all of these (in intro). Rivers' second point of issue was that he wants it to be clear that this is for Booker Creek. He said that's not clear in the report. This committee is largely made up of people in Booker Creek. We need more public engagement on what works for other parts of Town.

Michael Dupree reminded the group of the speaker from Charlotte-Mecklenburg's stormwater program, who spoke to when folks had property bought out, many of them couldn't afford to purchase elsewhere in the city. Dupree said there should be affordable housing to replace the house that is purchased within the community.

Dupree also mentioned that new development has a set of rules and expressed support for the recommendation to raise requirements to plan for the 100-year storm. Dupree said that existing development is a much larger area and pursuing stream bank stabilization and GSI programs would benefit everyone downstream. Dupree shared that he is working with Town of Carrboro considering cost-sharing pilot program for GSI

Maggie asked the group if they have anything else to discuss, reminded the group of Group Agreements.

Jeanette Bench said that based on the last three comments, we could add a couple of sentences in the summary about environmental justice. Miguel agreed to draft a couple of sentences for the intro (will put it in the chat).

Miguel Rojas-Sotello drafted the following sentences to be incorporated into the draft report's introduction: "The Booker Creek Working Group considers it important to recognize that a transversal dimension across these recommendations is equity, diversity, and Environmental Justice. Since acts of nature, here flooding impacts communities of color and of low income on a different level. The Working Group also considers other-than-human entities not just considered as given ecosystem services but as

an integral part of the living systems, and identity in Chapel Hill.” The group will vote with the assumption that this EJ statement will be included in the summary.

Louie Rivers said that if we're thinking about other parts of town with more renters and apartment complexes, he is unsure of how much these recommendations will work in those parts of Town. These recommendations are good for single-family home residential places. Rivers also mentioned that some links in the draft report go to dead sites, so the group will need to correct those before sending the final report to Council.

Discussion adjourned. Morgan Flynt suggested the group listen to the public comments before the final vote. Miguel suggested they hear comments that directly respond to the report. The group voted on this suggestion:

- Against: Jeanette, Doug
- For: Louie, Chad, Louie, Tom, Miguel, Pamela, Michael, Doug

6 Public Comment

Edward Marshall provided a comment. Marshall expressed support for the recommendations applying across the Town. Marshall also expressed support for the group’s green infrastructure recommendations – particularly the cost-share program and technical assistance. Lastly, he expressed support for the preservation of bottomland forests, particularly in the six Booker Creek neighborhoods. Marshall also hopes that the Booker Creek neighborhoods will be permanently taken off of the list of potential storage basin projects.

Barbara Driscoll said she supports all recommendations in the report, particularly the conservation easements on the riparian areas in Booker Creek and the recommendation for a maintenance plan for the existing stormwater basin park and all other stormwater features in Chapel Hill.

Martin Johnson expressed concerns about the processes of government working groups and, with regard to the report, Johnson expressed concern that the report relies primarily on the voluntary action of homeowners. Johnson also hopes to see the potential for an Eastwood Lake stormwater project explored in the future.

David Hartman referred to his house as “ground zero” for flooding, right next to Booker Creek, and said the Booker Creek Basin Park has made a difference. Hartman also expressed support for entering into the FEMA Community Rating System.

7 The Vote

The group voted unanimously to move forward on the motion to send the report to the Town Council with the addition of environmental justice language in the introduction for their consideration and action.

8 Adjourn