Morrisville Town Council
Organizational Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

NOTE: Minutes are summaries only, reflecting Council action and main points of discussion. For the full meeting audio and/or video, the meeting agenda, presentations, and other related agenda materials please click here.

Present: Mayor Cawley, Council Members Garimella, Robotti, Fender, Johnson, Rao, Scroggins-Johnson, Kesling, Patel, Town Attorney Frank Gray, and Assistant Town Attorney Lori Jones.

Staff: Brandon Zuidema, *Town Manager*
Giselle Rodriquez, *Deputy Town Manager*
John Letteney, *Assistant Town Manager*
Jeanne Hooks, *Director of Management Services*
Kayla Bertling, *Town Clerk*
Kathryn Boyle, *Planning Chief*
Tom Dooley Jr., *Fire Chief*
Laura Gough, *Social Media Coordinator*
Erin Hudson, *Communications & Outreach Director*
Cindi King, *Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Assistant Director*
Bret Martin, *Transportation Project Manager*
Tiffany McNeill, *Economic Development Director*
James Owens, *IT Support Technician*
Shandy Padgett, *Inspections Director*
Justin Rosser, *Chief of Police*
Mark Spanioli, *Engineering Director*
Michele Stegall, *Planning Director*

1. Call to Order – Mayor Cawley called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

2. Recognition of Sergeant at Arms – Sergeant Strickland

3. Presentation of the Colors – Morrisville Honor Guard

4. Pledge of Allegiance – led by Mayor Cawley

5. Invocation – delivered by Dr. Myron Yandle, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Morrisville

6. Adoption of Regular Agenda

No conflicts of interest with the proposed agenda were reported.

MOTION: **Council Member Rao moved to adopt the Regular Agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member Fender and carried unanimously (7-0).**

7. Consent Agenda

7.a. Resolution to Unseal Closed Session Minutes (2025-420-0)
Kayla Bertling, Town Clerk

APPROVED

MOTION: **Council Member Robotti moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member Fender and carried unanimously (7-0).**

7.b. Resolution Authorizing MPA Program ILA with Wake County (2025-421-0) Brandon Zuidema, Town Manager

MOTION: **Council Member Robotti moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member Fender and carried unanimously (7-0).**

8. Items Pulled from Consent (if any)

No items were pulled for discussion.

9. Recognition of Outgoing Council Members

9.a. Recognition of Council Member Donna Fender

Mayor Cawley and Council Member Robotti read a proclamation recognizing Council Member Fender's legacy of service, highlighting her advocacy for sustainability and affordable housing. Mayor Cawley presented Council Member Fender with a commemorative plaque.

Council Member Fender shared remarks on her time serving on Council. She expressed gratitude to neighbors and friends who volunteered and donated to support her election. She reflected on the hardships of running for office and described the experience as rewarding and profoundly humbling. Council Member Fender stated she never planned to serve but decided to get involved after the 2016 presidential election. She shared that taking the leap was terrifying but ultimately energizing and fulfilling. She emphasized the importance of overcoming obstacles and learning from new experiences. She shared being a part of something bigger than ourselves gave meaning to life.

Council Member Fender highlighted accomplishments related to sustainability but noted more work remained. She expressed appreciation for Sustainability Coordinator Kimberly Conley. Council Member Fender encouraged the new Council to prioritize sustainability and tree preservation. She concluded by asking Council to make her and other Morrisville residents proud.

9.b. Recognition of Council Member Steve Rao

Mayor Pro Tem Garimella shared remarks on Council Member Rao's dedication to the Morrisville community. Mayor Cawley and Mayor Pro Tem Garimella read a proclamation recognizing Council Member Rao's legacy of service, highlighting his advocacy for technological innovation, diverse cultural events, and community partnerships. Mayor Cawley presented Council Member Rao with a commemorative plaque.

Council Member Rao shared remarks on his time serving on Council. He reflected on the weight of decisions and the moments that brought him to serve. He expressed gratitude to those who shaped his service, beginning with his parents for teaching resiliency, hard work, and love for people. He thanked his mother-in-law and father-in-law for their legacy of service in the Air Force and for modeling steady, humble service. He acknowledged his sister-in-law and her daughter, and expressed deep appreciation to his wife, Komal, for her support and grounding influence. He recognized his children as his pride and inspiration.

Council Member Rao shared that President Jimmy Carter inspired his belief that service is not about the title but about the service given. He thanked everyone who had been the light behind his service. He expressed gratitude to Reverend Jones and Shiloh Baptist Church, noting that when neighbors come together, there is nothing they cannot accomplish. He highlighted achievements during his tenure and emphasized that unity is not a slogan but a way of life. He emphasized that diversity is not a challenge but an opportunity.

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Council Member Rao thanked his colleagues, staff, and the people of Morrisville, for making the town the number one city to live, work, and play. He expressed appreciation to community members and elected officials. He expressed gratitude for the honor of his life. He stated his hope to continue serving and his pride in being a Morrisville resident. He encouraged Council to continue striving for greatness. Council Member Rao highlighted Asian-American elected officials who were the first in their roles and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve. He concluded by encouraging Morrisville to keep shining its light on the world.

10. Oaths of Office

10.a. Mayor TJ Cawley, Sworn by NC Secretary of State Elaine Marshall

NC Secretary of State Elaine Marshall performed the oath for Mayor TJ Cawley.

Mayor Cawley shared remarks. He thanked Secretary Marshall for administering the oath and expressed appreciation to residents in attendance. He thanked all candidates who ran for office, noting the community was stronger because of their participation. He expressed gratitude to Wake County Board of Elections staff, campaign volunteers, his campaign team, and the Wake Democratic Party for their efforts. Mayor Cawley stated that Morrisville saw the highest voter turnout in the Town's history.

Mayor Cawley thanked his family for their support, noting that for twelve years they shared him with the town, and he would not ask for another four. He emphasized that their support made his service possible and expressed his love for them. Mayor Cawley stated that the people have spoken and he looks forward to continuing efforts to make Morrisville an even greater place to live, work, and play. He emphasized the importance of wise investments, intentional planning, and centering of sustainability. He called for a community that was welcoming, vibrant, healthy, and connected. Mayor Cawley thanked the community.

10.b. Council Member Vicki Scroggins-Johnson, Sworn by NC Supreme Court Associate Justice Allison Riggs

NC Supreme Court Associate Justice Allison Riggs performed the oath for Council Member Vicki Scroggins-Johnson.

Council Member Scroggins-Johnson shared remarks. She expressed significant gratitude and humility, noting that beginning her fourth term was still hard to absorb. She reflected on her time since first being elected and stated it had been an honor to serve a community known for its resiliency, diversity, and collaboration. She emphasized that Morrisville truly lives "Connected and Well" and thanked residents for trusting her again. She thanked Justice Riggs and former Town Manager Martha Paige, as well as those who supported her campaign. She also thanked all candidates who ran for office and encouraged them to work together to create a stronger Morrisville moving forward. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson expressed appreciation to her family for their support.

She spoke to the town's values and noted that while Morrisville was nearing build-out, there was still a way to go. She emphasized that the town's voice was strong and more connected than ever. She shared her personal connection to Morrisville, noting that she loved the Town when she moved here but later discovered familial ties to the area from before incorporation. She expressed pride in serving her hometown and spoke to the importance of local government and civic engagement.

Council Member Scroggins-Johnson shared Justice Riggs's election story and efforts to disenfranchise 60,000 voters. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson noted her own role in identifying impacted Morrisville residents. She emphasized that residents were connected at the local, state, and federal levels and that choices made locally affected many others. She

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encouraged residents to "think local, think big" and asked how the town could continue to connect in the future. She reflected on past connections, including the Pugh House, Shiloh community, and Hindu cultural contributions, and current connections such as the All-America City designation, a resilient and vibrant environment, and the Town Center project. She concluded by calling for gratitude for the past, courage for the present, and hope for the future.

10.c. Council Member Ashit Patel, Sworn by Former U.S. Representative Wiley Nickel

Former U.S. Representative Wiley Nickel performed the oath ceremoniously for Council Member Ashit Patel. Council Member Patel was formally sworn by Town Clerk Bertling during the reception.

Council Member Patel shared remarks. He thanked former Council Member Donna Fender for her service to Morrisville and her commitment to the environment, stating his hope to make her proud. He expressed appreciation to Wiley Nickel, his family, elected officials in attendance, and those who placed their trust in him. He thanked the Mayor for encouragement throughout the election process and expressed gratitude to his campaign team for guiding him through the highs and lows with tireless work and commitment. He thanked voters for believing in him and stated that for those who did not vote for him, they were still neighbors, and he would work just as hard for them.

Council Member Patel thanked his wife for reminding him of his purpose in running and his children for their patience and support. He expressed gratitude to friends who contributed to his campaign, his mother for her support, and his late father for instilling values of integrity, principles, hard work, and perseverance. He stated his father would have felt every sacrifice was worth it. He thanked Town staff for their efforts to ensure the community continued to grow. He shared a lighthearted story about UNC students hanging his campaign signs on their walls. Council Member Patel stated he took the oath as seriously as when he joined the Army. He committed to making every decision with honesty, integrity, and for the best interest of the community.

10.d. Council Member Harrison Kesling, Sworn by N.C. Representative Maria Cervania

NC Representative Maria Cervania performed the oath for Council Member Harrison Kesling.

Council Member Kesling shared remarks. He thanked Representative Cervania for her encouragement and stated it was a privilege to stand before the community, noting it was not where he expected to be. He expressed excitement for the opportunity to represent his neighbors and gratitude to everyone who supported him. He thanked his mother, father, and friends who helped him begin his campaign and cross the finish line. He expressed appreciation to Council Members Robotti and Fender for believing in his vision for Morrisville and thanked area elected officials for their encouragement. He also thanked his fiancée for her support.

Council Member Kesling shared how his experiences motivated him to get involved, highlighting his value of walkability, connected neighborhoods, and designs that brought people together. He emphasized that local decisions impacted lives and spoke about the negative effects of convenience on the environment. He encouraged the public to consider a future where sustainability and connection was prioritized. He emphasized the need to design for people and stated his focus would be on sustainability, transportation, and community. He thanked neighbors for their trust, Council for their advice, staff for working to create a Town that reflects its highest values, and legislators for supporting legislation that contributes to progress. He concluded by stating that only together could we create a more perfect Morrisville.

11. Reception

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Recess – 7:26 p.m.
Reconvene – 8:11 p.m.

12. Morrisville Speaks: Public Comment

Suresh Narayan, 803 Willingham Rd, thanked staff for their hard work and communication on the Senior Center expansion, noting that seniors were excited for the future. Community Member Narayan also thanked staff for their work to address safety concerns in the Breckenridge community.

Stefanie Reed, 1672 Legendary Ln., sang the YIMBY (Yes in My Back Yard) anthem to advocate for more apartments and increased housing options.

13. Action Items

13.a. Selection of Mayor Pro Tem

Council Member Johnson educated the public about the role of Mayor Pro Tem. She nominated Council Member Robotti. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson seconded the nomination.

MOTION: **Council Member Johnson moved to appoint Council Member Anne Robotti to serve as Mayor Pro Tem through 2027. The motion was seconded by Council Member Scroggins-Johnson and carried unanimously (7-0).**

Mayor Pro Tem Robotti shared she was honored.

13.b. Resolution Adopting the 2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule (2025-428-0)

MOTION: **Mayor Pro Tem Robotti moved to adopt Resolution 2025-428-0 adopting the 2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule. The motion was seconded by Council Member Johnson and carried unanimously (7-0).**

13.c. Resolution Appointing Town Council Members to Regional Committee Vacancies (2025-417-0)

Mayor Cawley read the recommended appointments.

- TJ Cawley would serve as the appointee and Harrison Kesling as the alternate to the CAMPO Executive Board
- Vicki Scroggins-Johnson would serve as the appointee and Ashit Patel as the alternate to the Central Pines Board of Delegates
- Liz Johnson would serve as the appointee and Satish Garimella as the alternate to JLOW
- Anne Robotti would serve as the appointee and TJ Cawley as the alternate to the Western Wake PAC

MOTION: **Mayor Pro Tem Robotti moved to adopt Resolution 2025-417-0 Appointing Town Council Members to Regional Committee Vacancies, as discussed. The motion was seconded by Council Member Johnson and carried unanimously (7-0).**

14. Future Meetings, Events and Resident Involvement Opportunities

For a full listing of events, please see the Town Calendar at www.MorrisvilleNC.gov

15. Council and Manager Comments

Council Member Johnson welcomed the new Council Members and acknowledged the special nature of the meeting. She thanked staff for their Senior Center expansion presentation given to the seniors. She wished the community happy holidays. Council Member Johnson thanked staff for their excellent execution of Council's direction.

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Mayor Cawley was happy to call Morrisville home and was humbled to represent the community. He wished the community happy holidays.

Mayor Pro Tem Robotti welcomed the new Council Members and acknowledged those that were reelected. She reflected on the lack of change in Council during her time and what it felt like to be a new Council Member. She hoped the new members would find the fellowship, support, and friendship that she shared with Donna Fender.

Council Member Patel thanked everyone for their support and shared excitement for the future.

Council Member Kesling shared gratitude to work with Council and staff to make Morrisville a better place.

Council Member Scroggins-Johnson thanked staff for the recent tree lighting event. She welcomed the new Council Members and reflected well on her relationship with Donna Fender. She wished the community happy holidays.

Council Member Garimella thanked staff for the execution of the meeting. He welcomed new Council Members and congratulated the new Mayor Pro Tem. He wished the community happy holidays.

Mayor Cawley welcomed the new members and noted those leaving would be missed.

Town Manager Zuidema thanked staff for the execution of the meeting and for the holiday decorations around Town Hall. He thanked the outgoing Council Members for their service and welcomed the new Council Members. He wished the community happy holidays.

17. **Adjournment**

MOTION: Mayor Pro Tem Robotti made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Garimella seconded the motion which carried unanimously (7-0).

Mayor Cawley adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

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