

Donna Bell

My name is Donna Bell. I have been on Town Council for six years. I decided to run for another term because I am so excited about the work that the Town and its citizens have accomplished. The diversity of skills and thought brought to town by community members has created impressive results. I am running to continue the Council's work of devising innovative public policy solutions to address Chapel Hill's needs.

Affordable housing is an issue I am proud to champion. I am proudest of my advocacy and Council's work in passing the Penny for Housing program, neighborhood protection through NCDs, and Chapel Hill's Affordable Housing Strategy. I have learned, in working for affordable housing, the organic connection between transit, economic development, and affordability. Chapel Hill 2020 reiterated the important connection between these factors.

The 2020 Comprehensive Plan created a framework for the future of Chapel Hill and was recognized by the NC American Planning Association with an innovation award. The 2020 Comprehensive plan laid out a structure for growth: Good Places and New Spaces, Community Prosperity and Engagement, A Place for Everyone and Nurturing our Community. Since the plan's completion, we have been able to add further detail with the 2013 Greenways Master Plan, the Parks Comprehensive Plan, the Chapel Hill Comprehensive Bike Plan, the Central West Small Area Plan and the Stormwater Master Plan. The Council uses these documents to create goals and implement policy initiatives.

Consistent with the 2020 Plan, I have been an advocate for development that protects the character of existing neighborhoods, but understands the need for more dense developments on the edges of neighborhoods close to transit corridors. Recognizing the need for stronger protections for vulnerable neighborhoods, I have supported Neighborhood Conversation Districts. During my time on Council NCDs have been approved for Little Ridgefield and Glen Lennox . The Northside – Pine Knolls NCD was revised in response to policy goals not sufficiently supported in original ordinance. State Bill 25 has weakened some of the protections offered by the NCD but I am committed to finding effective solutions to ensure we are preserving the environment and character of our community and neighborhoods.

I look to discussing and engaging Chapel Hill citizens on all the challenges in helping to guide our steps. Thank you for inviting me and I look forward to an engaging forum.