

MMC Meeting regarding Greene Tract

May 3, 2024 / Noon – 1:30 pm / Orange County Solid Waste Administration Building

Purpose

For Orange County, Carrboro and Chapel Hill to continue to collaborate around the future of the Greene Tract.

Participants

Carrboro

Barbara Foushee, Mayor

Marie Parker, Interim Town Manager

Trish McGuire, Planning Director

Marty Roupe, Development Review Administrator

Chapel Hill

Jess Anderson, Mayor

Chris Blue, Town Manager

Loryn Clark, Deputy Town Manager

Judy Johnson, Assistant Planning Director

Jacob Hunt, Planning Department

Orange County

Jamezetta Bedford, Chair

Bonnie Hammersley, County Manager

Travis Myren, Deputy County Manager

Cy Stober, Planning Director

Perdita Holtz, Deputy Director – Long-Range Planning & Administration

DSC Facilitation Team

Maggie Chotas & Laura Swartz

Meeting Goals

1. Continue effective collaboration
2. Clarify the role of the MMC and decision-making process moving forward
3. Understand the current project scope and timeline
4. Establish next steps in communication

Meeting Summary

This meeting addressed the following topics:

1. Clarifications on the role of the MMC.
2. Overview of consultants' roles, project scopes, deliverables and timeline.
3. MMC and staff next steps and communication moving forward.

Details per Topic Area

Welcome and Introductions

Participants were invited to introduce themselves and share one hope they have for today's meeting.

Hopes for the meeting include:

- Having a meaningful meeting that moves this group forward;
- To walk away with a task;
- Move forward on the key issues and goals;
- Good discussions, good ideas and good energy for the end of the week.

Facilitator Maggie Chotas welcomed members of the general public and reminded everyone that there is no time set aside for public comment in this meeting.

Reaffirming Working Together & Agenda Overview

Given the new makeup of the group, Facilitator Maggie Chotas reviewed the MMC ground rules, which the group created during a meeting on December 18, 2019.

Ground rules:

1. Identify when we are talking personally or from the majority of our Boards.
2. Encourage staff to participate and share, given that they have valuable context and insight.
3. Clarify facts along the way, and do not get offended if someone tries to correct misstatements.
4. Do not take things personally.
5. Share notes back with our Boards.
6. Post final notes summary on the County's Greene Tract Information page (*decided 6/27/23*). However, the underlying document(s) are public records and must be provided to a member of the public if requested within a reasonable time allowing for any necessary redaction. (*email from Jamezetta 9/18/23*)
7. Public meetings will be noticed on all three jurisdictions' calendars/ webpages.

Topic #1

Clarifying the role of the MMC

Maggie Chotas reviewed relevant language about the role of the MMC within the Greene Tract from the 2021 Interlocal Agreement¹

- g. Assigning the Mayors, Chair, and Managers to be the Representatives of the Parties for the purpose of negotiating the ultimate uses of the Property and working directly with staff to bring such negotiated results to the governing boards for final approval and determination;

After reviewing this portion of the Interlocal Agreement, the group discussed the following questions:

1. Does this description from the 2021 ILA continue to define the expectation for the role of the MMC via the Greene Tract?
2. Should this group gather again?

Key points

- Mayor Anderson asked whether the group has defined check-in points? Without determined check-in times, it's hard to know how to negotiate for the Council.
 - In the past, something came up in the MMC, the MMC clarified, and then elected officials took clarifications back to their respective Boards.
 - Cy Stober explained that staff is primarily concerned with the two contracts involving deliverables.
 - Does the MMC have a role in determining the process of deliverables or not? Does the MMC get involved or not?
 - Chair Bedford explained that, originally, she, Pam Hemminger (former Chapel Hill Mayor) and Damon Seils (former Carrboro Mayor) planned to have three large group meetings with the three of the boards. Since then, it was decided that meeting all together wouldn't be as productive as having the consultants attend each of meetings of the BOCC and Council separately
 - The MMC might have to reconvene to resolve any conflicts between the Boards.
 - Mayor Foushee shared that she likes the idea of information coming directly to the Boards to get initial thoughts. Then the MMC could regroup. It might be that the staff would resolve things and work on the inputs before coming to the MMC.
 - Marty Roupe added that, "if that is the direction you want to go, then we may need to modify the contracts [with the consultants]."

¹ <https://www.orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21801/2021-Greene-Tract-ILA?bidId=>

- Cy Stober clarified that the consultant contracts include 3 presentations and there is some additional money that can be redirected if needed. A contract amendment might be necessary, but not a budget amendment. The 3 presentations could be to each of the jurisdictions.
- When considering whether the MMC will need to meet again, Chair Bedford mentioned that her board will have questions so the MMC will have things to discuss.
- Mayor Anderson expressed continued confusion. If we aren't doing the financial analysis until Phase 3, how do we get to the construction phase before that? It seems like a problem to first ask people what they want and then do the financial analysis. When is this rooted in financial analysis so we know it's real?
 - Judy Johnson added that the thinking was the plans would be refined during the financial analysis. It is not within Thomas & Hutton's scope to figure out the finances.
 - We need to consider the financial analysis today if we want to get it ready for the future so that the master plan doesn't get dusty on the shelf and we have to do it over again.
- Chair Bedford asked who is doing the financial analysis?
 - We have not yet hired a group to do the financial analysis, but Judy Johnson noted that it is something we could consider starting soon. Staff has preliminarily talked with some financial groups who suggested that "the sooner they get involved, the better."
- Chair Bedford asked, "are we assuming there would be just one developer? If so, who would do their financial analysis?"
 - Judy Johnson responded that staff anticipates working with many different developers. There could be half a dozen different developers. As property owners, we do not want to be the developers.

Topic #2

Overview of Consultant's roles, project-scope, deliverables, and timelines

Staff and the elected officials reviewed and discussed the updated Greene Tract framework and timeline.

Key Points

- Judy Johnson reviewed the framework² highlighting that the blue areas represented Gensler's work, the pink areas represented Thomas & Hutton's work, and the green

² See Appendix A: Framework

- areas represented the property owners. The big task for the everyone is the master plan.
- What is entitlement?
 1. It is the act of going through Chapel’s Hill’s development process.
 2. The property owners will play an important role in the entitlement process.
 - Mayor Anderson asked why Dan Jewell can’t just do the financial analysis?
 1. She added that the staff is more than qualified to come up with a more detailed project plan. At some point, we will want to put it on Chapel Hill since the land is in Chapel Hill.
 2. Mayor Anderson reiterated that, “the last time she heard, we [Chapel Hill] are giving the land, but not the money” for development.
 - Trish McGuire added that this is why the MMC has been helpful. It is in everyone’s best interest to have a master plan that has some element of feasibility.
 1. Mayor Anderson reiterated, “let’s not create a master plan that is not tied to reality.”
 2. Mayor Foushee asked Mayor Anderson if she was concerned about any specifics? The type of housing?
 - Mayor Anderson responded that she is not worried about anything in particular. In an effort to have a pure and transparent process, she would like to tether community engagement to reality.
 3. Mayor Foushee added that there is the expectation that the Greene Tract will have more affordable housing. She can say with 100% certainty that folks will be looking for affordable housing.
 4. Chair Bedford echoed this sentiment – the Orange County Board has the expectation to have as much affordable housing as possible.
 - Travis Myren summarized that the group needs to consider issues in the following order:
 - (1) Affordability
 - (2) At what density?
 - (3) At what level of public subsidy?
 - (4) Total Financial Feasibility
 - Facilitator Maggie Chotas asked what that looks like in terms of sequencing? If you were going to put it into a project plan, where would it go?
 1. Cy Stober responded that the group would need to add in the financial analysis now, and it would likely extend contracts by at least a quarter. These extensions would involve contract amendments and possible budget amendments.
 2. Staff will come together to think through these details.

3. If affordability is the primary variable, then feasibility is second.
 4. Judy Johnson added that Weavers Grove is 40% affordable housing. Is 40% a reasonable target to look at when running these scenarios?
 5. Chair Bedford noted that her board is not prepared to set an affordability goal. They would need to see the number first and then set a goal.
- Trish McGuire noted that the design process will inform whether we are ready to make a decision around how much affordable housing could occur.
 - Mayor Foushee added that she has always had the understanding that we would have a broad range of housing types that would cross socio-economic statuses as much as possible. The information gathered in the design workshops will inform the affordability goal.
 - Does the staff have what they need to move forward with this?
 1. Staff can do some more work, and then they will need to go back to the Boards or back to the MMC for more guidance.
 2. Travis Myren asked if the MMC will want to see a draft plan before staff takes plans to the Boards?
 3. Cy Stober noted that contract amendments and scenarios will keep the staff plenty busy.
 - Trish McGuire asked if the elected officials are getting what they need from Gensler and Thomas & Hutton?
 1. Mayor Anderson responded that she sees the value of the group and there might be opportunities to rethink how we put information to the Boards.
 2. Chair Bedford noted that the MMC still has the opportunity to get information to their Boards regularly through the “information items.”

Topic #3

MMC and Staff Next Steps and Communication Moving Forward

Next, the group discussed when they will meet again and reserved time on Friday, September 20, 2024 from Noon – 1:30 pm for the next MMC meeting, if needed.

Key Points

- After some discussion, the elected officials decided that the master plan draft will be shared among the staff and with the managers, but will not go to the MMC before going to the Boards.
- Elected officials made a request for the consultants to link decisions with information from design workshops, noting where they heard information.

- Cy Stober reminded the group that Gensler puts out monthly newsletters on the project.
- At the last MMC meeting, the group discussed note summaries going back to 2021. Cy Stober shared an update that staff is working to gather summaries going back to 2021 (when Maggie Chotas started facilitating). Those meeting were not open to the public, so staff is redacting information to protect private citizens. All summaries will be posted to the [Greene Tract page](#) on the Orange County Website.
- The group decided that the MMC will meet as needed, and most of the information will go straight to the Boards. Staff will continue to “do the heavy-lifting” and work with Managers.

Next Steps

- 1) Staff will take key areas (affordability, density, subsidy, and total feasibility) and find a consultant who can start working on the financial analysis and building out scenarios.
- 2) Staff determines what is coming out of the scenarios and necessary next steps.
 - a. Should the scenarios go straight to the elected Boards?
 - b. Should the scenarios first come to the MMC?
- 3) Upcoming Design Workshops:
 - a. The 2nd design workshop is in June 9, 2024 from 2 – 5 pm at Morris Grove Elementary School.
 - b. The 3rd design workshop has not been scheduled yet.
- 4) The MMC will meet again from Noon – 1:30 pm on Friday, September 20 at the Orange County Solid Waste Building, if needed.

The meeting adjourned at 1:22 pm.

