



CHAPEL HILL

JUNE/JULY 2021
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TownTalk



On the Front Burner



Town Manager Maurice Jones

I hope this summer season has been a positive one for you and your loved ones. We have seen a rise in COVID cases recently and need to remain diligent in our efforts to keep the virus from spreading. Still, we have experienced great

progress in the fight against COVID since the summer of 2020 and if you haven't already I would encourage you to please take some time off from work to relax and recharge your batteries. We've extended the pandemic-related vacation rollover date one final time to the end of this calendar year. We want everyone to be able to take the time you've earned when you feel comfortable to do so.

As you travel this summer please remember to take the necessary precautions to protect yourself and others. I also remind you that the absolute best protection against the virus at this point is to get vaccinated.

I want to take this opportunity to share with you some significant changes that are coming to Chapel Hill beginning this summer in downtown and along Estes Drive. Demolition of the Rosemary Parking Deck (on the north side of East Rosemary Street between PNC and BB&T) is scheduled to begin in early July for the public-private partnership of transforming the 100 block of East Rosmary Street. When construction is completed, a new 1,100-space parking deck with a retail porch will be where the current Rosemary Parking Deck is located, a new lab space and office building will be

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Update on our State Stormwater Audit: The State Stormwater Permit requires the Town to be in compliance with six measures to reduce pollutants in stormwater. The Stormwater Management Division (Public Works) implements the permit requirements in partnership with other Town departments. See p 2.



Photo: Tom Simon

WE NEED YOUR HELP WITH FOOD DISTRIBUTION

The Town of Chapel Hill is feeding those in need every Wednesday from 9 a.m. until the food is gone (usually around noon) at the Eubanks Park and Ride back lot.

If you are interested in volunteering some time, contact your Supervisor and send the Housing Office Assistant an email at Amebane@townofchapelhill.org.

We could use your help and those in need would greatly appreciate it!

STORMWATER MS4 PERMIT AUDIT

Stormwater Management staff had a busy spring finalizing plans for a State audit. In 2018, North Carolina officials announced that audits on municipal stormwater (MS4) permits were going to be conducted statewide beginning in 2019. Per EPA requirements, the State is required to audit 20% of permittees each year.

The Town has been operating on a Municipal (MS4) Stormwater Permit since 2005. That permit requires the Town to be in compliance with six minimum measures (such as outreach and education, public participation, pollution prevention, and good housekeeping for municipal facilities) to reduce pollutants in stormwater, and each measure has a list of requirements. The Stormwater Management Division (Public Works) implements the permit requirements in partnership with other Town departments.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the federal authority that oversees stormwater permits for municipalities, as mandated by the Clean Water Act; these permits are issued and enforced by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ). The goal is to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff, which eventually travels through municipal stormwater systems, and the permit requires municipalities to lead the effort in reducing the pollutants as much as possible.

Stormwater Management updates the Town's Stormwater Management

Plan (SWMP) annually, as required by the permit. The SWMP contains enforceable Best Management Practices (BMPs) and measurable goals for the implementation of a comprehensive stormwater management program that complies with the permit requirements. "That plan is our guiding document," said Stormwater Analyst Allison Weakley. "The objectives translate into manageable and measurable goals and reporting metrics, and include stormwater initiatives, services, activities, and projects."

Stormwater staff spent months reviewing the six measures and the Town's implementation of permit requirements that would guide the audit trying to get ahead of any questions that would be asked of staff. "As long as I've been here, and to my knowledge, the Town has never been audited for the MS4 permit," Weakley said. "We knew there were some areas where we could improve (more?), and we were able to prepare our presentation for the audit with that in mind."

The audit began with an in-person visit June 8th. The auditors looked through documentation, asked a lot of questions, then conducted site visits. Three of the six measures were reviewed by the auditors.

"Our team is top notch," said Weakley. "We told the auditors, 'our team is small but mighty.' We are prepared to accept whatever feedback we receive—positive or



negative. Our presentation was transparent and showed that we are committed to correct any possible compliance issues."

Now they wait. The auditors have 60 days to return the results. And the work doesn't end there. Stormwater staff will then have to perform a self-audit on the other three measures that the auditors didn't choose. Once the audit results are received, they will have 120 days to complete the self-audit and submit a revised Stormwater Management Plan that will be approved by NCDEQ. The permit is expected to be renewed in 2022.

"I am so proud of all the staff that represented the Town of Chapel Hill so well in this process," said Manager of Engineering & Infrastructure Chris Roberts. "This was no small effort. Everyone put in long hours to ensure we presented the best of our Town."

We'll check back in with Stormwater staff in the coming months to hear the results.

"The important thing to remember is, while we are Stormwater staff, water quality is a responsibility of all employees and everyone in Chapel Hill," said Weakley.

Briefs

Dennis Farmer

(Technology Solutions) has accepted the position of Information Technology Analyst. Dennis, a graduate of NCSU, started his



IT career almost 17 years ago. His latest experience is from the City of Durham as a Business Systems Specialist where he learned critical IT skills and knowledge related to local government. Dennis is filling the position left by Luca Di Michele who will be truly missed. He will be based at Town Hall sharing an office with Todd Baron.

Kiler Hamilton (Parks and Recreation) is the new Park Maintenance Supervisor. Kiler will be responsible for leading and supporting a team of talented staff in the maintenance and care of the landscaping at the Town's right-of-ways, trails and greenways, and Town facilities.

SHENEKIA WEEKS CHOSEN AS DEI OFFICER

Shenekia Weeks is the Town's first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer. The DEI Officer will further advance and transform the Town's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The position will collaborate with Town leadership and community stakeholders to direct, coordinate, and implement programs and activities designed to celebrate Chapel Hill's diversity and to establish equitable opportunities for all.

Weeks previously served as the District Administrator of the Guardian ad Litem Program in Stokes and Surry counties. From 2016 through 2020 she served as the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Trauma



Ryan Hurley (Parks & Recreation) has been promoted to Park Maintenance Crew Leader.

Congratulations to **Travis Parker** on being accepted into the 2021 Transportation Mid-Manager (TMM) Program. The TMM program is a competitive leadership development seminar for mid-level leaders working in cross-functional transportation roles.

Melissa Patrick

(Transit) has been promoted to Lead Supervisor for Fixed Route and Demand Response Divisions. Melissa has been employed with the



Town since 2011. She will oversee day to day operations for Fixed Route and Demand Response Divisions.

Monica Rainey (Parks & Recreation) has been chosen to fill the Administrative Services Division Manager role. Monica brings with her both bachelor's and master's degrees in Business Administration and more than 20 years of experience in various administrative roles, with increasing responsibilities. She replaces Andrea Judge, who retired in January.

Samantha (Sam) Slayer

(Parks & Recreation) has been promoted to Administrator Coordinator. Sam has been with Parks & Recreation for more than six years. During her time with Parks & Recreation she has taken on a lot of new challenges. Sam brings great energy and enthusiasm to the position.

Congratulations to our new HRD Partners, **Kelly Stokes** and **LaTisha Perry**!

ON THE FRONT BURNER

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located where the Wallace Deck is, and 136 E. Rosemary St. and 137 E. Franklin St. are getting face lifts. The project will also add two new parks along Rosemary Street. You can find more details at townofchapelhill.org/rosemary-project.

The Estes Drive Connectivity Project will add bike lanes and a multi-use trail along Estes Drive from west of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to the eastern-most entrance of Caswell Road. This will be a major project with the road reduced to one lane for an extended period of time. We will be communicating broadly when the timeline is established so everyone can find an alternate mode of transportation or select a detour if you need to travel in that area. You can find more information about this project at townofchapelhill.org/estes.

CREATING INCLUSIVE SPACES

Anyone in customer service can tell you: the key to making someone feel welcome is to give them what they need before they know they need it.

Creating inclusive spaces works the same way, and it's important for all the same reasons. People will engage with services more if they feel like those services are for them. They'll make their voices heard if they feel like someone is actually listening. They'll put in a job application if they think your workplace has the safety and opportunity they need.

To create an inclusive space, don't wait to be told that something is wrong. Be proactive. Look at who you're engaging and ask yourself: who's left out? Find those people's stories. Marginalized groups have already said how they want to be included; you just have to listen.

Need help connecting with resources? The LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group can help. Visit www.townofchapelhill.org/lgbtq+erg or email mdebelleis@townofchapelhill.org.



NEW SHELTER ART FOR PRIDE MONTH

Chapel Hill Transit worked with the Town's LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group to develop shelter art for Pride Month. The shelter is located on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard at Adelaide Walters Apartments, near Town Hall. Thanks to the Community Arts and Culture Team for helping make this happen.

If you'd like to see more Art + Transit efforts, check out this link: chapellarts.org/arts-experiences/public-art/art-transit. There are two more shelters and a new wrapped bus (done in partnership with the NAACP Youth Council) coming soon.

Thanks to **Steve Wright, Melissa Bartoletta** and **Susan Brown** for making this collaboration possible and being great partners in activating Chapel Hill Transit stops and buses with public art.



VETS ON THE MOVE LAUNCH EVENT

The Vets on the Move program is growing, thanks to a group of volunteers that includes Town employees and community members. The program provides assistance with alternative transportation for veterans who are transitioning into civilian life.

The Veterans Commute Options Event was held on June 25 to give veterans resources and information about the ride-along buddy program and alternative transportation in Chapel Hill. Veterans said they were grateful and honored to be recognized by the community.

PTSD triggers can make getting to work or appointments difficult for Veterans. The Vets on the Move program assists veterans in using public transportation to get to work and medical or mental health appointments. Ride-along buddies will accompany those needing someone to ride along for three sessions until they are comfortable using public transportation alone.

The program was envisioned by **Len Cone** (Planning). This is one of two similar programs in the country, and the only program like this on the East Coast.

The group will meet in the fall to see what direction to go in continuing the program. For more information on Vets on the Move and transportation alternatives, visit GoChapelHill.org or email mcone@townofchapelhill.org.



Vets on the Move
GoChapelHill.org

Compliments

Jacqueline Vallera commended **Reggie Mebane** (Transit) for ensuring that a frail elderly woman was able to safely use Chapel Hill Transit. He carried this woman's belongings off the bus, while helping her walk with her cane as she used his arm for support. He got her settled on a bench in the shade at her stop before continuing with the route. "I do hope this man is recognized– the world needs more kind souls like his."

Kyle Stuart (Police) was commended by Police Chief Chris Blue for developing an operations plan to investigate catalytic converter thefts, resulting in five arrests.

Ran Northam (CaPA) was thanked by Sarah Poulton (Manager's Office) for helpful Council meeting coverage. "Thanks for being creative and clear in our communications!"

Sammy Bauer (Stormwater) thanked **Allison Weakley** (Stormwater) for enthusiastically leading the meeting for NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)'s audit of the Town's water quality permit. Allison's proactive leadership in preparing for the audit helped the Town shine during the meeting.

Steve Sherwin (Police) was commended by Police Chief Chris Blue and the Fire Department for responding quickly to a gas leak on Franklin Street. "Your efforts in quickly assessing the situation and limiting traffic provided safety to those in the area and helped our fire partners remedy the situation quickly."

Sammy Bauer (Stormwater) thanked **Sharon Fisher** and **Alisha Cordell** (both Technology Solutions) for helping with a software issue. "Their quick problem-solving allowed me to make an important deadline. Their help kept my work timely and my blood pressure healthy."

Bergen Watterson (Planning) and the Transportation Planning team were thanked by Sean Cavanaugh for making progress towards a fully connected bike infrastructure.

Cathy Cole thanked **Chapel Hill Public Library staff** for making sure Chapel Hill readers could continue to access books during the pandemic. "Today I had my first opportunity to 'browse' again at the library.....what a treat! I just want to extend my gratitude and admiration for how you and your dedicated staff have helped us during the pandemic. The staff was consistently friendly, cheerful and helpful. Once again my gratitude and thanks to all of you."



EZ Rider passenger Chengyn commended **Julisa Pendergraph** (pictured above) and **Jenny Stokes** (both Transit) and for being kind. "Julisa was really kind to me. After I was stung by a bee, she stayed with me for an hour until EMS arrived." "The entire EZ-Rider team is amazing."

Sammy Bauer (Stormwater) thanked **Technology Solutions** for immediately helping with a critical laptop issue the day before a big state audit. Because of their quick response, her work was barely interrupted.

Ada Southerland, on the Town's Juneteenth Celebration: "Thank you for continuing to be all inclusive. I have a little granddaughter who I love with all my heart and I keep hoping the world will become a more loving place. I can't thank you enough for everything you do!"

Congratulations to our Hometown Heroes! **Kelly Drayton** (Fire) and **Meg McGurk** (Police) were honored as Hometown Heroes by chapelboro.com.

During the pandemic, Kelly took over as the manager for the emergency operation center within the town. As it continued to grow, she did a great job of leading us and preparing us.

She's constantly looking out for fellow employees and making sure that everybody's taken care of. She made sure that employees who worked long days in the emergency operation center got breaks and didn't get burnt out.

[Read More](#)



Meg has served as the town's community safety planner since 2018 and has been essential in Chapel Hill's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She has also served as planning section chief and manager of emergency operations.

"Meg has done an outstanding job and has helped out so much in response to this pandemic," said Ran Northam (CaPA).

As the planning section chief, Meg was instrumental in the town's response to COVID-19. The planning section chief is kind of like the right hand of the emergency manager.

[Read More](#)

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

ComPsych is our new Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider. Get 24/7 support, resources, and information at guidanceresources.com. When you create an account, use Web ID: COM589.

Resources that are available to Town employees include: confidential emotional support for anxiety, depression, stress, grief, loss and life adjustments, and relationships; work-life solutions include finding child and elder care and hiring movers or home

repair contractors; legal guidance for divorce, adoption, family law, wills, trusts and more; and financial resources on retirement planning, taxes, budgeting, debt, bankruptcy, and more.

Online support includes articles, podcasts, videos, slideshows, on-demand trainings, and Ask the Expert. Interactive digital tools include guided programs and personalized resources. Call: 800-272-7255
TTY: 800.697.0353
App: GuidanceNow

CYBERSECURITY TIPS

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ALWAYS
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Lauren Ryan Today: 5 Years Tobacco Free

"It is Life Changing"

Lauren started smoking socially in college. After graduation she continued to smoke, believing it helped relieve her stress. It was her "dirty little secret" that she hid from everyone because she felt ashamed.

After she married and planned to become pregnant, she quit smoking until her son was 17 months old.

Lauren began working at Chapel Hill Transit in 2015 and learned about wellness programs for employees and contacted Barbara Silver with the Wellness@Work Tobacco Treatment Program. She decided to create a healthier lifestyle.

Lauren and her husband wanted to get pregnant again, and she decided to become tobacco-free. She recognized her prior quit attempt was for her son, and not really for herself. This time around, quitting for herself made all the difference!

Lauren's regular meetings with Barbara helped with accountability. Together, they worked on strategies to deal with stress and anxiety in more productive

ways, such as working on projects and practicing deep breathing. Lauren also enjoyed the \$100 gift cards she received for being tobacco free for six months and one year.

Lauren has now been tobacco-free for five years and credits the Wellness@Work team with her being a healthier and stronger person. Instead of smoking, she now works on craft projects to relax. She no longer worries about third hand smoke affecting her children. She had less anxiety about severe complications from COVID-19, because her lungs are in better shape. Lauren is grateful she contacted the Tobacco Treatment Program. She proudly proclaims: "I'm not a smoker."

If you smoke, chew, dip or vape and want to quit, please contact Barbara Silver. Phone or text: 919-904-4848. Email: barbara_silver@med.unc.edu



NEW LOCAL MUSIC

Tracks Music Library has a new music collection for 2021 featuring more than 30 albums produced by Triangle-area musicians. New summer mixtapes, hand selected by staff curators, showcase a variety of genres and bands.

The new collection includes tracks from local music legend Katharine Whalen; the smooth sounds of Dreamroot, a music collective seeking "to put out positive energy during a dark time;" the latest release by Bright Moments, a solo project of multi-instrumentalist, composer, and arranger Kelly Pratt; and the impressive vocals of pop singer-songwriter William Nesmith, plus so much more. Learn more at tracksmusiclibrary.org.

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