

Town of Chapel Hill Neighborhood Conservation District Process

On October 8, 2007, the Chapel Hill Town Council adopted the following process for initiating the Neighborhood Conservation District process:

Phase One: Petition for Neighborhood Conservation District Public Information Meeting

Phase One of the Neighborhood Conservation District process must be initiated by either a Town Council action or a neighborhood petition to request a Public Information Meeting. The petition will be evaluated by the Planning Board. The Board will hear from citizens, and designate an initial notification boundary for the Neighborhood Conservation District Public Information Meeting.

The purpose of Phase One is to provide information to the entire neighborhood included in the petition notification area about what a Neighborhood Conservation District is, how many existing Neighborhood Conservation Districts there are and what they consist of, what a Neighborhood Conservation District can and cannot accomplish, and an explanation of the process that creates a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zoning District. The purpose of separating this phase from the formal process phase is to provide information about Neighborhood Conservation Districts before the formal process is initiated. The steps in Phase One are:

Step 1: Submission of a Neighborhood Conservation District Phase One petition form requesting a Public Information Meeting. You may contact the Chapel Hill Planning Department for a copy of this official form. Phase One can be initiated by Town Council action or a petition with the signatures of 51% of land or property owners.

Step 2: A valid Neighborhood Conservation District Phase One petition will be presented to the Planning Board. A petition will be considered valid if 51% of the land or property owners sign the form. The Planning Board will set the initial notification boundary and schedule a Public Information Meeting. The Planning Board will also have the opportunity to identify any issues that they would like the neighborhood or the staff to address.

Step 3: Staff will send a mailing to the notification area designated by the Planning Board and to households within 500 feet of the proposed boundary. The mailing will include:

- Notification of the Public Information Meeting;
- General information and history of Neighborhood Conservation Districts;
- A summary of existing Neighborhood Conservation Districts; and
- An explanation of the Neighborhood Conservation District process.

Step 4: The format of the Public Information Meeting will be approved by the Planning Board. The meeting will be facilitated by Town staff.

Phase Two: Petition to Begin the Neighborhood Conservation District Feasibility Review Process

Phase Two of the Neighborhood Conservation District process must be initiated by either a Town Council action or a neighborhood petition requesting to proceed with the formal process of becoming a Neighborhood Conservation District.

The purpose of Phase Two is to engage residents, the Planning Board and the Town Council in the process of creating a Neighborhood Conservation District and to clarify the neighborhood boundary, the decision making structure, and the community goals for the Neighborhood Conservation District from the beginning of the process. The steps of Phase Two are:

Step 1: Submission of the Neighborhood Conservation District Phase Two – Feasibility Review petition form to request a Neighborhood Conservation District designation. Please contact the Chapel Hill Planning Department for a copy of this form. The petition for Phase Two requires Council action or the signatures of 51% of land or property owners.

Step 2: Upon receiving a valid Neighborhood Conservation District Phase Two petition, the Town will schedule a Neighborhood Conservation District Feasibility Review by the Planning Board.

- The Town will send a postcard notification to residents to inform them of the date of the Feasibility Review.
- The Planning Board will hear from residents and review the petition.
- The Planning Board will make a recommendation to the Council with regard to the community goals, urgency, the decision making structure, and initial boundary of the proposed Neighborhood Conservation District.

Step 3: Following the Feasibility Review, the Town Council will consider the petition, the Planning Board recommendation, and hear from residents. If approved, the Town Council will also specify the community goals, level of urgency, and the initial boundary.

- The Town Council will decide whether to use a plenary or committee structure for the process. If a committee structure is chosen, the Town Council will instruct the Town staff to initiate the application process and set a Council Meeting date to nominate and appoint the members.
- The Town Council will decide whether to use Town staff or a consultant to facilitate the Neighborhood Conservation District process.

Step 4: If the Town Council accepts a petition to create a Neighborhood Conservation District, the Town will send a mailing to everyone in the proposed boundary and within 500 feet of the proposed boundary that will include:

- The Town Council's stated community goals, level of urgency and the initial proposed boundary;
- A document explaining land use dimensions and planning terminology; and
- Website information.

Step 5: If the Town Council decides to use a Town-wide committee structure for proceeding with the Neighborhood Conservation District process, the mailing will include a committee application form.

- The Town Clerk will advertise the committee and send an email notification to the mailing lists for the residents who participated in a prior Neighborhood Conservation District process.
- The recommended committee size will be 10% of households in the neighborhood or twenty people, whatever is less.
- It is preferable that the committee include some non-residents of the neighborhood, not to exceed one third of the total membership.

<p>If you have any questions, please contact the Chapel Hill Planning Department at (919) 968.2728. Information about Neighborhood Conservation Districts can be found on the Town's website (http://www.townofchapelhill.org/index.asp?NID=144)</p>
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