



301 W. Main St.
Town Hall
Carrboro, NC 27510

**Town of Carrboro
Meeting Minutes
Town Council**

December 5, 2023

7:00 PM

Council Chambers - Room 110

Present: Mayor Barbara Foushee, Council Member Catherine Fray, Council Member Jason Merrill, Council Member Danny Nowell, Council Member Randee Haven-O'Donnell, Council Member Eliazar Posada

Also Present: Marie Parker, Interim Town Manager; Wendy Welsh, Interim Town Clerk; Nick Herman, Town Attorney

OATH OF OFFICE FOR MAYOR – ELECT AND COUNCIL MEMBERS - ELECT

Oath of Office for Mayor – Elect Barbara Foushee administered by U.S. Congresswoman Valerie Foushee

Oath of Office for Council Member – Elect Eliazar Posada administered by District Court Judge Joal Broun

Oath of Office for Council Member – Elect Catherine Fray administered by Former Mayor Lydia Lavelle

Oath of Office for Council Member – Elect Jason Merrill administered by Interim Town Clerk Wendy Welsh

RESOLUTION HONORING COUNCIL MEMBER SUSAN ROMAINE

A motion was made by Council Member Posada, seconded by Council Member Nowell to approve the following resolution:

A RESOLUTION HONORING COUNCIL MEMBER SUSAN ROMAINE

WHEREAS, Susan Romaine has served the community as a member of Carrboro Town Council for four years, having been elected in 2019; and

44
45 **WHEREAS**, during her tenure on the Town Council, Susan represented the Council on the
46 Economic Sustainability Commission, the Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee, the
47 Planning Board, the Truth Plaque Task Force, the Intergovernmental Parks Work Group, and the
48 Orange County Local Government Affordable Housing Collaborative; and
49

50 **WHEREAS**, prior to her election to Town Council, in 2010, Susan and two neighbors co-
51 founded Chapel Hill-Carrboro PORCH, a neighbor-to-neighbor hunger response and relief
52 program and since 2015, has been an instrumental advocate and is a current Board Member of
53 Orange County Living Wage; and
54

55 **WHEREAS**, Susan's time on Town Council was quickly transformed by the COVID-19
56 pandemic, during which her thoughtfulness, compassion, and superb communication efforts
57 made her a true resource connecting neighbors to the many resources available to them through
58 our Town and County governments; and
59

60 **WHEREAS**, following the pandemic Susan walked every street in Carrboro to reconnect with
61 her neighbors and the physical landscape of our town; and
62

63 **WHEREAS**, Susan has been a pragmatic and forward-thinking steward of Carrboro's economic
64 viability, advocating for responsible use of town resources and for support of Carrboro's many
65 local businesses, entrepreneurs, and employees; and
66

67 **WHEREAS**, Susan has never let that pragmatism stand in the way of her care for her neighbors,
68 leading her to fight for increased housing affordability and accessibility, and
69

70 **WHEREAS**, Susan has consistently worked to make sure relief for COVID-19 and other
71 economic hardships has gone to the community members most in need; and
72

73 **WHEREAS**, Susan has been a paragon of accessibility through her tenure, responding to every
74 single email she has received from neighbors; and
75

76 **WHEREAS**, Susan was thoroughly diligent in her Town Council preparedness. Susan
77 consistently, reliably, and carefully read each and every Town Council agenda and associated
78 materials; and
79

80 **WHEREAS**, Susan provided detailed feedback, assessment, and recommendations on critical
81 budgetary matters for Council consideration that included and were not limited to; Town of
82 Carrboro's annual budget, Federal ARPA, and IRA funding, municipal, county and state grants
83 and assistance program funding; and
84

85 **WHEREAS**, if her vigilant proofreading of the Council minutes is any indication, Susan will
86 likely have some corrections to make to this resolution; and
87

88 **WHEREAS**, Susan has been as reliable a source of truffles and the occasional pastry before a
89 long meeting as she has been a source of thorough consideration and a flexible approach to even
90 the most complex issues; and

91
92 **WHEREAS**, Susan has been a fair, compassionate, open-minded, and responsive representative
93 of every single Carrboro resident; and

94
95 **WHEREAS**, her cheerful good nature, collaborative spirit, and warm generosity will be missed
96 by her colleagues;

97
98 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Carrboro Town Council expresses its
99 deepest gratitude to Susan Romaine for her service to the Town of Carrboro and all of Orange
100 County.

101
102 This the 5th day of December, 2023.

103
104 **The motion carried unanimously.**

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106 *****

107
108 **RESOLUTION HONORING COUNCIL MEMBER SAMMY SLADE**

109
110 **A motion was made by Council Member Nowell, seconded by Council Member Fray to**
111 **approve the following resolution:**

112
113 **A RESOLUTION HONORING COUNCIL MEMBER SAMMY SLADE**

114
115 **WHEREAS**, Sammy Slade has served the community as a member of Carrboro Town Council
116 for 14 years, having first been elected in 2009 and subsequently reelected in 2013, 2017, and
117 2019, and

118
119 **WHEREAS**, prior to his Board of Aldermen election, Sammy Chaired the Local Living
120 Economy Task Force. Sammy has served the former Board of Aldermen and Town Council as
121 a liaison to the Air Quality Advisory Group, the Animal Control Board of Appeals, the
122 Recreation and Parks Commission, the Appearance Commission, the Affordable Housing
123 Taskforce, the Climate Change Committee, the Rogers Road Water/Sewer Work Group, the
124 Transportation Advisory Board, the Climate and Energy Taskforce, the Economic Sustainability
125 Commission, the Environmental Advisory Board, the Orange County Food Council, the Family
126 Success Alliance, the Orange County Climate Council, the Climate Action Team, the
127 Community Safety Task Force, and the Stormwater Advisory Commission, and as chair of the
128 Local Living Economy Task Force; and

129
130 **WHEREAS**, before his time in office Sammy co-founded the Carrboro Greenspace: Center for
131 Community and Sustainability and the Carrboro Community Garden Coalition; and
132

133 **WHEREAS**, Sammy has been a tireless advocate for environmental and climate justice, leading
134 the Town to address our planetary climate emergency with the urgency and scope required; and
135

136 **WHEREAS**, in that work Sammy was instrumental in the establishment of the Climate Action
137 Task Force and Green Neighborhoods Initiative, which seek to organize residents to work
138 outside and alongside our governmental efforts to address the climate crisis; and
139

140 **WHEREAS**, with his attention to detail, keen understanding of intersectionality, and tireless
141 commitment Sammy led the efforts to operationalize climate justice throughout our Town
142 budget, helping both colleagues and residents gain a granular and sophisticated sense of the
143 many opportunities for meaningful action within our institutions; and
144

145 **WHEREAS**, Sammy has brought that same tireless commitment to his advocacy for working
146 class residents, fighting for a comprehensive vision of affordability that includes transit access,
147 home weatherization, and support for a diverse range of local businesses; and
148

149 **WHEREAS**, Sammy responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with his characteristically
150 determined care for his neighbors, consistently communicating the necessity of protecting our
151 residents with data-driven advocacy and constant reminders that keeping each other safe is the
152 most important function of community; and
153

154 **WHEREAS**, Sammy has been an example of transparency and accessibility with residents,
155 never failing to raise the concerns of his neighbors while educating them about the complexities
156 and opportunities for addressing those concerns through our Town government, and
157

158 **WHEREAS**, Sammy has been a faithful representative of Carrboro's activist community and
159 history, constantly pushing his colleagues to consider new ways to use government to more
160 closely reflect the will of our residents, and
161

162 **WHEREAS**, Sammy has been a consistent source of innovative thinking about urban design,
163 economic vitality, and accessible human-centered infrastructure, and
164

165 **WHEREAS**, in his 14 years of service, Sammy has been the longest-serving Latino in any single
166 office in North Carolina, serving as an inspiration and example to Hispanic and Latinx residents
167 of Carrboro and statewide; and
168

169 **WHEREAS**, residents have appreciated seeing Sammy model his commitment to climate action
170 by getting around town by bike, and we hope that the free time he is soon to have on his hands
171 will allow him to add a helmet to that cycling routine; and
172

173 **WHEREAS**, Sammy has served as a model of integrity, passion, and commitment;
174

175 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Carrboro Town Council expresses its
176 deepest gratitude to Sammy Slade for his service to the people of Carrboro and all of Orange
177 County.
178

This the 5th day of December, 2023.

The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION HONORING MAYOR DAMON SEILS

A motion was made by Council Member Fray, seconded by Council Member Merrill to approve the following resolution:

A RESOLUTION HONORING MAYOR DAMON SEILS

WHEREAS, Damon Seils has served the Town of Carrboro in an elected capacity for ten years, having been first elected to the Town Council in 2013, and then subsequently re-elected in 2015 and 2019 before his election to the office of Mayor in 2021; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure on the Town Council and as Mayor, Damon represented the Council on the Joint Orange-Chatham Community Action, the OWASA Taste of Hope Interagency Working Group, the Chapel Hill Transit Partners Committee, the Chapel Hill Public Transit Committee (Transit Partners Committee), the Transportation Advisory Committee (MPO-TAC), the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness leadership team, the Planning Board Liaison, the Family Success Alliance, the Safe Routes to School Implementation Committee, the Complete Count Committee, the Greenways Commission, the Transportation Advisory Board Liaison, the Affordable Housing Advisory Commission, the Appearance Commission, the Board of Adjustments, the Community Safety Task Force, the Youth Advisory Board, the Chamber for a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Directors, the Chatham-Orange Joint Planning Task Force, the North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, the Orange County Solid Waste Advisory Group, the Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors, and the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization; and

WHEREAS, prior to his election to the Town Council, Damon was appointed in 2003 to the Orange County Human Relations Commission, and later served as a member and Chaired the Town of Carrboro Planning Board; and

WHEREAS, Damon's expertise in planning issues and his commitment to improving Town processes made him a champion of the Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan, first advocating for its development during his time as Chair of the Planning Board and then later becoming instrumental in its adoption as Mayor; and

WHEREAS, Damon was a steadfast supporter of the Town of Carrboro and Orange County Branch Library 203 project from its conception to its groundbreaking, providing instrumental leadership in building Carrboro's first new municipal structure in 100 years and expanding both the Town and Orange County's capacity to provide much-needed and widely anticipated services to Carrboro residents; and

WHEREAS, Damon led as a steady presence throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, reassuring his neighbors with characteristic calm demeanor and pragmatism while proactively working to connect Town residents with vital resources and opportunities to support one another; and

WHEREAS, Damon has led the Town Council’s efforts to distribute millions of dollars of relief money through COVID-19 recovery programs and the Inflation Reduction Act, helping Carrboro stabilize after difficult and turbulent times by ensuring resources reached the people and places most impacted by overlapping crises; and

WHEREAS, Damon has been instrumental in bringing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to Carrboro and implementing safer, more thoughtful, and more environmentally sustainable multimodal connectivity through Town; and

WHEREAS, Damon’s representation of the Town on the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Board has advanced our Town’s access to planning resources and ability to complete transformative transit projects; and

WHEREAS, Damon’s leadership allowed Town Council to move with both efficiency and inclusivity, overseeing efforts to set new standards for public engagement in public discussions while also moving forward complex and detailed plans concerning transit, affordable housing, economic sustainability, racial equity, climate action, and the organization of Town staff; and

WHEREAS, Damon is widely known for his scrupulous fairness and even-keeled demeanor, having presided over meetings with open-mindedness, noticeable calm, and a commitment to extending his colleagues grace and collegiality; and

WHEREAS, Damon has tirelessly connected with leaders in other jurisdictions to improve Carrboro’s ability to coordinate policy, funding opportunities, and community building efforts; and

WHEREAS, Carrboro residents have greatly enjoyed Damon’s omnipresence at Town events, both official and unofficial, ranging from Northside community gatherings to the Cat’s Cradle to early morning bicycle rides to Carrboro Elementary; and

WHEREAS, as a devoted runner, Damon is a go-to entrant in the Cardinal Track Club and Tour de Carrboro Road Races, the St. Paul’s AME 5k Benefit; and

WHEREAS, thanks to Damon’s initiative, he, along with the mayor and two of his Town Council colleagues and a council member of Chapel Hill were arrested while protesting regressive policies of the GOP-led General Assembly during the Mega Moral Monday of June 4, 2013. Damon expressed at the time the value of leveraging democratic power when he said: “I think that actually being an elected official made it more important for us to make a stand;” and

WHEREAS, though Damon’s ardent support for Arsenal FC might mislead the casual observer into mistaking him for another faddish Yank bamboozled into unthinking support for a garish Big Six club, his philosophical appreciation for Pep Guardiola and an artful build more generally

will quickly confirm that he has both a keen eye and a sound moral sensibility regarding the beautiful game; and

WHEREAS, Damon can pretty well be captured in his essence by having once, on a flight to a nationwide convention for local elected officials to discuss the challenges and opportunities of implementing a detailed progressive agenda in a municipal context, put his AirPods in while cheerfully saying “Time to relax with the new Beyoncé,” which it should be noted was the album RENAISSANCE, a relatively bracing and upbeat homage to queer house music; and

WHEREAS, Damon has epitomized servant leadership for more than a decade in his community, setting a standard for thoughtfulness, community engagement, and accessibility that his colleagues will strive to live up to for years to come;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Carrboro Town Council expresses its deepest gratitude to Damon Seils for his service to the people of Carrboro and all of Orange County.

This the 5th day of December 2023.

The motion carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEMPORE

A motion was made by Council Member Posada, seconded by Council Member Fray to appoint Council Member Nowell as Mayor Pro Tempore.

The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF ABSTRACT OF VOTES CAST AT THE NOVEMBER 7, 2023 ELECTION

The purpose of this item is for the Town Council to consider approval of the Abstract of Votes Cast at the November 7, 2023, election.

A motion was made by Council Member Nowell, seconded by Council Member Haven-O'Donnell to approve the following resolution.

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE VOTING ABSTRACT FROM THE ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS FOR THE NOVEMBER 7, 2023 ELECTIONS

WHEREAS, the Orange County Board of Elections, having opened, canvassed, and judicially determined the original returns of the November 7, 2023 election,

317
318 **NOW, THEREFORE, THE TOWN OF CARRBORO RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**
319

- 320 1. The Town of Carrboro does hereby adopt the Orange County Board of Elections Abstract
321 of Votes of the November 7, 2023 election.
322
323 2. This resolution becomes effective upon adoption.
324

325 This the 5th day of December, 2023.
326

327 **The motion carried unanimously.**
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331 **ADOPTION OF THE 2024 MEETING CALENDAR**
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333 The purpose of this item is for the Town Council to have any discussion and adopt the 2024
334 meeting calendar.
335

336 **A motion was made by Council Member Nowell, seconded by Council Member Haven-**
337 **O'Donnell to approve the proposed 2024 meeting calendar.**
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339 **The motion carried unanimously.**
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341 *****
342

343 **TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**
344

345 The purpose of this item is to allow the Town Council to consider committee assignments for
346 2024.
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348 **A motion was made by Council Member Nowell, seconded by Council Member Haven-**
349 **O'Donnell to approve the following resolution.**
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351 A Resolution Making the 2024 Board Committee Assignments
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353 Section 1. 2024 Board Liaison Committee Assignments
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Town Advisory Boards	
Affordable Housing Advisory Commission	Posada
Appearance Commission	Posada
Arts Committee	Nowell
Board of Adjustment	Fray
Climate Action Team	Haven-O'Donnell, Posada
Economic Sustainability Commission	Haven-O'Donnell, Merrill
Environmental Advisory Board	Posada
Greenways Commission	Haven-O'Donnell, Merrill
Human Services Commission	Foushee
Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee	Fray
Planning Board	Fray
Racial Equity Commission	Haven-O'Donnell, Foushee
Recreation and Parks Commission	Nowell
Stormwater Advisory Commission	Nowell
Transportation Advisory Board	Merrill
Truth Plaque Task Force	Foushee
Intergovernmental Bodies	
Central Pines Regional Council Board of Delegates	Haven-O'Donnell
Chamber for a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Directors	Foushee
Chapel Hill Public Transit Committee ("Transit Partners Committee")	Haven-O'Donnell, Merrill, manager's designee
Chatham-Orange Joint Planning Task Force	Posada
Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Board	Nowell (member), Fray (alternate)
Family Success Alliance Advisory Council	Posada
Intergovernmental Parks Work Group	Fray
North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition	Foushee
Orange County Local Government Affordable Housing Collaborative	Merrill
Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness Leadership Team	Fray, Foushee
Orange County Solid Waste Advisory Group	Haven-O'Donnell
Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors	Haven-O'Donnell, Foushee

Section 2. This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

This the 5th day of December, 2023.

The motion carried unanimously.

**A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A SPECIAL ELECTION OR AFFIRMING THE
DECISION TO FILL THE COUNCIL MEMBER SEAT VACANT BY THE ELECTION
OF MAYOR BARBARA FOUSHEE BY APPOINTMENT**

The purpose of this item is to allow the Town Council to discuss and decide to call a special election or go through the process of appointment to fill the vacancy on the Town Council that was created upon Mayor Foushee assuming the office of Mayor.

Mayor Foushee gave an overview of the options to fill the vacant Council seat, which are to hold a special election in the March 2024 Primary Election, hold a special election that the Town pays for, appoint a member to the Council, or to leave the Council seat vacant to fill in the November 2024 General Election.

Council Member Nowell reflected on this complicated issue and addressed the State standard is to appoint and discussed the fairness and equity of that. Sees the March election non-viable to file and campaign. Wants to have a special election coinciding with the November 2024 election and push for an appointment policy going forward.

Council Member Posada discussed campaigning twice in 18 months and the amount of work it takes to campaign. Supports the November election and wants to revisit the decision to appoint.

Council Member Haven-O'Donnell supports the November special election and resists the recommendations to amend the charter. Previous Board of Alderman created the charter to allow for flexibility for future boards.

Council Member Fray gave a history of elections for the Town, starting with the 2006-2007 election and how Carrboro changed the Town Charter to require a special election. In 2013 the Town ran into another situation and was forced to hold a special election with only one candidate and spent a lot of money to hold it. Afterwards, the Town again asked to change its Charter to allow Council to change which method they would like to use, either special election or appointment. Pointed out that special elections have occurred when a Council Member is running for Mayor and would like to look at the language around the midterm vacancies.

A motion was made by Council Member Nowell, seconded by Council Member Posada to approve the following resolution.

**A RESOLUTION CALLING A SPECIAL ELECTION TO FILL A VACANCY ON THE
CARRBORO TOWN COUNCIL**

WHEREAS, Barbara Foushee was elected as Mayor; and,

WHEREAS, Barbara Foushee's current term as Council Member does not expire until December 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the Council Member seat is now vacant; and,

WHEREAS, the Charter of the Town of Carrboro requires that whenever a seat on the Town Council (other than that of the Mayor) becomes vacant that the Town Council decide to fill that seat by appointment or by calling a special election; and,

WHEREAS, a special election shall be called by the Town Council by the adoption of a resolution pursuant to G.S. 163-287.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CARRBORO TOWN COUNCIL THAT:

1. A special election is hereby called for November 2024 to coincide with the General Election date.
2. The Town Clerk is hereby authorized to work with the Orange County Board of Elections to ensure the success of the special election.
3. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

This the 5th day of December, 2023.

The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Council Member Posada, seconded by Council Member Nowell to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.
