Chatham County
Advisory Committee Policy

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Section 1: Purpose and Overview

A. Purpose

The Chatham County Advisory Committee Policy establishes a consistent framework for the formation, operation, and oversight of Board of Commissioners' established advisory committees. It defines the structure for committee appointments, membership terms, responsibilities, and reporting requirements to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective community engagement. By formalizing these guidelines, the policy supports advisory committees in providing informed recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on matters affecting the County.

B. Scope

This policy applies to the following advisory committees formally established by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners. More information on each committee can be found in Attachment A of this policy:

- Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC)
- Climate Change Advisory Committee
- Environmental Review Advisory Committee (ERAC)
- Library Advisory Committee
- Recreation Advisory Committee
- Transportation Advisory Committee

C. Definitions

1. **Advisory Committee** – A group appointed by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners to provide recommendations on specific policy areas, programs, or community needs. Advisory committees do not have legislative or regulatory authority but serve in an advisory capacity.
2. **Agenda** – A written outline of the items to be discussed, presented, or acted upon during a meeting of an advisory committee.
3. **Board of Commissioners (BOC)** – The elected governing body of Chatham County responsible for establishing policies, appointing advisory committee members, and overseeing committee activities.
4. **Committee Member** – An individual appointed by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners to serve on an advisory committee, to provide input on matters within the committee's purview.
5. **Committee Chair** – A member of an advisory committee elected or appointed to lead meetings, set agendas, and ensure the committee operates efficiently.
6. **Committee Vice Chair** – A member of an advisory committee elected or appointed to assist the chair and assume leadership responsibilities in the chair's absence.
7. **Designated Seats** – Seats on Advisory Committees that are designated for Commissioner recommendations or other specific appointments as outlined in each committee's charge (See Attachment A).
8. **Staff Lead** – A designated staff member who supports an advisory committee by providing guidance, administration, and ensuring alignment with Board of Commissioners directives while taking direction from their department leadership.
9. **Quorum** – The minimum number of members required to be present for an advisory committee to conduct official business, as defined by this Advisory Committee Policy in Section 5.C.1.i.
10. **Meeting Minutes** – Full and accurate official written record of discussions, decisions, and actions taken during an advisory committee meeting. Minutes must be maintained as part of the public record according to North Carolina General Statute § 143-318.10.
11. **Public Record** – Records in any form, including meeting minutes, reports, emails, text message, that are received or created while conducting business according to Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes and the Chatham County Records Retention Schedule.
12. **Statutory Requirement** – A legal obligation imposed by federal, state, or local law that takes precedence over provisions in this policy when applicable.
13. **Meeting Notice** - Official Notice of any Advisory Committee meeting.
14. **Immediate Family Member** - A person's parent, sibling, spouse, child, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, or step derivatives thereof.

Section 2: Establishment of Advisory Committees

A. Advisory Committee Authority

1. Under the authority granted by North Carolina General Statute § 153A-76, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners may establish advisory committees and adopt rules and regulations for managing the interests and business of the County. The Chatham County Board of Commissioners is responsible for appointing residents to serve as members of these advisory committees, while Chatham County department heads and Staff Leads provide necessary support. Advisory committees serve in a consultative capacity, offering recommendations, research, analysis, and community feedback to inform county policies and decisions. Their role is strictly advisory.

B. Establishment of New Advisory Committees

1. Criteria for Advisory Committee Creation

   The Chatham County Board of Commissioners may establish a new advisory committee when it determines that a standing body is needed to provide focused input, community engagement, and policy recommendations on a specific issue, program area, or public interest concern. The Board of Commissioners may create new advisory committees, including but not limited to those formed in response to:

   i. Emerging or ongoing County priorities;
   ii. Statutory or regulatory requirements;
   iii. Requests from County departments, community groups, or other stakeholders;
   iv. Strategic goals adopted by the Board of Commissioners.

2. Authorization Process

   The establishment of a new advisory committee shall require formal action by the Board of Commissioners through adoption of a resolution. The authorization should include, at a minimum:

   i. The name of the committee;
   ii. Its purpose and charge;
   iii. The number of members and any required representation (e.g., geographic, stakeholder-specific);
   iv. Reporting expectations and assigned staff support;
   v. Any specific qualifications or statutory requirements applicable to committee membership.

3. Initial Member Appointments

   i. Upon approval of a new committee, the Board of Commissioners shall direct staff to advertise for applications and initiate the appointment process as

outlined in Section 3.D.2. Staggered terms will be established to balance rotation of membership as outlined in Section 3.C.2.

4. Sunset Clause
    i. The Board of Commissioners may choose to establish a committee on a temporary or time-limited basis. If so, the resolution to create the committee shall include a sunset date or a review provision. Upon reaching the sunset date, the committee shall be dissolved unless renewed or extended by Board of Commissioner action.

C. Dissolution of Advisory Committees

1. The Chatham County Board of Commissioners retains the right to dissolve an advisory committee at its discretion. In the event of dissolution, all records, reports, and meeting minutes will be archived in accordance with Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes (Public Records Law) and Chatham County Records Retention Schedule. Dissolution may occur under any of the following conditions, including but not limited to:
    i. The committee has fulfilled its intended purpose and is no longer needed.
    ii. The committee has been inactive for a specified period as determined by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners.
    iii. The committee is deemed redundant due to changes in county priorities, policies, or governance structures.
    iv. The committee fails to meet compliance requirements, such as maintaining a quorum or fulfilling reporting obligations.

Section 3: Membership

A. Composition

1. Number of Members
   Each Chatham County advisory committee shall have no fewer than five (5) and no more than eleven (11) voting members. All committees must have an odd number of voting members to support decision-making and reduce the possibility of tie votes. The exact number of members for each committee will be defined in its enabling resolution or guiding document and must comply with these requirements. The Board may authorize additional non-voting, ex officio members, including Staff Leads or representatives of partner entities, as necessary to support the committee's function.
2. Representation
   The Board of Commissioners endeavors to appoint members who reflect the geographic, demographic, and experiential diversity of Chatham County.

Appointments should, to the extent practicable, provide representation from multiple commissioner districts, ensure a balance of urban and rural voices, and include a variety of perspectives and lived experiences relevant to the committee's charge. While individual commissioners may nominate applicants from their own districts, district residency is not required for appointments.

B. Eligibility

1. Residency Requirements

   All members appointed to advisory committees shall be residents of Chatham County at the time of appointment and throughout the duration of their service. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners for individuals who own property or operate a business in Chatham County and whose expertise is deemed by the Board of Commissioners beneficial to the committee's purpose. Members who cease to meet the residency requirement during their term shall notify their Staff Lead and may be subject to removal by the Board of Commissioners.

2. Qualification Criteria

   To be considered for appointment to an advisory committee, an applicant must meet the following minimum qualifications:

   i. Be at least eighteen (18) years of age at the time of appointment.
   ii. Submit a completed application through the process established by this Advisory Committee Policy and the County Manager's Office;
   iii. Demonstrated interest, experience, or expertise relevant to the subject matter of the committee;
   iv. Not be a party to any active litigation against Chatham County or otherwise engaged in legal action that may present a conflict of interest;
   v. Not serve concurrently in an elected public office unless service on the committee is explicitly required or authorized by law or intergovernmental agreement;
   vi. Not have an immediate family member serving concurrently on the same advisory committee;
   vii. Be willing and able to regularly attend scheduled meetings, participate in committee activities, and comply with all applicable laws, policies, and codes of conduct governing advisory committee service.
   viii. Not be employed by Chatham County at the time of appointment or during the term of service.

C. Terms

1. Lengths of Terms

Unless otherwise specified by the Board of Commissioners or required by statute, all appointments to advisory committees shall be for a term of three (3) years. Terms shall begin on March 1 and end on February 28/29 of the third calendar year following the beginning of the term.

2. Staggered Terms
   Terms of committee members shall be staggered such that approximately one-third of the membership's terms expire each year. For newly established committees or major restructurings, initial appointments may include 1-, 2-, and 3-year terms to establish the rotation.
3. Appointment Timing
   Regular appointments will occur prior to March 1, with terms commencing on March 1 to align with the annual appointment cycle.
4. Reappointment and Term Limits
   Members may be reappointed to consecutive terms. There are no formal term limits; individuals may continue serving if they are reappointed by the Board of Commissioners. All members seeking reappointment are required to complete an application as established by this policy and the County Manager's Office before reappointment consideration.

D. Appointment

1. Eligibility for Appointment
   Only individuals who meet the qualification criteria outlined in this policy shall be considered for appointments to an advisory committee. The County Manager's Office shall review all applications to verify eligibility prior to consideration by the Board of Commissioners. Meeting minimum qualifications does not guarantee appointment.
2. Application Process
   The County shall maintain a transparent and inclusive process for identifying and nominating individuals for appointments to advisory committees. The nomination process shall include the following components:
   i. **Public Notice for Vacancies:** Vacancies shall be publicly advertised through the County website and other appropriate media platforms to ensure broad community awareness and to encourage participation from diverse applicants. Notices shall specify the committee's name, number of vacancies, and any required qualifications or residency conditions.
   ii. **Application Requirements:** All interested individuals must submit a completed application using the official form provided by the County Manager's Office. The application shall collect relevant eligibility and qualification criteria information as indicated in this policy.

iii. **Review of Applications:** Applications shall be reviewed by the Board of Commissioners. Advisory recommendations regarding appointments may be solicited but are not binding. Final appointment authority rests solely with the Board of Commissioners.

iv. **Rolling Applications:** Applications are accepted throughout the year and may be retained on file for future consideration, generally for a period of up to one (1) year. Previously submitted applications may be reviewed when a vacancy occurs, even if the original filing date has passed.

3. Appointment Procedures

i. **Board Consideration:** The County Manager's Office shall present all qualified applicants for each committee vacancy to the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners may consider the applicant's experience, diversity of representation, prior service, and overall needs of the committee.

ii. **Commissioner-Designated Recommendations:**

1. Some advisory committee seats are specifically designated for commissioner recommendations, as outlined in each board or committee's membership structure in Attachment A. For these seats, the assigned commissioner may recommend an applicant from the submitted applications. All recommendations must be approved by formal action by the full Board of Commissioners.
2. Recommendation process for designated seats:
    a. For a vacancy a commissioners shall submit their recommendation within five months of the vacancy occurrence.
    b. For an expiring term a commissioners shall submit their recommendation within three months from the end of a term.
    c. If the seat remains vacant following the period provided for in Section a. and subsection b. of this section, then the vacancy shall be brought before the Board of Commissioners for consideration.

iii. **Nominations from Designated Organizations:** Where committee seats are designated for representatives of municipalities, agencies, or other stakeholder groups, the Board of Commissioners may solicit nominations directly from those entities. All such nominees shall be subject to the qualification and eligibility requirements of this policy and are not guaranteed appointment. All representatives must submit an appointment application.

iv. **Official Appointment:** Appointments shall be made by formal action of the Board of Commissioners and recorded in the meeting minutes. Terms shall begin on March 1 following appointment unless filling an unexpired term mid-year.

v. **Notification and Orientation:** Upon appointment, the Staff Lead shall notify each appointee in writing, including details of the term length, expectations, and any required onboarding. New members shall be provided with committee materials, meeting schedules, and contact information for the Staff Lead and committee chair. Orientation sessions may be offered by County staff to support onboarding.

vi. **Oath of Office (if applicable):** Where required by law or by the nature of the committee, appointees shall take an oath of office prior to participating in committee activities. The Staff Lead shall coordinate the administration of such oaths as needed which shall be filed in the Clerk to the Board of Commissioner's Office.

4. <u>End of Service</u>

i. **Resignation:** A member of an advisory committee may resign at any time by providing written notice to the committee chair and the assigned County Staff Lead. The Staff Lead shall promptly forward the resignation notice to the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners. The resignation shall be effective as of the date specified in the notice, or immediately if no date is provided. Once a resignation becomes effective, the member shall no longer participate in committee meetings or activities in any official capacity.

ii. **Removal:** Advisory committee members serve at the pleasure of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners and may be removed at any time by majority vote of the Board, with or without cause. Grounds for removal include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. <u>Failure to Attend Meetings:</u> Repeated absences from scheduled committee meetings without prior notice or valid cause. As a general guideline, a member who misses three (3) consecutive regular meetings or more than 25% of scheduled meetings in a 12-month period may be considered for removal due to non-participation.
2. <u>Neglect of Duties:</u> Failure to actively engage in committee business, including review of materials, participation in discussions, or completion of assigned tasks as determined by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners.

3. Violation of Policies or Conduct Expectations: Conduct inconsistent with County policies, including but not limited to this policy, ethics standards, or conflict of interest provisions.
4. Loss of Eligibility: A change in status that renders the member ineligible under Section 3.B.2, such as relocation outside of Chatham County, assumption of an incompatible public office, or involvement in active litigation against the County. Prior to removal, the committee chair or Staff Lead may provide notice to the member regarding the concern, though formal notice is not required. The Board of Commissioners reserves sole authority to determine whether removal is warranted.

iii. **End of Term:** A member's term shall conclude on the official expiration date as established at the time of appointment, typically February 28/29 of the applicable year. Members may continue to serve beyond their term expiration until a successor is appointed, not to exceed one (1) additional year. At the end of a term, the following conditions apply:

1. Reappointment: Members who remain eligible under Section 3.B may request consideration for reappointment. Reappointment is not automatic and shall be determined by the Board of Commissioners based on the member's performance, attendance, participation, and the needs of the committee. A member seeking reappointment must submit a completed application using the official form provided by the County Manager's Office.
2. Conclusion of Service: If a member does not seek reappointment or is not reappointed, their service shall conclude on the expiration date of their term or upon appointment of a successor, whichever occurs later.
3. Acknowledgment of Service: The County may formally acknowledge and thank members for their service upon the conclusion of their term, particularly for members completing full terms or rotating off after extended service.
4. Vacancy and Transition: The committee chair and Staff Lead shall notify the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners of any expiring terms and whether members wish to be considered for reappointment. The County Manager's Office shall coordinate the application and appointment process to avoid disruption to committee operations and to maintain quorum.

E. Vacancies

1. Occurrence of Vacancies: A vacancy on an advisory committee shall occur upon the expiration of a member's term without reappointment, or due to resignation, removal, relocation, incapacity, death, or any other reason that renders a member unable or ineligible to serve. A vacancy is considered effective as of the date specified in the written resignation, Board of Commissioner removal, a disqualifying event, or End of Term.
2. Filling Vacancies: It is the responsibility of the Board of Commissioners to fill advisory committee vacancies in a timely manner to ensure committees remain functional and representative. The County Manager's Office shall initiate the vacancy filling process upon notification of a vacancy. Appointments to fill a vacancy shall follow the procedures outlined in Section 3.D.2 of this policy.
3. Term of Appointment to Fill Vacancy: An individual appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. At the conclusion of that term, the individual may be considered for reappointment to a full term in accordance with Section 3.C.4.
4. Committee Operation During Vacancies: A committee may continue to meet and conduct business if it maintains a quorum, as defined in Section 5.C.1 of this policy. Vacant seats shall not be counted toward quorum requirements. Committee chairs and Staff Leads are responsible for notifying the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners when a vacancy occurs to avoid extended disruption to committee function.

F. Compensation and Reimbursement

1. Volunteer Service: All advisory committee members shall serve in a voluntary capacity. No member shall receive compensation, stipend, salary, or reimbursement for participation in advisory committee meetings, activities, or related service. Appointment to an advisory committee is considered a form of civic engagement and public service.

Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities

A. Role of Advisory Committees

1. Advisory Capacity: Advisory committees serve in a consultative role and are charged with providing non-binding recommendations, analysis, and community input to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners on specific policy areas or initiatives. Committees do not possess regulatory, legislative, or enforcement authority and shall not take independent action on behalf of the County unless explicitly authorized by the Board of Commissioners.

2. Scope of Responsibilities: Each advisory committee shall fulfill its responsibilities as outlined in its enabling resolution or guiding document from the Board of Commissioners. Responsibilities may include but are not limited to:
    i. Reviewing and assessing policies, programs, or operations within the committee's subject matter area;
    ii. Engaging with community members and stakeholders to gather feedback and identify needs;
    iii. Preparing written recommendations, reports, or policy options for Board consideration;
    iv. Assisting County staff in planning, program evaluation, or public engagement efforts as requested.

B. Responsibilities of Advisory Committee Members

1. Individual Member Duties: Members of advisory committees are expected to:
    i. Attend and actively participate in all scheduled meetings;
    ii. Prepare in advance by reviewing agendas, minutes, and background materials;
    iii. Contribute constructively to discussions and decision-making processes;
    iv. Represent the interests of the Committee rather than any individual or organizational affiliation;
    v. Adhere to County policies, including conflict of interest provisions, code of conduct, and meeting procedures.

C. Role of Board of Commissioners

1. Oversight and Support: The Chatham County Board of Commissioners is responsible for:
    i. Establishing advisory committees and defining their purpose, structure, and authority;
    ii. Appointing committee members in accordance with this policy;
    iii. Receiving and reviewing committee recommendations;
    iv. Providing policy direction and expectations to ensure committees remain aligned with County goals and priorities.

D. Committee Leadership and Responsibilities

1. Chair Responsibilities: Each advisory committee shall elect a chair from among its voting members on an annual basis, unless otherwise specified. The chair shall:
    i. Preside over all meetings of the committee;
    ii. Serve as the primary point of contact with the committee Staff Lead and the Board of Commissioners when needed;

iii. Coordinate the preparation and presentation of committee recommendations and reports.

2. Vice-Chair Responsibilities: Committees may elect annually a vice-chair to support the chair and assume leadership responsibilities in the chair's absence. The vice-chair shall perform all duties delegated by the chair and assist in facilitating committee operations.
3. Secretary Responsibilities: Each advisory committee may designate annually a Secretary from among its voting members, or may rely on the assigned County Staff Lead to fulfill secretarial duties if no member is designated. The role of the Secretary is to support meeting documentation and communication functions to ensure the committee's records are accurate and complete. The Secretary's responsibilities may include:
    i. Assisting with the preparation or review of meeting agendas and minutes, in coordination with the committee chair and Staff Lead.
    ii. Recording motions and votes during meetings when a staff member is not present to do so.
    iii. Maintaining a record of attendance and quorum for the committee.
    iv. Ensuring that meeting minutes are reviewed and approved at subsequent meetings.
    v. Notifying the Chair or Staff Lead of any corrections needed in the record.
    vi. Helping track follow-up actions or assignments from meetings.

E. County Staff Lead and Responsibilities

1. Staff Lead Responsibilities: Each advisory committee shall be assigned a County Staff Lead who is responsible for:
    i. Coordinating meeting logistics, agenda development, public notice, and minute-taking;
    ii. Providing technical assistance, subject matter expertise, and administrative support;
    iii. Ensuring compliance with County policies, public records law, and open meetings law;
    iv. Serving as a communication link between the committee and County departments or leadership.

F. Subcommittees

1. Formation of Subcommittees: Advisory committees may establish subcommittees or working groups to address specific issues or projects, provided the full committee, with a quorum present, authorizes such groups by majority vote. These

subcommittees must comply with Open Meeting Law requirements if a quorum of the committee is present.

2. Role of Subcommittees: Subcommittees serve as extensions of the advisory committee and are established to examine specific issues, conduct research, or develop recommendations on focused topics. They operate under the direction of the full committee and shall report their findings for discussion and approval before any action or recommendation is advanced to the Board of Commissioners.

Section 5: Meeting Requirements

A. Frequency and Scheduling

1. Regular Meetings: Each Advisory Committee shall adopt a regular meeting schedule annually, which shall be published on the county website.
2. Meeting Schedule and Notice: Meeting dates, times, and locations shall be established in advance and published in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 143, Article 33C (Open Meetings Law). Any changes to the regular meeting schedule must be communicated to committee members and the public at least seven calendar days before the day of the first meeting held pursuant to the revised schedule.

B. Public Access and Compliance

1. Open Meetings: All meetings of advisory committees and their subcommittees shall be conducted in compliance with North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 143, Article 33C (Open Meetings Law). Meetings shall be open to the public and properly noticed, with accommodation provided for public attendance and participation when applicable.
2. Remote Participation: An Advisory Committee may establish rules for virtual or hybrid meetings so long as they comply with the North Carolina Open Meetings Law and provide appropriate and accessible public access.
3. Public Comment Guidelines: Advisory committees may allow public comment during meetings but are not required to do so. If public comment is permitted, the opportunity, process, and any time limits shall be communicated in advance and conducted in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 143, Article 33C (Open Meetings Law).
4. Accessibility: Advisory committees shall make every effort to ensure meetings are inclusive and accessible to all members of the public. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. Individuals requiring auxiliary aids, interpretation, or other accommodation should contact the committee's Staff Lead or County Manager's

Office in advance of the meeting. Remote formats may also be used to support accessibility, where feasible and legally permissible.

C. Quorum and Voting

1. Quorum:
    i. For Chatham County advisory committees, a quorum is defined as a simple majority (more than half) of the currently appointed voting members.
        a. Vacant seats do not count toward the total when calculating the majority.
        b. Example: If a committee has 9 appointed members, at least 5 must be present to have a quorum. If only 7 seats are currently filled, a quorum would be 4.
    ii. If a quorum is not present, the committee may not take official action but may hold informal discussion. The lack of quorum should be noted in the meeting minutes.
2. Voting Procedures: Decisions shall be made by a majority vote of the members present, provided a quorum is established. Proxy voting is not permitted. In the event of a tie vote, the motion shall fail. Voting by email or other asynchronous method is prohibited.
3. Abstentions and Excusals: In situations involving a potential or actual conflict of interest, the following procedure shall apply:
    i. **Disclosure of Conflict:** A member shall disclose the nature of the conflict of interest to the committee prior to discussion of the agenda item. The disclosure must be verbal during the meeting and must occur before any deliberation or vote on the item.
    ii. **Request to be Excused:** After disclosure, the member may formally request to be excused from participating in the discussion and vote on the matter.
    iii. **Committee Vote on Excusal:** The committee shall vote to approve or deny the request to be excused. Approval requires a majority vote of the members present, excluding the excused member.
    iv. **Effect of Approved Excusal:** If the request to be excused is approved by the committee:
        a. The member excused shall not participate in any discussion or vote related to the item.
        b. The following shall be recorded in the official meeting minutes:
            1. The nature of the disclosed conflict;
            2. The member's request for to be excused;
            3. The outcome of the committee's vote;
            4. Notation of the member's excusal from the vote.

D. Attendance Requirements

1. Expectations for Attendance: Members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings. Repeated absences may result in removal as outlined in Section 3.D.4.ii. Absences shall be communicated in advance to the chair and Staff Lead whenever possible. Attendance will be recorded in the official minutes and monitored.

E. Training and Orientation

1. Member Orientation: New members shall receive orientation materials and guidance from County staff upon appointment. Orientation may include information on the committee's purposes, meeting procedures, County policies, and applicable state laws.
2. Ongoing Training: The County may offer or require periodic training for advisory committee members on relevant topics such as open meetings law, public records requirements, ethics, effective public engagement, or subject matter specific to the committee's charge.
3. Ethics Training: Members may be required to complete ethics training. This training is intended to reinforce the standards of conduct expected of advisory committee members. For a full overview of ethical expectations, required conduct, and related procedures, refer to Section 7 of this policy.

F. Minutes and Recordkeeping

1. Meeting Minutes: Full and accurate minutes must be kept of all meetings of public bodies and shall include the date, time, location, attendance, motions, votes, and summaries of discussions.
2. Public Records Compliance: All records in any form that are received or created while conducting business, shall be maintained in accordance with public records laws and County retention policies. Records shall be made available to the public upon request, unless exempted by law. Public Records includes meeting minutes, reports, emails, text message, etc. according to Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes (Public Records Law) and the Chatham County Records Retention Schedule.
3. Posting of Minutes: Approved minutes shall be made publicly available via the County website or upon request, in compliance with Public Records requirements.

Section 6: Reporting and Accountability

A. Communication with the Board of Commissioners

1. Formal Reporting Relationship: Advisory committees operate under the authority of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners and shall maintain a clear and consistent reporting relationship with the Board of Commissioners. Committees shall

direct all official recommendations, reports, and correspondence to the Board of Commissioners through the assigned Staff Lead.

2. Board Requests and Referrals: The Board of Commissioners may request that advisory committees review specific issues or provide input on policy matters. Committees are expected to prioritize and respond to such requests in a timely and organized manner. Committees may also propose items for Board consideration through formal written communication submitted by the chair, with Staff Lead support as needed.

B. Annual Reports

1. Purpose and Content: Each advisory committee must prepare an annual report summarizing its activities, recommendations, and areas of focus for the past calendar year.
2. Submission and Presentation: Annual reports must be presented in person to the Board of Commissioners. Committees shall prepare a written handout, developed using a template provided by the County Manager's Office, and the Chair (or designee) will formally present the report at a scheduled Board of Commissioners meeting.

C. Review of Advisory Committee Effectiveness

1. Performance Review: The Board of Commissioners reserves the right to review the performance and continued relevance of any advisory committee. Committees may be evaluated based on criteria such as attendance, output, responsiveness to Board of Commissioners directives, public engagement, and alignment with County goals.
2. Committee Self-Evaluation: Advisory committees may be asked to conduct periodic self-assessments to reflect on their operations, identify areas for improvement, and ensure they are effectively fulfilling their charge. Staff Leads may assist with developing evaluation tools or templates.
3. Recommendations for Improvement or Dissolution: If an advisory committee is found to be inactive, duplicative, or no longer aligned with County priorities, the Board of Commissioners may act to restructure, suspend, or dissolve the committee in accordance with Section 2.C of this policy.

Section 7: Ethics and Conduct

A. General Expectations

1. Commitment to Ethical Service: Members of advisory committees are expected to uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct, integrity, and accountability in all matters related to their service. Advisory service is a public trust, and members shall

perform their duties in a manner that promotes public confidence in Chatham County government.

2. Respectful and Inclusive Environment: Advisory committee members shall treat fellow members, County staff, and members of the public with courtesy, professionalism, and respect at all times. Harassment, discrimination, or abusive behavior will not be tolerated. Chatham County is committed to maintaining an inclusive, equitable, and harassment-free environment in all public meetings and civic processes.
3. Use of Position for Public Good: Members shall not use their position for personal gain. No committee member shall use their role to secure special privileges, services, contracts, or benefits for themselves, their immediate family members, business associates, or affiliated organizations.
4. Representation of the Committee or County: Individual members may not represent the advisory committee or the County in any public forum, media engagement, or formal communication unless expressly authorized to do so by the Board of Commissioners. Members must clearly distinguish personal opinions from official positions of the committee.
5. Conflicts of Commitment: Members shall ensure that other personal, professional, or volunteer obligations do not interfere with their ability to effectively participate in committee activities. If a member's availability or capacity to serve meaningfully becomes compromised, they should notify the committee chair and Staff Lead to determine whether continued service is appropriate.

B. Conflict of Interest

1. Avoidance of Conflicts: Members shall avoid actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. A conflict arises when a member's personal or financial interests—or the interests of a close family member or business associate—could influence or appear to influence the member's judgment or actions in committee matters.
2. Disclosure and Recusal: If a member identifies a conflict of interest, they shall disclose it to the committee chair and Staff Lead as soon as possible. The member shall request to be excused from any discussion or vote on the matter in question. The excusal and the nature of the conflict shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.
3. Guidance on Conflict Determination: When a potential conflict is unclear, the member should consult with the Staff Lead and may request guidance from the County Manager's Office. Members are encouraged to err on the side of disclosure and recusal to maintain transparency and trust.

C. Compliance and Training

1. Mandatory Ethics Training: All advisory committee members shall complete any ethics or conduct training required by Chatham County within ninety (90) days of appointment. The County may also require periodic refresher training on topics such as open meetings law, public records, conflict of interest, and inclusive community engagement.
2. Policy Acknowledgment: Upon appointment, members shall be provided with a copy of this policy and any other applicable materials. Members shall sign an acknowledgment indicating that they have received, read, and agree to comply with the policy's provisions.

D. Enforcement

1. Standards Enforcement:
    i. Violations of this policy may result in removal from the advisory committee, pursuant to the provisions outlined in Section 3.D.4.ii.
    ii. The committee chair or Staff Lead shall document, and report concerns regarding ethics, conduct, or performance to the County Manager's Office.

Section 8: Administration and Policy Updates

A. Record Keeping

1. Official Records: Advisory committees shall maintain accurate and complete records of all meetings, including agendas, minutes, attendance, reports, recommendations, and other relevant documentation. The Staff Lead shall be responsible for ensuring that such records are prepared, retained, and submitted to the appropriate County departments in accordance with Chatham County's public records retention schedule.
2. Public Access: All records of advisory committee meetings and proceedings, unless legally exempt, shall be made available to the public upon request and posted on the County website. Minutes shall be approved by the committee and archived by the Staff Lead.
3. Roster Maintenance: The County Manager's Office shall maintain an up-to-date roster of each advisory committee, including member names, appointment dates, term expiration dates, geographic representation (if applicable), and contact information. Committee rosters shall be reviewed and updated at least annually and made available to the public via the County website or other media.

B. Oversight and Policy Management

1. Policy Oversight: The County Manager's Office shall be responsible for the administration and oversight of this Advisory Committee Policy. This includes

ensuring compliance with application process, training requirements, and recordkeeping practices across all advisory committees.

2. Staff Lead Coordination: County staff assigned as leads to advisory committees shall serve as the primary point of contact for policy questions and operational guidance. Leads are responsible for supporting compliance with open meetings and public records laws, coordinating onboarding and training, and assisting with the preparation of reports, agendas, and meeting logistics pursuant to Section 4.E.
3. Onboarding Materials: Newly appointed committee members shall receive an onboarding packet from the Staff Lead. This packet shall include a copy of this policy, the committee's charge, the current meeting schedule, a roster of members, relevant statutes or ordinances, and contact information for the chair and County staff support. Members are required to review these materials and sign an acknowledgment form confirming receipt and understanding as a condition of active service on the committee.

C. Policy Review and Updates

1. Review Cycle: This Advisory Committee Policy should be subject to a periodic review no less than once every four (4) years to ensure continued relevance, legal compliance, and alignment with County goals and public engagement practices.
2. Inactive Committee Review: The County Manager's Office shall monitor the activity of all advisory committees. Committees that have not convened a meeting for twelve (12) consecutive months or more may be referred to the Board of Commissioners for evaluation. The Board of Commissioners may determine whether such committees should be restructured, reactivated, merged, or dissolved in accordance with Section 2.C.
3. Amendments: The Chatham County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to amend this policy at any time. All amendments shall be adopted by majority vote of the Board of Commissioners during a public meeting and shall take effect upon approval unless otherwise specified.
4. Notification of Changes: In the event of a policy update or amendment, all advisory committee members and Staff Leads shall be notified in writing and provided with a revised version of this policy. Members may be asked to re-acknowledge receipt and understanding of the policy following significant changes.

Section 9: Applicability to Other Boards and Committees

A. Sections Applicable to Other Boards and Committees

1. The Board of Commissioners may determine that certain sections of this policy apply to other boards, commissions, or committees not formally established as advisory committees under this policy.
2. When designated, those boards or committees shall follow the applicable sections as outlined in this policy.

B. Applicable Sections

1. The following sections of this policy are designated as applicable to other boards and committees as determined by the Board of Commissioners:
    i. Section 3.D. – Appointment
    ii. Section 3.E. – Vacancies
    iii. Section 4.E. – County Staff Lead and Responsibilities
    iv. Section 4.F. – Subcommittees
    v. Section 5 – Meeting Requirements, with the exception of 5.B.2- Remote Meetings which are not allow except when under a North Carolina State of Emergency
    vi. Section 7 – Ethics and Conduct
    vii. Section 8 – Administration and Policy Updates

C. Committees Subject to These Requirements

1. The following boards and committees are subject to the applicable sections listed above, as designated by the Board of Commissioners:
    i. Agriculture Advisory Board (Chatham County Ordinance 8-19-2019)
    ii. Appearance Commission (except that NCGS 160D-109 shall govern conflicts of interest)
    iii. Board of Equalization and Review (NCGS 105-322)
    iv. Board of Health (NCGS 130A-39)
    v. Board of Social Services (NCGS 180A)
    vi. Central Pines Regional Council Adult Care and Nursing Home Committee (Community Advisory Committee) (NCGS 131D-31 and NCGS 131E-128)
    vii. Home and Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee (NCGS 143B-181.1(a)(11)
    viii. Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (NCGS 143B-846)
    ix. Planning Board (except that NCGS 160D-109 shall govern conflicts of interest)
    x. Watershed Review Board (Chatham County Ordinance 12-6-1993)
    xi. Zoning Board of Adjustments (except that NCGS 160D-109 shall govern conflicts of interest)

Policy Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Chatham County Advisory Committee Policy. I understand the expectations outlined in the policy and agree to abide by them during my service on the committee.

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ATTACHMENT A
Chatham County Advisory Committees

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Mission

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee evaluates affordable housing needs in Chatham County and provides recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on related policies and procedures. The Committee also administers and oversees the Housing Trust Fund and supports the implementation of the Chatham County Affordable Housing Strategy Toolbox.

Charge and Responsibilities

- Reviewing affordable housing policies and procedures and providing recommendations and comments to advise County leadership.
- Understanding the Chatham County Affordable Rental Housing Strategy Toolbox and helping to implement priorities.
- Providing feedback and assistance in developing additional strategies to support affordable homeownership opportunities and transitional housing in Chatham County.
- Helping to promote opportunities related to affordable housing like fair housing workshops, RFPs, and surveys.
- Submitting an "Advisory Committee Summary Annual Report" to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners.

Membership

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee consists of eleven (11) members with one member representing the Town of Pittsboro, one member representing the Town of Siler City, and one member representing the Town of Goldston.

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee members should have knowledge of:

- Real Estate & Development
- Social Services
- Public Health
- Transportation
- Finance
- Economic Development
- Design & Architecture
- Urban & Regional Planning
- Property Management
- Faith-Based Service Providers
-

Appointment

- Each member of the Board of Commissioners recommends one (1) member, subject to full Board approval.
- Six (6) members are selected and appointed by the full Board of Commissioners.
- One (1) member is appointed by the Town of Goldston Board of Commissioners.
- One (1) member is appointed by the Town of Pittsboro Board of Commissioners.
- One (1) member is appointed by the Town of Siler City Board of Commissioners.

ATTACHMENT A
Chatham County Advisory Committees

Climate Change Advisory Committee

Mission

The purpose of the Climate Change Advisory Committee will be to make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners and others regarding likely climate change impacts in Chatham County and ways to adapt to and mitigate these impacts, including: (a) reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (primarily CO2) with related improvements in air quality, (b) promoting the use of renewable energy, (c) promoting carbon neutral/green building standards for new and existing buildings both public and private and (d) encouraging resilient conservation–oriented land uses and both residential and commercial land development standards that foster climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Charge and Responsibilities

The Climate Change Advisory Committee advises the Board of Commissioners on the impacts of climate change in Chatham County and recommends strategies for both mitigation and adaptation. Key areas of focus include:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (primarily CO_2) and improving air quality
- Promoting the adoption of renewable energy sources
- Advancing carbon-neutral and green building standards for both new and existing public and private structures
- Encouraging resilient, conservation-based land uses and development practices that support long-term climate adaptation and mitigation

Membership

The Climate Change Advisory Committee consists of thirteen (13) members, with one member representing the Town of Pittsboro and one member resenting the Town of Siler City.

The Climate Change Advisory Committee members should have knowledge of:

- Renewable energy systems
- Building efficiency
- Green building standards
- Conservation standards applicable to residential and commercial settings
- Transportation efficiency and alternative fuels
- Forestry and agricultural practices
- Ecology and environmental science
- Climate change literature and science

Appointment

- Eleven (11) members are selected and appointed by the full Board of Commissioners.
- One (1) member is appointed by the Town of Pittsboro Board of Commissioners.
- One (1) member is appointed by the Town of Siler City Board of Commissioners.

ATTACHMENT A
Chatham County Advisory Committees

Environmental Review Advisory Committee

Mission

The Environmental Review Advisory Committee advises the Board of Commissioners on environmental policies and county ordinances, including the watershed ordinance. The Committee undertakes special projects to protect natural resources, supports County staff in reviewing state and federal environmental permits, and collaborates with local municipalities and agencies on shared environmental concerns.

Charge and Responsibilities

- Evaluates existing minimum level "triggers" for proposed developments that would require the County Board of Commissioners to have environmental impact assessments performed.
- Provides a "peer review" of any environmental impact assessments produced for the Board of Commissioners. The review reports would be provided to the Planning Board, Division of Environmental Health and the Board of Commissioners.
- Advises the Board of Commissioners on environmental policy and related county ordinances, including the Watershed Protection Ordinance.
- Conducts investigations and gathers information, as needed, to facilitate protection of the environment.
- Reviews, at its discretion or as requested by the Board of Commissioners, any required state and federal environmental permits for projects in the county.
- Partners with towns in the county and other interested governmental agencies on mutual concerns related to the environment.
- Serves as the Watershed Review Board (Chatham County Watershed Protection Ordinance, Sections 505-508); State Statutes Chapter 153A, Article 6, Section 121 and Chapter 143, Article 21)
- Closely monitors the work of the N.C. Environmental Management Commission for local impacts.

Membership

The Environmental Review Advisory Committee consists of eleven (11) members.

The Environmental Review Advisory Committee members should have knowledge of:

- Botany
- Soil Science
- Toxicology / Air Quality
- Governmental Agencies (including universities)
- Environmental Planning (including GIS experience; AICP preferred)
- Environmental Law / Land Use Law
- Water Resources / Professional Engineering
- Biology
- Agriculture

Appointment

- Each member of the Board of Commissioners recommends two (2) members, subject to full Board approval.
- One (1) member is selected and appointed by the full Board of Commissioners.

ATTACHMENT A
Chatham County Advisory Committees

Library Advisory Committee

Mission

Serves as the advisory committee for the effective functioning of the library.

Charge and Responsibilities

The Library Advisory Committee serves as a liaison between the community, County staff, and the Board of Commissioners.

The Library Advisory Committee advises on policies, operations, and strategic planning for Chatham County's public libraries.

Its primary goal is to support and enhance library services to meet the educational, informational, and cultural needs of residents.

Committee members provide input on library programs, outreach efforts, resource allocation, facility needs, long-term development, ensuring the library system remains accessible, relevant, and responsive to the community.

Membership

The Library Advisory Committee consists of seven (7) members.

Appointment

- Each member of the Board of Commissioners recommends one (1) member, subject to full Board approval.
- Two (2) members are selected and appointed by the full Board of Commissioners.

ATTACHMENT A
Chatham County Advisory Committees

Recreation Advisory Committee

Mission

Advises the Board of Commissioners on recreation programs and county-owned recreation and park facilities.

Charge and Responsibilities

The Recreation Advisory Committee provides guidance and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners and County staff on matters related to parks, recreation programs, and public recreation facilities in Chatham County.

The Recreation Advisory Committee helps assess community recreation needs, supports long-range planning, and promotes inclusive, accessible, and diverse recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.

Members also provide input on facility development, programming priorities, and policies to enhance the overall quality of life in the county through recreation and active living.

Membership

The Recreation Advisory Committee consists of nine (9) members.

Appointment

- Each member of the Board of Commissioners recommends one (1) member, subject to full Board approval.
- Four (4) members are selected and appointed by the full Board of Commissioners.

ATTACHMENT A
Chatham County Advisory Committees

Transportation Advisory Committee

Mission

Identifies and studies issues and makes recommendations to the Board of Commissioners, and serve as a venue for public discourse, on transportation and related issues.

Charge and Responsibilities

The Transportation Advisory Committee advises on the County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, updated every five to ten years at the request of the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

The Transportation Advisory Committee also provides input on the North Carolina Department of Transportation project prioritization process and reviews major transportation issues or projects assigned by the Board of Commissioners, Planning Department, or Regional Transportation Committees.

Membership

The Transportation Advisory Committee consists of seven (7) voting members and up to eight (8) non-voting members.

The Transportation Advisory Committee members should have knowledge of:

- Non-motorized transportation (e.g., bicycling, walking)
- Public transportation (e.g., transit systems)
- Personal motor vehicles (e.g., cars, motorcycles)
- Commercial and agricultural transport
- Public safety (e.g., emergency response, law enforcement)
- Transportation and the economy
- Transportation and the environment
- Transportation and community impacts

Appointment

- Each member of the Board of Commissioners recommends one (1) member, subject to full Board approval.
- Two (2) members are selected and appointed by the full Board of Commissioners.
- Non-voting members (up to eight) may represent Chatham County Government, Chatham Transit Network, incorporated towns, or other relevant organizations.