Item Overview

Business Meeting – 06/26/2017
Agenda # 18

Subject: Receive Final Report and Consider the Recommendations of the Historic Town Hall Committee

Staff:	**Department:**
Megan Dale, Management Analyst	Public Works

Overview: On October 26, 2016, the Town Council adopted a resolution[1] establishing the Historic Town Hall Committee with Council Member Sally Greene as Committee Chair. The Committee's charge was to consider the future use of the Historic Town Hall building at 100 West Rosemary Street as a visitors center and/or history center when it becomes vacant. The purpose of this item is to provide the Council with the committee's findings and recommendations, which are included in the attached report.

Recommendations

- That the Council adopt the resolution to accept the committee's report, dissolve the committee, and authorize the Town Manager and Chairs of the Historic Town Hall Committee and Town Properties Task Force to review the reports, identify connections and discuss next steps. The Town Manager will bring a report for the Council's consideration in the Fall.

Key Issues

- Historic Town Hall is currently home to the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service's Community Kitchen. The IFC is proceeding with plans to relocate its kitchen services to another facility and expects to vacate Historic Town Hall in approximately two to three years.
- The Historic Town Hall committee's report responds to a petition the Town received on June 27, 2016,[2] regarding combining the Visitor's Center and Chapel Hill Museum at the Historic Town Hall facility.
- The Committee met from November through May, including one community input meeting held on May 3, 2017. Approximately 35 people attended the meeting (including the committee members) and provided input related to the committee's charge. At their final meeting, the committee reviewed and considered the input and revised the report. The May 3 meeting notes are included as an appendix to the attached report. All past meeting minutes and materials are available on the Town's website[3].
- The committee consists of the following members, representing the listed partners and agencies:
    - Sally Greene - Council of the Town of Chapel Hill, Chair
    - Penny Rich - Orange County Commissioner
    - Moses Carey - Community Member
    - Joel Curran - UNC-Chapel Hill

[1] http://chapelhill.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=7&clip_id=2923&meta_id=142703
[2] http://chapelhill.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=7&clip_id=2805&meta_id=133807
[3] http://www.townofchapelhill.org/historictownhall

- Richard Ellington - Historical Society Board
- Josh Gurlitz - Architect
- Alan Rimer - Former Chapel Hill Museum Board Member
- Lee Storrow, Visitors Bureau Board Member
- Chela Tu - Chamber of Commerce

Fiscal Impact/Resources: No fiscal resources are required to review the reports and discuss next steps. If additional resources are required to implement recommendations, staff will work to identify funding and return to the Council with a request for a budget ordinance amendment.

Where is this item in its process?

Petition Received to Consider Old Town Hall as Visitor's and History Center June 27, 2016 → Town Council Authorizes Process to Consider Uses for Old Town Hall October 26, 2016 → Committee Report and Recommendation Presented to Town Council June 26, 2017 → Manager to Report back to the Council Late Fall 2017

Council Goals:

x		Create a Place for Everyone	x		Develop Good Places, New Spaces
x		Support Community Prosperity	☐		Nurture Our Community
☐		Facilitate Getting Around	x		Grow Town and Gown Collaboration

Attachments:

- Draft Presentation
- Resolution
- Cover Letter to Report from Committee Chair, Council Member Sally Greene
- Committee Report

Process to Consider Possible Future Use of Historic Town Hall

DRAFT

Historic Town Hall Committee Charge

Consider the possible future use of Historic Town Hall as a **Visitor's and History Center**

– Feasibility?

– Community Value?

DRAFT

Context

Report to Council
June 27, 2016

Petition

As you know, many citizens of Chapel Hill were disappointed when our Town decided it could no longer afford a museum and were unwilling to support it with any funds. (As a former Chair of the Board, I was particularly disappointed.) We now are pursuing a unique opportunity to open a new museum and relocated Visitor's Center in the old town hall once vacated by the IFC Kitchen. This is a brief summary of the activities that have taken place with regard to the utilization of the old town hall as a relocated Orange County Visitor's Center and Chapel Hill Museum.

- Met with the Orange County Visitor's Bureau Board and made a presentation on the proposal. I believe it is safe to that the general concept of combining the Visitors Center with the Chapel Hill Museum was met with enthusiasm.
- We have met with the IFC on several occasions to discuss their schedule, look at alternatives for the kitchen and keep lines of communication open.
- We are scheduled to talk with Chancellor Folt after the Fourth of July to enlist the University's support for the idea, provide Chancellor Folt with a similar update to this presentation this evening and explore the potential for some economic aid for the effort.
- We have reviewed the report provided by the County for the upgrade of the old town hall. While a number of us believe that the estimates are on the high side for the repairs that need to be made we recognize that a variety of different sources of funds will be necessary to not only renovate the building but up-fit the space for both the visitor center and the museum.
- We have contacted five old board members of the museum who have expressed an interest in helping in any way to revive the museum.
- We anticipate having a reconstituted Chapel Hill Museum Board of Directors this year who can work in concert with the Visitors Bureau Board of Directors, the Chapel Hill Town Council and the Orange County Board of Commissioners.

Thanks for your enthusiasm and support for this idea.

Rev. Robert Seymour Alan E. Rimer

DRAFT

Committee Partners

Visitor's Bureau

DRAFT

Committee Discussions

- Background and Tour of Historic Town Hall
- Presentations from Visitors Bureau, Chapel Hill Museum, Chapel Hill Historical Society
- Research and Meetings with Museum Professionals
- Field Trips
- Public Input Meeting

DRAFT

Historic Town Hall

- 7,534 usable sq. ft.
- Fully renovate interior
- Sustainable funding source
- Continue maintenance/ repair
- Reconfigure to be more open/ welcoming
- Costs and benefits to downtown businesses

DRAFT

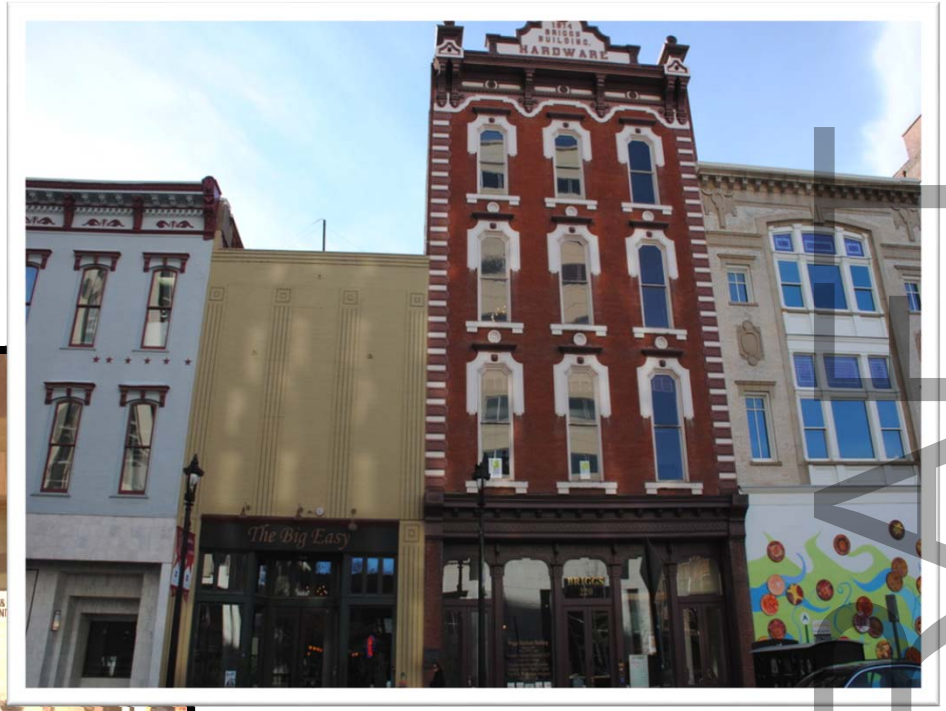
"I would contend that museums are the greatest available laboratory for studying the problem of how to create interest, and that this problem is central to our quest for survival as a people. . . . What avails it to be surrounded as a race with all the wonders of technological wizardry, temporarily secure on our plundered planet, and simply not care?

"Could it not also be added that by making people interested, aware therefore of the sum of their surroundings, we are doing something more?"

—Dillon Ripley, *The Sacred Grove: Essays on Museums* (1969)

DRAFT

City of Raleigh Museum



DRAFT

Durham History Hub

DRAFT

Community Input Meeting

- How could a place to connect people to Chapel Hill's history and culture, past and present, be of value to the community?
- What would such a space need to look like and do to feel like it belonged to the community?
- Does a future use related to history/ culture resonate for Historic Town Hall?

DRAFT

Findings

- Evolving Nature of Museums
- Evolving Nature of Visitors Centers
- Historical Society Well Situated in Library
- Demand for Space for Cultural Activities

DRAFT

Committee's Recommendations

Continue considering

- Future use as a space to highlight local history and culture
- Visitors Bureau and Orange County Commissioners' interest in co-locating in Historic Town Hall
- Nearby properties with potential synergies

DRAFT

Continue to Consider as a Space for History/ Culture

- Engage Diverse Communities and Identify Opportunities for Collaboration
- Define Mission, Goals, and Audience
- Determine Ownership and Financial Commitment
- Analyze Economic and Social Costs and Benefits

DRAFT

Recommendations

- Accept the Historic Town Hall Committee's Report.
- Authorize the Manager to work with Chairs of Historic Town Hall Committee and Town Properties Task Force to review reports, identify connections, and discuss next steps.
- Dissolve Committee.

DRAFT

A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE HISTORIC TOWN HALL COMMITTEE, AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO WORK WITH COMMITTEE CHAIRS TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS, AND DISSOLVE THE COMMITTEE (2017-06-26/R-13)

WHEREAS, on October 26, 2016, in response to the Inter-Faith Council of Social Services' plans to vacate Historic Town Hall at 100 West Rosemary Street and in response to a petition received on June 27, 2016, the Town Council appointed the "Historic Town Hall Committee" to consider the possible future use of Historic Town Hall as a visitors and/ or history center; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Town Hall Committee has conducted research, consulted experts, and solicited and received community input related to the committee's charge; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Town Hall Committee has provided a report of the committee's findings and recommendations for the Council's consideration.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill that the Council accepts the report of the Historic Town Hall Committee and authorize the Town Manager and Chairs of the Historic Town Hall Committee and Town Properties Task Force to review the reports, identify connections and discuss next steps. The Town Manager will bring a report for the Council's consideration in Fall 2017.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council thanks committee members and Committee Chair, Council Member Sally Greene, for their commitment and contribution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council finds that the committee has fulfilled their charge, their work is deemed complete and the committee is dissolved.

This the 26th day of June, 2017.

To: Chapel Hill Town Council

From: Council Member Sally Greene

Re: Report and Recommendation of Historic Town Hall Committee

Date: June 26, 2017

The members of the Historic Town Hall Committee responded enthusiastically to the charge to consider the feasibility of putting the old Town Hall building to reuse as a cultural asset. Our answer is a resounding "Yes, it is feasible," though questions remain.

We began with the question that prompted the committee: a petition to consider the building's possible use as a new iteration of the old Chapel Hill Museum, and as a relocated Visitors Center. Following our charge, we gave some attention to including the Historical Society. By the time we concluded, after field trips to the City of Raleigh Museum and the Durham History Hub and a well-attended public input meeting, we understood that (1) the nature of museums is evolving toward dynamic, community-driven sites where recognition of the past meets engagement with the present, (2) the nature and space needs of visitors centers is also evolving, (3) the Historical Society is well situated in the Library and can stay there for the foreseeable future, and (4) there is a pent-up demand for space for cultural activities across a variety of interests.

In addition to a museum and visitors center, these interests include artists' studios for demonstrating and marketing their work; as well as a forum for the practice of the public humanities, particularly a site for scholars of history, literature, and related fields to engage in conversations of importance to the life of the community.

Such needs are reflected in other Town plans. The West Rosemary Development Guide (2017), for example, calls for a historical and cultural center near Northside. (Indeed, the foundational work of the Marian Cheek Jackson Center for Saving and Making History, which included oral histories and documentary photography of longtime residents, stands as a model of community engagement through connection with history.) This West Rosemary goal, moreover, advances the primary goal of the Cultural Arts Plan (2016), which is "to engage, educate and empower people of all ages by expanding access to a variety of arts and cultural opportunities in community settings."

Over at UNC, Chancellor Folt sees the present as "a defining moment for the arts at Carolina," with Carolina Performing Arts "look[ing] to tear down the borders between artist and audience." The space that will soon open at Carolina Square is called CURRENT ArtSpace + Studio. It "will provide a space for Carolina Performing Arts to fully engage with downtown Chapel Hill, its businesses, and residents," writes the Chancellor in the introduction to a recent Sunday insert in the *New York Times*. She links its

creation to the Town's vision for a downtown cultural arts district. Further, UNC's Visitors Center will soon move to the 100 block of East Franklin Street, and our committee recognized the accompanying opportunities for increased collaboration.

Amidst all of our dreaming about possible scenarios, we confronted the stark reality that the building offers only 7,534 net usable square feet.

As suggested by the committee's report, the next phases of conversation will need to be framed by larger questions. The first is whether the Town's goals are best served by continued civic/community use of the building, or whether we should sell or lease the property as a taxable asset. If we decide to continue to contemplate civic uses, the next question is whether other downtown locations offer any opportunity to support, in a complementary way, some of the uses that the community is expressing interest in.

Reflecting the Council's shared interest in racial justice, I want to conclude by noting an emerging national conversation on considerations of equity in designing and operating a museum. Here's a selection of resources for thinking about this question:

museumforallblog.wordpress.com
museumsandrace.org
incluseum.com

It has been a privilege to chair this committee. Many thanks to all of its members for their consistent, thoughtful, and cheerful participation.

And my special thanks go to Megan Dale for her stellar work as staff support.

Report and Recommendation of Historic Town Hall Committee

To: Town of Chapel Hill Council

From: Historic Town Hall Committee

Date: June 26, 2017

OVERVIEW

The charge of the Historic Town Hall Committee from the Town of Chapel Hill Town Council is to consider the possible use of the Historic Town Hall facility located at 100 West Rosemary Street as a visitor's and/or history center. Information about the committee formation and activities can be found in Appendix A.

Under this charge, the committee has considered the following two questions:

1) Could these uses feasibly be located in this building?
2) Should these uses be located in this building, and would a history/visitor's center in Historic Town Hall serve the community's interest?

FINDINGS

The committee finds that conceptually, a visitor's and/or history/culture center could feasibly be co-located in Historic Town Hall, pending additional information regarding financial feasibility and organizational ownership.

The committee finds that a place to connect community members and visitors in the downtown area to Chapel Hill's history and culture, both past and current issues, would be of value to the Chapel Hill community. Community interest in a use related to history and culture as well as other potential uses was noted in a community input meeting. Detailed committee findings are included in Appendix B. Key themes of the committee's discussion are included in Appendix C. Minutes from the community input meeting are included in Appendix D. Notes from the committee's readings are included in Appendix E.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

In order to determine the feasibility of locating a visitors center and/or history/culture center in Historic Town Hall, the committee researched, consulted experts, and discussed expectations of what a space for history/culture should look like and do in the Chapel Hill community. The committee finds potential value to the community in a history/culture center that could serve as a connector to create interest and link people and their lives to the community's history (this should include use of the space as a site for hosting difficult community conversations), help tell Chapel Hill's story, and offer flexibility to respond to changing community needs.

The committee recommends that the Town continue to engage the Visitors Bureau and Orange County Commissioners in a conversation about the desirability and feasibility of co-locating in this space.

Particularly in response to the interests expressed by artists who attended the community forum, the committee sees a natural and productive relationship between activities involving history and the arts. The committee recommends that the Council continue to consider other nearby properties (such as Lot 2) as a space for arts, with potential synergies with a history/culture center. Through its work, the committee has recognized the need for the Town to have a public facilities infrastructure plan.

Based on research, discussion with experts, and consideration of the Chapel Hill community's values, the committee recommends the following actions to continue considering a future use for Historic Town Hall as a space to highlight local history and culture:

1) Engage diverse communities and organizations in an inclusive community input process to better understand their interests, build community ownership of the space, and identify opportunities to collaborate and partner with other organizations and the university.

2) Define the mission, goals, and targeted audience in order to a) determine compatibility of co-locating with other organizations and b) develop a cost estimate and possible building configuration.

3) Determine the Town and County's involvement regarding ownership of and financial commitment to a history/culture center and identify a stable funding source for financial sustainability.

4) Develop an analysis to determine the economic and social costs and benefits, including direct and indirect return on investment, potential impact on downtown businesses, commercial opportunities, and community impact.

APPENDIX A - COMMITTEE BACKGROUND

Formation

On October 26, 2016, the Town of Chapel Hill Town Council established a committee to consider the possible future use of the Historic Town Hall facility as a visitors and history center. This committee was formed in anticipation of the pending relocation in 2-3 years of the current tenant, the Inter-Faith Council for Social Services, and to respond to a petition received in June 2016 regarding combining the Visitor's Center and Chapel Hill Museum at the Historic Town Hall facility.

On November 15, 2016 the Orange County Board of Commissioners authorized their participation in this committee.

Per the Town Council's direction, following this report, the work of the committee will be considered complete and the committee will be discharged.

Committee Members

The committee consists of the following members, representing the listed partners and agencies:

- Sally Greene - Council of the Town of Chapel Hill, Chair
- Penny Rich - Orange County Commissioner
- Moses Carey - Community Member
- Joel Curran - UNC-Chapel Hill
- Richard Ellington - Historical Society Board
- Josh Gurlitz - Architect
- Alan Rimer - Former Chapel Hill Museum Board Member
- Lee Storrow, Visitors Bureau Board Member
- Chela Tu - Chamber of Commerce

Activities

The committee researched, consulted experts, and received input regarding the feasibility and interest in locating a history/culture and/or visitors center in Historic Town Hall. Town and County staff provided information regarding the building's history and condition, and the committee received presentations from the Visitors Bureau, Chapel Hill Museum, and Chapel Hill Historical Society.

From the UNC representative on the committee, the committee understands that the university is going ahead with plans to relocate its visitors center to the 100 block of East Franklin Street, and is not interested in a combined UNC-Chapel Hill Visitors Center. There is interest, however, in coordinating the activities/identities of the two, for example through the use of video technology.

To further explore the idea of locating a museum in Historic Town Hall, the committee consulted and discussed various readings on features of successful modern museums. The committee

visited the nearby City of Raleigh Museum and Durham History Hub to see examples of local museums' facilities, operations, budgets, and funding sources. The committee also consulted museum professionals regarding important issues to consider in starting a history/culture center.

Finally, the committee held a public meeting on May 3, 2017 to begin a community dialogue regarding possible interest in a future use for Historic Town Hall related to history and culture. The committee has considered and incorporated the input received in this report. Minutes from the community input meeting are attached in Appendix D.

APPENDIX B – DETAILED COMMITTEE FINDINGS

A component of the committee's charge was to consider a visitor's center and/or history center in Historic Town Hall as a possible location for three organizations: the Visitors Bureau, the Chapel Hill Museum, and the Chapel Hill Historical Society. The sections below describe the committee's research, discussions, and findings related to these three organizations, the Historic Town Hall facility, and potential interest in a use related to history/culture.

HISTORIC TOWN HALL

Historic Town Hall was built in 1938 and is owned by the Town. The building is a total of 9,255 square feet with 7,534 net usable square feet. The building has 3 floors, one of which is a basement, and has an elevator.

The building originally housed multiple municipal functions, including a courtroom, jail, and police and fire. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places for reasons related to architecture and planning. The building's Neo-Colonial style set the trend for many other Town buildings to be built in the same style. The building's construction led to the establishment of citizen committees to oversee development, specifically the Planning Commission.

The Town Council has previously indicated an interest in placing a preservation easement on the building with an appropriate nonprofit organization. Such easement would protect the exterior of the building but would not complicate renovating the interior, since so little of the original interior layout remains.

As of May 2017, the properties adjacent to Historic Town Hall are being marketed for a multi-family or hospitality development. The committee encourages the Council to think entrepreneurially about future plans for that site that could connect to the Historic Town Hall site.

The committee observed that the building's central downtown location lends itself to use as a center of history and culture. Further, the committee sees an opportunity to highlight history related to local government, planning, and development; and the current initiative to activate Rosemary Street.

If this building were used for a history/culture and/or visitor's center, the committee and community members noted the importance to consider

- the need to gut and fully renovate the building interior
- the small size of the building (approximately 9,000 square feet) when considering feasibility of housing multiple uses
- the need to identify a sustainable funding source(s) and determine responsibility for building maintenance

- the need to configure the building to be more open and welcoming
- costs and benefits to the downtown business community of housing a history/culture and/or visitors center in Historic Town Hall versus selling the building
- the importance of continued capital repair and maintenance while the IFC remains in the building, and pending a decision regarding future use

VISITORS BUREAU

The Visitors Bureau is located at 501 West Franklin Street and represents Orange County, Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Hillsborough. It is open from 8:30am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, 10am-3pm on Saturdays, and many holiday weekends and special events. A staff of six assists with questions, provides guidance, and refers visitors, area newcomers, and residents to local businesses, restaurants, hotels, etc. in Orange County.

The Visitors Bureau's mission is to

- Provide information about travel to and within Orange County, NC to visitors and potential visitors in the most friendly and comprehensive way possible
- Use the Visitor Center as a marketing vehicle for local businesses by displaying information and referring guests to area restaurants, shops and special events
- Support Orange County's $187 million annual tourism industry through welcoming hospitality and one-stop service
- Help North Carolina's reputation for being welcoming and friendly by offering a welcome center to all

Visitors Bureau staff has identified synergies with a history/culture center and has expressed an interest in the possibility of moving to Historic Town Hall, although Orange County Commissioners and the Visitors Bureau Board have taken no action or stance related to this committee's charge. The Visitors Bureau is stable in its current location.

Visitors Bureau staff has noted the following important points when considering a potential relocation:

- There is demand from locals and visitors to hear the story of Chapel Hill.
- A central downtown location and conveniently located parking for visitors and staff are critical to the organization's success.
- There is a national trend in Visitors Centers to incorporate technology (i.e., wireless internet, kiosks, phone apps, etc.), while the need for in-person assistance continues to be important to visitors.
- There are examples of co-located visitors centers and history/cultural centers or museums, as well as examples of partnerships between these types of organizations without being co-located.
- There is an opportunity to continue to partner with the UNC Visitors Center when it relocates to its new location on Franklin Street.

Chapel Hill Museum

The Chapel Hill Museum was formerly located in the old Chapel Hill Library at 523 East Franklin Street with a mission to preserve, exhibit and interpret the history and culture of the town, state and region. The museum was formed in 1996 by members of the Bicentennial Committee and its revenues came primarily from community support, including grants, donations raised by the board, and corporate sponsors. It closed in 2010. The museum served as a community resource, offering exhibitions, educational programs, seminars, and special events. The high cost of maintaining this historic structure was a major factor in the Council's ultimate decision to sell the building.

Former board members have expressed the following when considering a potential relocation:

- Support for reviving the Chapel Hill Museum
- Support for co-locating the Museum and Visitor's Bureau at Historic Town Hall
- Importance of financial commitment from the Town to cover facility needs for a sustainable museum
- Importance for a space to highlight Chapel Hill's local history
- Need to partner with the university and highlight the relationship between the university and town

Chapel Hill Historical Society

The Chapel Hill Historical Society was founded in 1966 to research and document the history of Chapel Hill and the surrounding communities, to encourage and assist in the study of local history, and to provide public programs and publications related to the heritage and traditions of the area. The organization's goal is "preserving the history of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and neighboring communities in Orange County for future generations."

The Chapel Hill Historical Society has been located on the lower level of the Chapel Hill Library for about two years, and it was formerly located in the old Chapel Hill Library at 523 East Franklin Street. The current physical space includes a meeting area, an office, space for individuals to conduct research, and storage.

The committee has found that the Historical Society's programs and Chapel Hill Library's programming interests are compatible, and the Historical Society is stable at its Library location for the foreseeable future.

SPACE FOR HISTORY/CULTURE USE

In order to determine the feasibility of locating a visitors center and/or history/culture center in Historic Town Hall, the committee researched, consulted experts and discussed expectations of what a space for history/culture should look like and do in the Chapel Hill community. The committee finds potential value to the community in a history/culture center that could serve as a connector to create interest and link people and their lives to the community's history (this should include use of the space as a site for hosting difficult community conversations), help tell Chapel Hill's story, and offer flexibility to respond to changing community needs.

Based on research, discussion with experts, and consideration of the Chapel Hill community's values, the committee recommends the following actions to continue considering a future use for Historic Town Hall as a space to highlight local history and culture:

1) Engage diverse communities and organizations in an inclusive community input process to better understand their interests, build community ownership of the space, and identify opportunities to collaborate and partner with other organizations and the university.

2) Define the mission, goals, and targeted audience in order to a) determine compatibility of co-locating with other organizations and b) develop a cost estimate and possible building configuration.

3) Determine the Town and County's involvement regarding ownership of and financial commitment to a history/culture center and identify a stable funding source for financial sustainability.

4) Develop an analysis to determine the economic and social costs and benefits, including direct and indirect return on investment, potential impact on downtown businesses, commercial opportunities, and community impact.

Appendix C - Key Themes from Committee Meetings

Historic Town Hall

- Interest in Preserving Historic Exterior
- Need to Gut the Building Interior
- Need to Engage an Architect or Engineering Firm for an Updated Cost Estimate
    - Budget for Getting a Cost Estimate
    - Further Understanding Use of Building to Develop a Scope
- Opportunity to Highlight the History of Planning and Development in Chapel Hill
- Need to Confirm Continued Maintenance/ Capital Repair for Building

Visitors Bureau

- Demand for Storytelling
- Importance of Central Downtown Location
- Incorporate Technology while Maintaining Personal Assistance
- Trend of Co-locating Visitors Centers with Museums or Cultural Organizations
- Need to Partner with UNC Visitors Center

Historical Society

- It appears that the Historical Society is a good fit where it is, in the Library.

Museum/ History/ Culture Institution

- Former Board Members of Chapel Hill Museum Interested in Reviving Museum

- Expectations for a Museum
    - Importance of Engaging the Community in Building this Institution
    - Need to Collaborate with Similar Organizations and Leverage Opportunities to Partner, especially with UNC
    - To Specify Space Requirements, Need to Determine the Institution's Mission, Story, Geographic Area of Focus, Primary Audience, "Name"
    - Need to Understand Expectations of Town and County Leadership

- Ownership and Operation
    - Determining Ownership and Organization, Specifically Town/ County's Involvement
    - Identifying Stable Funding Source(s)
    - Importance of Professional Staff and Engaged Volunteers
    - Importance of Understanding Direct and Indirect Return on Investment and Impact on Downtown Businesses

- Modern “Museum”
    - Consider As a Non-Collecting Institution Given Limited Space and Interest in Flexibility
    - Consider Its Value to Local Residents as a Place to Convene Conversations about Difficult Issues
    - Consider Its Possible Relevance to Town Planning Conversations/ Issues, Including Conversations to Activate Rosemary Street
    - Consider Its Value as a Connector to Other Sites of Interest in Community and/ or as a “Museum Without Walls”

- Once Museum Expectations are Defined, can Determine Compatibility with Visitors Center and Historic Town Hall

APPENDIX D – COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING MINUTES

Town of Chapel Hill
HISTORIC TOWN HALL COMMITTEE

Wednesday, May 3, 2017, at 5:30 p.m.
Southern Human Services Center, Board Room
2501 Homestead Road, 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, Lee Storrow 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, Lee Storrow, Chela Tu

Staff Present: Megan Dale, Travis Myren

2. Business

a. Presentation on Historic Town Hall Committee

Background: The presentation will cover the Historic Town Hall committee's formation, charge, and work to-date.

Action Item: No action is anticipated.

- Action Taken: The presentation was delivered by Council Member Greene and discussed. No action was taken.

b. Public Discussion

Background: The committee and community members will discuss the possible future use of Historic Town Hall for a purpose related to local history and culture.

Action Item: No action is anticipated.

- Action Taken: The committee and community members engaged in a dialogue on potential uses for the building and opportunities that were available. No action was taken.

Town Ombuds Jim Huegerich led a facilitated discussion. The following comments were recorded from members of the public:

- A resident remarked upon Chapel Hill's transformation during and since the 1960's, and that the Town should remember and celebrate this history so current generations are aware of it.

- A resident said that their hope for the building was that the space would be a museum and have some relationship with the university. The resident noted that the history of the town is closely related to the history of the university, and the town and university should partner in commemorating that history.

- A resident said it was important to consider the costs to renovate and operate a museum in the building. Also the town should consider options to spread out the economic benefits of a museum, rather than isolate it in one building that may not always attract visitors.

- A resident said that the museum could serve as a cultural hub connecting and supporting other cultural organizations. The building could also provide a space for cultural activities, which could extend the reach of culture along the Downtown corridor.

- A resident said that the building is an opportunity to increase the foot traffic and economic opportunities on Franklin Street, increase partnerships, and make Downtown Chapel Hill a destination for the arts.

- A resident said it is important for the town, county, and university to make a financial commitment to the use of the building during the early stages of the process so it is financially sustainable.

- A resident shared their concern that a museum in this particular location may not be cost effective and may not be the best location for such a property use.

- A resident said that the property could be an opportunity to take the town's dynamism to the next level, create synergies with businesses, and to celebrate what we do well in Chapel Hill, both in the past and today.

- A resident shared their concern that the building is relatively small and that there could be problems in trying to put too many different uses in it. There also is a potential in using the building as a forum for public dialogue and connecting the Northside neighborhood to Downtown Chapel Hill.

- A resident said that there was an opportunity to consider the space as a community hub that connects the town and the university. This gives students a downtown space that is separate from campus to connect with the community and tackle controversial topics in a historical context.

- A resident said that students and faculty are looking for outlets to participate in public projects. Historic Town Hall can potentially provide an outlet for community engagement.

- A Visitors Bureau staff member shared some perspectives and common questions they receive from visitors, including a demand for history and culture and hearing Chapel Hill's story. The staff member noted that visitors are looking for conveniently located parking. Locals are interested in a cultural center that shares Chapel Hill's story and how it is different than other parts of the South.

- A resident asked the committee to consider why the Historic Town Hall location was the best location for university students to engage with Chapel Hill history.

- A resident stated that there is a desire for people to do projects involving the community to address local issues. The resident stated that the town needs to provide financial support so the space can be an outlet for community impact and make Chapel Hill a destination for the arts.

- A resident stated that it is important to recognize how people have historically engaged with the Historic Town Hall space while also recognizing how the space is currently being used as a place for food. Also, the committee should consider the commercial benefits the building can bring if it is available for multiple uses.

- A resident asked that the committee consider acquiring property near the Historic Town Hall building to think bigger about the space. The resident stated that local artists currently do not have space to show their work.

- A resident said that the Historic Town Hall location and the visitors center location offers a powerful symbiosis to serve children and create a space for people to convene and engage in dialogue.

- A resident was interested in knowing how disability organizations fit in with the future of the Historic Town Hall location. They shared that the property could provide a space for disability organizations, which is currently lacking in the community.

- A resident sees potential for a history-focused museum and noted that it is important to consider the differences in a use intended to promote the Town vs. a use that brings the community together and creates dialogue on difficult questions.

- A resident pointed out how the building is inaccessible and the exterior does not present a welcoming space. Elements of the building need to be redesigned to be inviting and open to serve as a community space.

- A resident said the property should be separate from the visitor's center because the space is small and the separation would encourage people to walk downtown between the Historic Town Hall location and the visitor's bureau location. There are opportunities for the visitor's center and a history center to work together if they are not co-located.

- A resident said that Chapel Hill needs a cultural arts center that catalyzes a connection between art and history. There is also a need to identify stakeholders and bring all interested parties to the table in order to tell the full history of Chapel Hill.

- A resident said that it is important to publicize in different ways and get more people involved in the conversation about the building's use, including minority groups and students at the university.

- A resident talked about the need for a needs assessment on the following before a decision is made on the building's use: (1) the economic drivers, (2) historic interests, and (3) the cultural arts component.

- A resident said that it was interesting to learn about the uses being considered for the property in response to the petition and was interested in learning what other types of uses for the building could be considered. The resident stated that it would be important to include those who may not have engaged with this specific committee charge, but may be interested in building's future use.

c. Other Public Comment

A few comments were provided by email and verbally to staff at the end of the meeting. Below is a summary of these comments.

- A resident asked if the new potential for development on the adjacent property creates urgency in the timeline for determining the building's future use.

- A resident asked that literary art be considered along with history and culture as a future use for this space.

- A former Chapel Hill Museum board member emailed comments stating that real artifacts should be included if a history center/ museum is formed, and that it is important to include the town/gown relationship through the centuries. The board member noted that all Chapel Hill Museum items were returned to the owners or auctioned.

- A resident emailed comments stating an interest in turning the building into a "Tourist Information" center where businesses could advertise, and that Carrboro history and businesses should be included in the future use of this space.

- A resident emailed comments stating an interest in “pop-up” spaces for local artists.

- A former Council member emailed comments regarding the Chapel Hill Museum. As a Council member, he served on a citizens committee that performed two feasibility studies, which culminated in Council approving a museum located in the old Chapel Hill Library on East Franklin Street. He noted it was a slow start due to the need to fundraise from citizens and businesses, but the museum eventually flourished with many exhibits and programs, including programs for children. He noted that the museum’s closure was a great loss to the community and was due to the building condition and lack of funding for maintenance.

3. Adjournment

Meeting Materials

Presentation on Historic Town Hall

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.

APPENDIX E – NOTES ON READINGS

The Sacred Grove: Essays on Museums, by Dillon Ripley (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1969).

--Ripley headed the Smithsonian for 20 years, leading it through its greatest period of expansion, including the Air & Space Museum, the Hirshhorn, the Cooper-Hewitt, the Renwick, and (one dear to his heart) the Anacostia Community Museum. This classic work argues that museums must evolve to increase their levels of engagement with the communities they serve.

Chapter 4:

Two polarities by the end of the nineteenth century:

1. "storehouse" vs. educational center;

2. elite vs. the rest:

art historians/universities

artists themselves, naturally allied with the folk and against the establishment, uninterested in the past;

poor people, "Such people were neither objects of pride to our civic boosters nor particular objects of concern."

Further polarity: Western man of Mediterranean origin, beautiful & true, chaste temples, vs. the anthropological "other."

Ripley: It is all one. "It has been gradually emerging that the task of the mid-twentieth century and succeeding years must be to attempt to dissolve the schism, to remove the gap between museums, and to re-create public understanding of the role of these paradoxical institutions."

Chapter 5:

Museums need to be dynamic.

They are the "Principal unrecognized arms of education," unrecognized because they are open, can be taken or left alone.

Museums must establish themselves as essential educational institutions. Connections with schools and universities.

Don't forget that not everybody is a verbal learner.

(Interesting take on colonialism as "cultural death," p. 91.)

Technology [television for him, everything else for us]: "We are in a state of profound transition." We are a "lost generation" compared with those who have grown up with TV. There is a new "communications gap" we must solve.

Museums must take on activist roles, "or the museum as a living institution will disappear," becoming "nothing but a static cultural archive center."

Chapter 6:

We cannot educate [just] by training and transmitting information.

Preservation is valuable but is only a part of the whole.

The task is "how to bring these objects into communication with ourselves." It involves all levels of research.

"Museums are the greatest available laboratory for studying the problems of how to create interest, and this problem is central to our quest for survival as a people."

"Unfortunately for many people, especially poor or poorly educated people, or certainly incurious people who already have no or very few interests, this act involves crossing a threshold outside of ordinary life. The strain may be such that the most deprived will never come."

Neighborhood museum. For an impoverished neighborhood, "the only solution is to bring the museum to them" (p. 104-05).

--Not a Bookmobile! Not bringing a museum from somewhere else to the people. Has to be from the ground up.

--Anacostia example, started in 1967, in a theater. Creating the museum led to clean-up of the block.

--An experimental project, as of 1969, hard to assess, but something is happening there. School classes are being taught there. A local businessman has donated a school bus to drive children to Saturday classes at the Smithsonian on the mall, which they never would have done. No vandalism.

--TODAY: Anacostia Community Museum, a branch of the Smithsonian

--Community Documentation Initiative:

http://cdi.anacostia.si.edu

"Is Your Community Better Off Because It Has a Museum? Final Thoughts About Participatory Culture," part 3, Indianapolis Museum of Art, November 3, 2001

An "era of participatory culture" for museums as well as libraries.

How can museums make significant and lasting changes in our local communities?

This is not a new thing but has roots in the very reason why museums exist (see above!).

Participation has the potential to transform individual and community experiences.

Museums must have an inherent mission to deliver public value driven by a universal right to cultural access.

Though museums have long enjoyed a privileged place, there are new questions about what constitutes public value and who sees the benefits of that value.

The "Occupy Museums" movement reminds us that a growing frustration exists with the way museums think about their role in society.

http://www.occupymuseums.org

Unique, high-quality sources of information are more and more in demand.

Curators have a significant role to play.

That isn't new; what is new is that curators need to shift from authoritarian to participatory. Authoritative, but not authoritarian. A subtle but important difference. The audience is the central determiner of value, but the museum is responsible for building an appreciation for cultural assets and preservation.

Thinking About Starting a Museum? A Discussion Guide and Workbook, Museums Alberta, 2003

Start with "Museums and Communities," p. 6

Museum can measure its public by geography, or identity or interest.

Often there is interest in more activities, etc. than the community can sustain.

"Groups that have grappled most effectively with scarce resources are actively committed to making the museum an indispensable part of their community's life. This happens when the museum is connect to, and visible and involved in, its community."

--educational programs

--tourism initiatives

The museum must be the place where the community's stories are told and the community must have some sense of belonging and ownership.

Community must feel that the mission is important.

Museum must accurately reflect the community's character.

The community needs to be a part of the decision to open a museum.

"The Future of Museums," American Alliance of Museums, by Dr. James Bradbourne

http://www.aam-us.org/resources/professional-networks/leadership-and-management/the-future-of-museums

Large warehouses of city treasures remain poorly maintained and understaffed.

"Many cities were caught up in the museum building frenzy of the 1980s and 90s, vying to outdo one other with potlach-like displays of municipal largess."

"The museum must look toward the creation of lightweight, flexible products that take advantage of its unique collections, not heavyweight blockbusters that disrupt the priorities and distort the identity of the museum. . . . must return to being a learning hub, not a destination attraction. Must commit itself to quality, diversity and sustainability. Only then will it be able to remain a vital resource, a multifaceted piazza for the learning society.

Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures, Center for the Future of Museums, American Association (Alliance) of Museums, December 2008

--Despite its age, this document is still actively referenced, particularly in discussions of museums and race; and museum demographics generally.

Aging

Aging population—more volunteers!

Today only 9 percent of core visitors to museums are minorities. Have to change this to stay relevant.

Gender

Educated women/mothers are going to be more demanding.

Smaller/flatter world

Energy use, uncertain, uncertain costs, uncertain what it means for travel and demand

Recession: distribution of wealth, greater divide could have an impact. Funding may come to rely more on economic elite, and how does that affect their ability to mitigate the culture gap that comes from income disparities.

III. Permanent Revolution in Communications

The whole world now relies on the Google cloud, etc. for "free" storage, yet museums have not been in that world.

Museums are playing catch-up to digital delivery.

Digitizing collections is the simple part of this challenge.

The role of the expert is changing (because people already have access to so much information) (see above; curators no longer authoritative—what Katie Spencer said).

IV. myCULTURE

Creative renaissance: "A generation of young adults with more extensive creative pursuits than any other recent generation." High level of creative output and creative consumption.

Museums should be at the heart of this creative renaissance.

Shifting conceptions of narrative: for younger people, "consumers increasingly drive narrative," thanks to video gaming. Reader serves as protagonist through websites and games that extend the experience, with readers driving their own experiences. This is a structural shift.

For museums, this shift provides an opportunity to create deeper, more immersive experiences. This will become more of the norm.

And yet museums still have a value as a place of respite and retreat—from an ever noisier world.