



MINUTES

The Holly Springs Town Council met in a workshop session on Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at the Law Enforcement Center and via livestreaming. Mayor Kondratick presided, calling the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was established as the Mayor and five Council members were present in the room as the meeting opened.

Council Members Present in the room: Mayor Mike Kondratick, Mayor Pro Tem Annie Drees, Council members Chris Deshazor, Danielle Hewetson, Kara Foster, and Sarah Larson.

Council Members Absent: none.

Staff Members Present in the room: Randy Harrington, Town Manager; Linda McKinney, Town Clerk (recording the minutes); Daniel Weeks, Assistant Town Manager; Scott Chase, Assistant Town Manager; John Schifano, Town Attorney; Jesse Dixon, IT; Corey Petersohn, Director, Office of Budget, Innovation, and Strategy; Cassie Hack, Director, Communications and Marketing; Chris Hills, Director Development Services; Elizabeth Goodson, Sean Ryan and Sarah Sularz, Development Services; Paige Scott, Director of Public Works; Carrie Mitchell and Rachel Ingham, Utilities & Infrastructure; Paul Liquorie, Police Chief; LeRoy Smith, Fire Chief; Tina Stroupe, Finance Director.

Mayor Kondratick called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Randy Harrington, Town Manager, gave an overview of the topics and asked Council to move Item 7, *Fall/Winter Workshop Topic Planning*, after the Town Clerk's update, because the Town Attorney's update would require going into Closed Session. Council agreed to the agenda change.

1. Community Engagement:

Scott Chase, Assistant Town Manager, said that this was the beginning of a discussion of Community Engagement and identifying gaps for further review. He said Holly Springs residents are highly engaged and gave examples of how staff has engaged with residents and included their input in decision making.

Cassie Hack, Director of Communications and Marketing, said there is a difference between Communications and Community Engagement. She outlined the differences in terms of what it is, what tools work best, which goals each addresses and how success is measured. She said that Community Engagement matters because by inviting diverse voices into the process, governments can avoid blind spots, reduce polarization and gain lasting community support. She outlined ways the Town is engaging with the public currently.

Mr. Chase gave examples of community engagement successes in the recent past, including e-bikes, high schoolers parking in subdivisions near the high school, and the 311 center. He pointed out that we are "punching above our weight" with the 311 as we are among the smallest municipalities to offer such a service.

Mr. Chase said we are a growing community and community engagement needs to evolve. There have been instances or topics, such as the yard waste program, where there were multiple

meetings with HOAs. The Engagement Hub, the online home for outreach and listening efforts, has been a highly used and effective method of receiving feedback from the public who might not be able to attend a meeting but want to have their voice heard. Ms. Hack said while engagement started with HOAs, there are neighborhoods without HOAs, and it is difficult to keep up with the changing board members on the HOAs. She said there is a great opportunity there. A suggestion would be an HOA summit to find ways to keep the HOAs involved in Town issues. She said the Engagement Hub on the website is a good place to interact with younger, digitally native residents. She asked for Council's engagement on what topics would be best used on the Engagement Hub.

Randy Harrington, Town manager, organized an activity to get Council's feedback on what areas of engagement are most important to Council. The areas that rose to the top priority were:

1. Neighborhood Listening Sessions
2. HOA engagement
3. 311 expansion
4. Engaging with existing groups other than HOAs.

MPT Drees asked if staff could put some social media suggestions into a Friday briefing.

Mr. Harrington said that next steps would be any needed staff research or "prototyping" on the Council-identified gaps based on today's discussion. There would be a follow up at the September workshop for further prioritization of potential gap areas to focus on and identification of other key considerations going forward.

2. Housing Policy:

Sean Ryan, Development Services, said he and Sarah Lipkin Sularz were here to continue the discussion on Housing Affordability that was started at the retreat. He said that at the Retreat the Holly Springs Housing Affordability Study was recapped with updated demographics. Council discussed various strategies to reduce barriers to affordable development, assist long-term residents to maintain safe, secure housing and improve access to housing resources. At that time Council prioritized three immediate tools and one long-term tool that they wanted staff to implement. These were Incentive Zoning, Expedited Approvals, and Land Use & Regulatory Changes, with Homeowner Rehabilitation as a long-term plan. Staff has been working with this direction to create specific actions that can be taken to reach those goals. He said tonight he would review those actions, discuss implementation timelines and identify key metrics with the goal of creating a Housing Affordability Action Plan for consideration. He said that these are small incremental changes that move the needle slightly, but change the long-term trajectory for the future.

Ms. Lipkin Sularz said there were three categories of actions to advance these goals: 1) Advancing access and public outreach; 2) implementing programs and policies; and 3) building the Town's capacity. In the first category, suggested action plans include Maintaining a User-friendly Housing Resources Webpage (Year 1) Building a Network of Housing Partners (Year 1) and Establishing a Housing Advisory Group (Year 2). She said staff recommends beginning with the Land Use Advisory Committee to establish clear framework with goals, objectives, an annual workplan and initial policies and programs. With this framework, the role could be turned over in Phase 2 to a group of community stakeholders as the affordability programs evolve.

Ms. Lipkin Sularz said the second category included creating an Affordable Housing Incentive Zoning policy (Year 1) creating an Affordable Housing Expedited Approval Process (Year 2) creating a Pilot Program for Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation and Repair (OORR) assistance (Year 3) and aligning the Town's Long-range Plans and Development Ordinances with housing Affordability Goals (Year 2). She outlined the investment in staff time necessary for each of these action items.

Ms. Lipkin Sularz said the third category included dedicating staff resources to manage housing programs (Year 1) and providing dedicated funding to support housing affordability (Year 1), both of which would require budget commitments from Council.

Council member Deshazor said that for him Actions 2 and 3 (building a network of partners, and establishing a housing advisory group) have to go together. He thinks that would make it less of a heavy lift for the Town. Mr. Ryan said that the goal for the workgroup would be for it to be a Holly Springs board, but because we are so early in the process, we need to build the group first so that they have something to manage. Council member Deshazor said that as for Programs and Policies, he would like to see a pre-set plan that can be presented to developers to make it clear what they can do.

Mayor Kondratick asked if the action around aligning long-range plans and development ordinances was just looking geographically to see where it makes the most sense. Mr. Ryan said that would be something we would do, but we would also be looking at the character areas in the land use plan to make sure that the communication is reflective of Council's goals. Ms. Lipkin Sularz said to reinforce that Action 4 talks about creating an overlay to reinforce it in the maps. MPT Drees said we have collected feedback from developers. She asked if we were funneling that feedback into this process. Mr. Ryan said yes, and where we are today is, is this the right framework for us to continue to dig into. He said there would be a little more structure around these goals when it comes back to Council, and to put that feedback into a Housing Action Plan. That feedback of the development community will be crucial as we start to implement it.

Council member Deshazor asked about the housing website. Ms. Lipkin Sularz explained the housing website that exists now showing various housing options. But it has not been updated or made interactive – it is a static list. It needs to be updated and made more interactive and user friendly, with someone in charge of it. Council member Deshazor asked if we as a Council need to decide what we mean by Affordable Housing. Council member Larson said we discussed it as 80% of area median income. Ms. Lipkin Sularz explained the levels of income compared to the Area Median Income (AMI) and said the 80-120% area is the group that needs the most help as there are existing programs that help those in lower income brackets. Council member Deshazor said he was more asking what types of housing – apartments, houses, townhomes – and are they rentals or owner-occupied. Mr. Harrington said the strategies to tackle 80% -120% AMI are very different from those needed for 30 - 60% AMI. The lower ones are usually tackled by larger municipalities. Council member Deshazor said he wants a clear strategy of what we are going after or nothing will get done. Mr. Harrington said that at the current state what we have heard so far has been around the 80-120%, but if it's something different, we would love to hear. Mr. Ryan said that as we get into implementing, we will need a metric to know what type of housing we are looking for. Once we get into the meat and potatoes we will get into those definitions. Ms. Lipkin Sularz said she wants to leave room for Council to be flexible, because when we talk about partnering with programs that already exist, they already have parameters that we will want to meet in order to accept matching funds.

3. UDO Proposed Updates

Chris Hills, Director of Development Services, said he wanted to discuss the current quasi-judicial subdivision and Development Plan approval process and discuss possible alternatives. If Council agrees that this is the direction, he asks that they authorize staff to proceed with drafting amendments to the UDO to amend the quasi-judicial approval process. Mr. Hills explained how the UDO was a consolidation of zoning and subdivision ordinances, and how the General Statute 160D, which regulates land-use in North Carolina, was a modernization of the statutes. He said that NCGS 160D allows Subdivision and Development Plans to be approved in three ways – quasi-

judicial by the governing body; quasi-judicial by an appointed body; or administratively by staff or technical committee.

Mr. Hills said that everyone, from residents to developers, has told them that they are frustrated by how long the current process is, how limited the resident involvement can be and the multiple levels of approval required, even when projects don't change. He said the goal of making a change would be to modernize the process to align public engagement where influence is greatest, to reduce confusion, streamline reviews, and optimize staff resources. He outlined which types of Council decisions are legislative, and which are quasi-judicial, and what that means in terms of public input and Council discretion. He said our peer municipalities are all practicing administrative approvals, leaving Holly Springs as an outlier.

Mr. Hills said the proposed decision making process would give rezoning, conditional rezoning districts, the Comprehensive Plan and the UDO text amendments to Council. Major and Minor Subdivisions and Development Plans would receive administrative approval. He outlined the steps after the approval of a Legislative Zoning and how the steps would change if this change to the UDO was implemented, and that it would shorten the approval process from 6-12 to 3-6 months.

Mr. Hills outlined the goals and outcomes staff hopes to achieve with this process evolution. He asked if Council wished to authorize staff to proceed with drafting amendments to the UDO to remove Quasi-Judicial approval process, and explained that this would not be an instantaneous process and that Council would see it again before it goes into effect.

Council member Hewetson asked if Council does not rezone, for a by-right development, could Council see those cases as quasi-judicial cases. Mr. Hills said he is not sure there is a legal avenue to create a separate class. But we do not have a lot of property zoned without a primary use already established. John Schifano, Town Attorney, said that zoning by right is by right. There's no way to do this. Mr. Hills said that having a strong UDO is the antidote to that. If the UDO is right, it will create the community you want to see.

Council discussed whether this scenario would lead to "bait and switch" from developers where once the rezoning was granted they did not build what they said they would. Mr. Hills said that risk is rare. We advise our clients that Conditional Zoning is the way to go because Council wants to know what they're getting. If someone asks for a basic rezoning, the Council can say no. With Conditional Zoning, bait and switch cannot happen. Mr. Schifano said we also pair rezoning with development agreements, so it is contractually tied to a specific plan. Also, the water resource policy is tied to it. If they don't do what was agreed to, they don't get the water. Mr. Hills said a well written UDO will prevent that from happening. Mr. Schifano said if you tie rezoning to site plan approval and a development agreement, that is a trifecta approach. You could have a development agreement expire, so conditional zoning might be a better approach.

Council member Deshazor asked if "staff" could be specifically worded to indicate that the Development Review Committee (DRC) is responsible. Mr. Hills said that could be done and he listed the departments involved in that committee and what interests are protected.

MPT Drees said she was concerned that Council is losing input opportunities for residents. Concerned about it not going to Planning Board. These give residents opportunities. She finds that troubling. Mr. Hills said, going back to due process, there is due process for the residents and for the property owners, and for the applicants. In the quasi-judicial process, if it meets the ordinance it has to be approved. If it is denied, it is an easy appeal to the Courts. Staff is hired to review projects and make sure they meet the requirements and staff is held to the statutory requirements. We cannot vary from that. Recommendations outside of the statute, whether they come from residents or the Planning Board, are difficult because statutorily we cannot require them. And we are adding up to 6 months of review time when very little can change in the quasi-judicial process. Council discussed the confusion of the residents and the Planning Board on the rules for quasi-

judicial hearings and the processes other municipalities are using. They discussed how the process has improved since Council moved the public hearing earlier in the process, allowing developers to react to public input and suggestions from the Council. They discussed drafting the UDO to make it clear that there was an appeal process for denials, and keeping Council informed at quarterly meetings and Friday briefings. They talked about exploring the pros and cons of using the Board of Adjustment for quasi-judicial proceedings.

Randy Harrington, Town Manager, said he has a lot of confidence in the recommendation and the team and the reviews. In those DRC meetings we make sure the right UDO components are being applied, and he tries to apply the things the Mayor and Council have indicated are important to these projects. He said he feels the process is appropriate, and has rigor to it.

Council discussed being purposeful in rezonings and the qualifications of staff to make these decisions, and that if the UDO is solid, this approach would give good results.

Consensus was to direct staff to move forward with these changes.

4. Legal/Clerk Quarterly Updates

a. Town Clerk

Linda McKinney, Town Clerk, said she had three topics to discuss: Historic Markers, Public Record Requests, and the Cemetery. She said that the next marker to be erected would be for the Railroad and would be erected in August as part of the 150th anniversary celebration. No applications were received for this fiscal year. There was one inquiry, but it did not lead to an application.

Ms. McKinney said that public records requests have increased exponentially. Prior to 2025 we received under 300 per year. In 2025 that increased 68% to 422. In 2026 we had 337 in the first 5 months, a 190% increase over 2025. This is an average of 67 legitimate requests per month. In addition we have seen an increase in botnet requests, particularly one that has been identified as coming from the Netherlands, posing as a media outlet, and blanketing NC clerks, including us, with 6 – 8 large data requests per day. These can require time too, as we have to verify that they are not human. Ms. McKinney said she explored with the IT department using AI to assist, but there would not be a time savings because each request would require a distinct query and then human double-checking to be sure of accuracy. In the current adversarial environment, we do not want to give anyone a reason not to trust us.

MPT Drees asked if this increase was throughout the County. Ms. McKinney said the increase is statewide. Council member Foster asked if we could track whether increased public engagement from Council and staff resulted in a decrease of public record requests. Council member Hewetson said if there is ever a benefit to Council reaching out to a requestor. Ms. McKinney said we always reach out if there is a chance to ask the requestor to narrow their request in order to get them what they actually want. There was discussion about utilizing software and whether or not it would save staff time, and that the implementation of it would take more staff time than responding to the requests does. There was discussion about the municipalities who use software to assist in the process are the larger municipalities, like Raleigh, and that they have dedicated staff members who manage their requests.

Ms. McKinney said her final topic was the lifespan of the cemetery. Over the last five years the average has been 36 plots sold per year. With current availability, that is about an 8 ½ year supply. This will be complicated by the fact that most sales include a mix of immediate need and preneed, wishing to have contiguous plots for family members. As the number of available plots decreases, there will inevitably be “orphaned” plots that are harder to sell. Sales are slightly less than half to residents, with slightly more than half to non-residents.

Ms. McKinney said that there are several options for the future of the cemetery, with a range of costs and lead time required. The easiest and cheapest is to maintain the status quo, selling the

remaining plots and then transitioning into maintenance mode, burying people in plots that are owned, and basically getting out of the cemetery business. Another option is grading the “Rose” section at the bottom of the cemetery which could add up to 5 years to the life of the cemetery. Or, given society’s move toward more cremations, we could install a columbarium either in the Rose section or on the western edge on the outside of the drive. Either of these options would require getting quotes to know how much it would cost and how many years it would add to the life of the cemetery. The final option would be to find land for a second cemetery, which would require significant time and money. She asked Council to think about the options and she would bring this back to them at the retreat. Council requested quotes for grading and for adding a columbarium.

7. Fall/Early Winter Potential Council Workshop Topic Planning

Randy Harrington, Town Manager, said he is trying to look ahead to plan workshops for the Council several months at a time. It works best if we have three topics and keep it to two hours. From the list he provided Council, there are more topics that there is time for. He outlined the six possible topics for September and said he would be seeking feedback in order to narrow this down and give them an opportunity to narrow these down.

Council member Larson said she would like to shift the non-profit funding review to a time when it has more time, so it could be shifted off the September workshop. Revisiting the naming policy is something she said she would like added to an agenda. Mr. Harrington said he may need to inquire on whether the big topic areas, housing, transportation bond, 8 MGD wastewater, need to have meetings outside of the regular schedule, perhaps a couple of hours in the afternoon, to make sure those get the attention they need and don’t shortchange the workshop. Council member Hewetson suggested the transportation bond projects discussion would be a good one to do that way.

5. Other business

Council member Larson said she didn’t know we were in the cemetery business. Council member Deshazor reminded people of the Juneteenth celebration this weekend at Womble. He thanked staff for bringing back Affordable Housing.

MPT Drees said that she thinks the panhandling ordinance could do with a re-examination. She asked if Council was interested in having the attorney look in to revising that. Consensus was yes.

Council member Foster asked if in a Friday briefing we could tie the community engagement and Public Record Request and emails we get to ways that we could help improve the trust in government.

Mayor Kondratick said there is a proposed rule from NCDEQ for monitoring 1-4 Dioxane. He asked Council to comment during the public comment period on the proposed rule, to submit a comment opposing the proposed rule. He believes it lacks in its approach in regulating it at the source, and it will require more from treatment plants. And our residents will be asked to bear more of the health risks and the costs. He believes it needs to be regulated at the source. Mr. Harrington asked Rachel Ingham, Deputy Director of Utilities and Infrastructure for Water Resources, to speak to this. Ms. Ingham said a brief summary of the rule is you’re going to monitor, you’re going to identify your sources, and you’re going to continue to monitor. It applies to treatment facilities that run pretreatment programs. It asks for consistent state-wide monitoring, to provide more data for future regulatory decisions and better identification of sources. If you get a detectable reading, then it is required to produce a plan to reduce the chemical. It does not set a numeric effluent limit, prohibit the discharge, or create a state-wide standard. Shifting this to wastewater rather than drinking water helps us identify the sources. Holly Springs already does this monitoring. But if there is no limit in the amount that can be released, it is up to drinking water sources to reduce it.

Mayor Kondratick asked if the rule requiring industrial users to create a plan requires them to implement the plan, and in a timely way. John Schifano, Town Attorney, said it does. There are a couple of possible holes in the proposed rule. You have to set your baseline. A lot of environmental regulation is, "if you can reduce it, you must reduce it." This rule says, "keep it at the status quo." It is up to the director to inform you if you need a mitigation plan, so that is a one problem. It doesn't require you to use all best efforts to eliminate 1-4 Dioxane.

Jay Osborne, Assistant Town Attorney, said it is an interesting rule because there is no quality standard. It has you sample, set a base line, and not go over that line. There can be a plan, and the director can oversee that plan but not sure if it is within the permitting. Not sure any of that gets to your concern, but seems that is how it is structured. There is no state standard and no federal standard. Mr. Schifano said it is not a perfect rule, but it is a lot better than what we have now. Council member Hewetson asked why gather this information without setting a standard. Ms. Ingham said setting a standard is a long process and the EPA and others are going through the process in order to set a standard. Mr. Osborne said it is not unusual for the concern to come before the regulation. Council member Hewetson asked if this process looks similar to the way PFAS was done. Mr. Osborne said, in his opinion, yes. Whether it will follow the same track, he doesn't know. Ms. Ingham said PFAS is more widespread, and 1-4 Dioxane is easier to track the sources. But 1-4 Dioxane is harder to remove than PFAS, so it is better to find it at the source. Mr. Osborne said there is a lawsuit on the legal authority to do this which is working its way through the Courts, coming out of the Piedmont. Council member Foster asked if there was anything we could do to prevent this coming at the source. Mr. Schifano said we do that now, and we enforce our part in our area. He said his fear is, if we oppose this rule, we will be back where we are with no rule. He said until the EPA comes up with a standard, this is what we have. It is not perfect, but it is the best we have. Mr. Osborne said you can comment that you like the idea of the rule, but would like the following amendments. You don't just have to oppose it. MPT Drees said she likes the idea of that. Ms. Ingham said Holly Springs is part of the North Carolina Pre-treatment Consortium which made comments very similar to that – we like the rule but would like these amendments. She said the Town could make a similar comment. Council agreed with that idea.

Mayor Kondratick said he would like to add two forms to the website, if Council agrees. A standard meeting request form to allow residents to request a meeting with any one of us and provide information about the preferred timing and subject of the meeting, and the second for event requests asking any of us to attend an event. Council discussed whether this would be an improvement over using their publicly available emails, how to set expectations for the public on their availability, and how the forms would work. Council said that if the Mayor would find it helpful they had no objection to him using one.

Mr. Harrington asked for clarification as he was hearing mixed opinions. Council continued discussion about pros and cons. Consensus was to focus on the Mayor.

b. Town Attorney John Schifano, Town Attorney, said he needed to go into closed session to do his update.

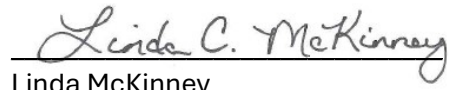
5. Closed Session: Council entered into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with the Town Attorney on possible litigation with Fred Smith Company and NCDOT, with a motion by MPT Drees, a second by Council member Hewetson, and a unanimous vote.

Motion to leave closed session was made by Council member Deshazor with a second by Council member Hewetson and a unanimous vote.

6. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Council member Deshazor seconded by Council member Hewetson and passed with a unanimous vote. The June 9, 2026 workshop meeting of the Holly Springs Town Council was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted on Tuesday, July 21, 2026.


Linda McKinney
Town Clerk