

1 **DRAFT MINUTES**
2 **TOWN OF APEX**
3 **TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION**
4 **TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024**
5 **3:30 P.M.**

6 The Apex Town Council met for a work session on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. at
7 the Apex Town Hall located at 73 Hunter Street in Apex North Carolina.

8 This meeting was open to the public. Members of the public were able to attend this
9 meeting in-person or watch online via the livestream on the Town’s YouTube Channel:

10 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98u3l63ANa0>

11
12 Elected Body

- 13 Mayor Jacques K. Gilbert (presiding)
14 Mayor Pro-Tempore Ed Gray
15 Councilmember Brett Gantt
16 Councilmember Terry Mahaffey (*left early, see note below*)
17 Councilmember Arno Zegerman
18 Councilmember Audra Killingsworth (*arrived late, see note below*)

19
20 Town Staff

- 21 Interim Town Manager Shawn Purvis
22 Assistant Town Manager Demetria John
23 Assistant Town Manager Marty Stone
24 Town Attorney Laurie Hohe
25 Town Clerk Allen Coleman

26 All other staff members will be identified appropriately below.

27 **[COMMENCEMENT]**
28

29 **Mayor Gilbert** called the Work Session to order, and led in a recitation of the Pledge
30 of Allegiance.

31
32 **[AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 - APEX UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (UMC) PRESENTATION]**
33

34 **Fiorella Horna**, with Fiesta Cristiana, gave an overview of Fiesta Cristiana’s
35 Development since being established in 2008. She shared what their mission is and how it
36 coincides with the Town of Apex.
37
38

1 [SLIDE-1]

Fiesta Family Services

*Town of Apex
Land Use Proposal
206 & 210 S Hughes Street*

The slide features a blue background with a red circular logo on the left containing the text "fiesta CRISTIANA". The main title "Fiesta Family Services" is in white, and the address information is in a smaller white font below it.

2
3 [SLIDE-2]

Fiesta Cristiana, serving the community since 2008

Established by Apex UMC as a Hispanic/Latino Outreach Ministry; Pastor Jose Luis Villaseñor hired. (2008)

Lauches Apex Immigration Services (2010)

Chartered as a Mission Congregation by the UMC North Carolina Annual Conference (2018)

Create First Racial Equity Bridge Teams at each campus (2019)

Contracted by El Centro Hispano to mobilize Community Health Workers for COVID response (2021)

Today

The slide contains a horizontal timeline with blue arrow-shaped segments for each year. Above the timeline are three blue dots with lines pointing to specific years, and below are three blue dots with lines pointing to specific years. A red star is positioned above the 2008 segment. The Fiesta Cristiana logo is in the top right corner.

4
5 [SLIDE-3]

Two entities with a common Mission

The Church

Fiesta Cristiana Mission Congregation

Fiesta Family Services

The Community Based Organization

The diagram shows two overlapping maroon boxes. The left box is labeled "Fiesta Cristiana Mission Congregation" and has an upward-pointing arrow to "The Church". The right box is labeled "Fiesta Family Services" and has a downward-pointing arrow to "The Community Based Organization". The boxes overlap in the center.

6

1 [SLIDE-4]

Mission

...to center the lived experiences of disinherited people while unapologetically and proactively dismantling systemic and structural inequities.

2
3 [SLIDE-5]

Long Term Community Development Goals

- Expand Fiesta Family Services (aka Family Resources Center) and grow capacity to address the needs of the whole person resulting in healthier and more fulfilling lives.
- Serve as a one-stop-resource center for Hispanic/Latino families and other communities of color to access information, referrals, and direct support services
- Assist the Town of Apex in engaging residents in the design of a community center, a type of Welcome Center/Community Center for all residents and be part of the services rendered to the community.

4
5 [SLIDE-6]

Short Term Community Development Goals

- Fiesta proposes that the existing structures on the properties (206 & 210 S Hughes) be used to provide community support, health promotion, and wellness services to Hispanic/Latino families and other communities of color
- Fiesta requests the town allow Fiesta to stay on the property to grow the capacity of the Fiesta's Family Resource Center to serve as a welcoming space where community members can access information, resources, and support needed to address socioeconomic factors that impact their health and quality of life

6

1 [SLIDE-7]



2
3 [SLIDE-8]

Latinos and other Underserved Communities Live Vibrant, Healthy Lives

Goal: Community members grow their knowledge, skills, and personal power to navigate systems and access resources to work collaboratively to respond to unmet needs, address the burden of poverty, and build infrastructure that helps people thrive and give back

- Build a network of trusted community support entities for referrals and service delivery
- Support the academic success and upward mobility of Latinx students through parent education/support, tutoring, and engagement with the public school system
- Promote health literacy, healthy lifestyle behaviors, and access to equitable, inclusive, and culturally/linguistically appropriate service delivery
- Encourage and support housing justice, homebuilding/repairs, homeownership, and avoiding housing crisis displacement
- Create spaces through which community transformation can occur: gatherings that foster a sense of community, lift/grow leaders, affirm identity-humanity, promote racial healing, and mobilize community, faith, and government leaders in racial equity and inclusion work by reinvesting in the transfer of wealth and power

4
5 [SLIDE-9]

Fiesta Family Services focuses on addressing

Social Determinants of Health

A circular diagram with a central person icon. The circle is divided into five colored segments: Education Access and Quality (blue), Health Care Access and Quality (red), Neighborhood and Built Environment (orange), Social and Community Context (yellow), and Economic Stability (green). Each segment contains an icon representing that domain: a graduation cap, a medical cross, a house, a group of people, and a dollar sign.

Education Access and Quality

Health Care Access and Quality

Neighborhood and Built Environment

Social and Community Context

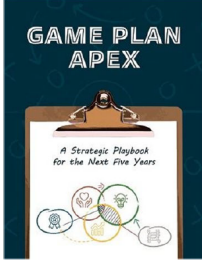
Economic Stability

Social Determinants of Health
© Healthy People 2030

6

1 [SLIDE-10]

Town of Apex Goal: A Welcoming Community



Create a safe and welcoming environment fostering community connections and high quality recreational and cultural experiences supporting a sense of belonging

- Ensure safe places and spaces
- Foster community connections
- Create a sense of belonging
- Encourage a healthy and active lifestyle
- Enhance communications for a more informed community

2
3 [SLIDE-11]

Fiesta Family Services (Family Resource Center)

The Family Resource Center increases access to information, resources, and support in both English and in Spanish that community members need to meet basic needs (food, housing, employment, healthcare, etc) and address socioeconomic factors that impact their health and quality of life through...



- Information, Referral, and Case Management
- Parent/Family Education and Support
- K-12 Tutoring and Student Support
- Immigration Legal Services

4
5 [SLIDE-12]

Community Outreach, Education, and Health Promotion

Fiesta's Health Outreach seeks to promote healthy lifestyle behaviors, access to care, and factors that affect health and quality of life

- Community Health Worker mobilization; certified Mental Health First Aiders
- Health and Resource Fairs
- Mental Well-being Education
- Health Promotion activities



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1 [SLIDE-13]

Racial Equity, Healing, and Inclusion

Increase capacity and involvement of community, faith, and government leaders in anti-racist work by reinvesting in the transfer of wealth and power, prioritizing health from trauma, and while affirming and celebrating Hispanic/Latino people, culture, and contributions.


- Racial Equity Training
- Healing Circles
- Cultural Affirming Gatherings
- Apex Latino Festival



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3 [SLIDE-14]

Transformational Leadership

Amplify the voices of the Hispanic/Latino/Latinx community by working with community members and leaders to dismantle structure and systems, and hold community leaders accountable to prioritizing equity and justice



- Leadership Development
 - Youth Engagement "JUVE"/Fiesta Youth
- Advocacy & Grassroots Mobilization
 - Housing Justice
 - Immigrant Rights
 - Language Access
 - Voter Participation

4
5 [SLIDE-15]

2024 - 2025 Priorities

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1 [SLIDE-16]

Fiesta Cristiana FY 2024-25 Priorities

- Community based organization status by December 2024
- Hire a Community Development Officer by July 2024
- Expand Family Resource Center reach in Apex by 10% from previous year
- Engage participants of parent support groups as Community Health Workers Team to promote healthy lifestyle behaviors, mental wellbeing, and access care
- Host at least two racial equity trainings, Mental Health workshops/retreat, and weekly healing circles
- Launch fund-development campaign

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3 [SLIDE-17]

Fiesta Cristina looks forward to partnering with the Town of Apex to building a more unified, thriving, inclusive community, where all are welcome

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5
6 **Councilmember Killingsworth** arrived at **3:47 p.m.**
7 **Reverend Laura Katherine Stern** said that Fiesta Cristiana is its own separate church
8 from Apex United Methodist Church (UMC). She said Apex UMC launched Fiesta Cristiana
9 and hired Pastor Jose Luis Villasenor back in 2008, and it has since become its own church.
10 She said they have had their properties professionally appraised, and said they know they are
11 worth more than the town’s most recent letter of intent offers. She said they would take this
12 offer if the town offered guarantees regarding space to the community development arm of
13 Fiesta. She said any property sale must go through all of the processes within the Methodist
14 Church before being finalized.
15 **Mayor Gilbert** said in his time of knowing Fiesta and UMC, that Fiesta has done a lot
16 and thanked them for that. He asked what is the age to receive training on mental health and
17 first aid.

1 **Reverend Stern** said right now it's only adults they are offering training to. They are
2 looking to be able to train youth in the future.

3 **Mayor Gilbert** said Pastor Villasenor is with everyone virtual today and asked if he
4 would like to say a few words.

5 **Pastor Villasenor** said he has been with Fiesta Cristiana for almost 17 years now. He
6 said the first outreach program for Hispanic and Latino families connected to the ministry was
7 computer learning. He said they were teaching Spanish speaking families how to use
8 computers so they could serve their kids better. He said they went on to host Wake County
9 ESL programs for the first four years. He said in those initial years, Fiesta Cristiana developed
10 a relationship with the Town of Apex, and then created the Apex Latino Arts Festival. He said
11 it is essential they establish a community service arm to better enhance services. He said he is
12 passionate about serving the community and has brought many new challenges and
13 opportunities. He said he's glad to work with town leadership because he truly believes
14 organizations like Fiesta Cristiana are essential for our community. He said lives have been
15 changed through their programs, and thanked Reverend Stern for her work.

16 **Mayor Gilbert** thanked Assistant Town Manager John for going back and forth with
17 Council and both organizations to bring this meeting together. He said the objective today is
18 to ask questions directly to Council from both organizations so there is no delay in going
19 back and forth.

20 **Mayor Pro Tempore Gray** said he wanted to note that the reason the town would not
21 be engaging in any negotiations during this meeting is that they want to be able to have the
22 same ability as any private buyer would to analyze, consult, and not show their hand. He said
23 they discuss property matters in closed session in order to discuss how they value the land for
24 the town and protect their position. He said this meeting may help in understanding the other
25 aspects of this outside of the land transaction itself. He said this is an important conversation
26 because organizations like Fiesta Cristiana are very important in providing support to the
27 community. He said Fiesta helps speak for the voices that don't get heard, and these groups
28 help provide to the community things the town is not able to directly. He said he appreciates
29 the work of Apex United Methodist Church to provide support to those that need the help.
30 He said the town is still very early on in this process, but these discussions happening early
31 will be very helpful.

32 **Mayor Gilbert** opened the floor up for questions and discussion.

33 **Councilmember Gantt** said Fiesta Cristiana does amazing work. He said he finds this
34 in alignment with Wake County more than the Town of Apex. He said voting, immigration,
35 health, wellness, are more health and human services that the county handles. He asked what
36 has the outreach been to Wake County about them leading this or a partnership.

37 **Ms. Horna** said there is currently an ARPA grant with Wake County. She said they
38 have worked with Wake County Human Services a lot regarding community health. She said
39 all of the work they have been doing have been with the town.

40 **Councilmember Gantt** asked has this proposal and presentation gone to Wake
41 County.

1 **Ms. Horna** said no. She said the work they're looking into moving forward through the
2 Family Resource Center is housed in Apex, and for Apex. She said the work they do for Wake
3 County has come from the community health worker initiative. She said mainly the work they
4 do is within the limits of the Town of Apex and working with people who either come to the
5 town to receive services or who live in the town and receive services.

6 **Reverend Stern** asked Pastor Villasenor to share the importance of the location of the
7 land and why the resource center is a helpful component.

8 **Pastor Villasenor** said when the outreach program started in 2008 in Apex, it was one
9 of the most affordable places to live. He said that a lot of new immigrant families were
10 moving to that area in Apex. He said there are three Latino business within one block of each
11 other downtown and the Family Resource Center nearby. He said that area has become a
12 hub of strategic outreach. He said Fiesta hosted the largest Covid vaccination event in the
13 state when Covid was not being reached to Latino families. He said many families have been
14 forced out of Apex due to cost of living, but are still connected to Apex through their
15 organization. He says the Family Resource Center has also been like a hub to other Latino
16 families in other towns who do not offer this service.

17 **Reverend Stern** said that this isn't just services towards Wake County, there's a very
18 specific focus towards Apex particularly the mediate area.

19 **Councilmember Gantt** said it would be a referral if the Town of Apex was in charge of
20 it, but it could be direct services provided if it was a County facility.

21 **Ms. Horna** said the vision for this is designed to bring all the people together in one
22 space to get the resources they need. She said the referrals are made for resources within the
23 town or outside of the town depending on what it is.

24 **Mayor Pro Tempore Gray** asked if it's because of the nature and type of the
25 population that they are dealing with on a day-to-day basis that being close to downtown as
26 possible would be beneficial.

27 **Ms. Horna** said yes, definitely.

28 **Mayor Pro Tempore Gray** asked if adding additional organizations would impact
29 negatively or positively the ability to do your job to help.

30 **Ms. Horna** said no, that there were conversations about there are so many needs for
31 Latino resources in one place. She said if Fiesta Cristiana is able to connect with other
32 organizations to create something that they don't already have or that can't give directly or
33 vice versa, she said that's the idea.

34 **Pastor Villasenor** said one of the things they value at Fiesta is collaboration. He said
35 Fiesta has many partnerships but not with the sharing of spaces except Apex UMC, but they
36 are not against doing more of that. He said he does share a space at the legal clinic which is
37 a site they service over 200 families. He said one thing to note was that Fiesta started a
38 program for high school graduates that wanted to pursue college, and offered a College
39 preparation course through Fiesta. He said Fiesta offered a service that the public school
40 system was failing to provide. He said the point is we need each other to serve our
41 community better, and that's the approach Fiesta goes into with each collaboration.

1 **Councilmember Zegerman** said he appreciates all the services Fiesta has provided
2 over the years. He asked if Fiesta Christiana Family Resource center exclusively offers these
3 services or is there another facility that Fiesta operates out of.

4 **Reverend Stern** said the Family Resource Center that is currently housed at the
5 address on Moore Street, that is not one of properties their talking about. She said one of the
6 properties is one they use for the Apex Outreach Service project and houses tools and the
7 other house has been used by a variety of things. She said recently, Fiesta's operations have
8 moved to the other property, which is used for various things.

9 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked is it more like administrative offices.

10 **Reverend Stern** said it's always been an administrative office.

11 **Pastor Villasenor** said this has been recent during the pandemic to provide outreach
12 particularly to the community worker team. He said up until November, Fiesta and staff
13 shared an office with Apex UMC and are still trying to navigate the process to move forward.

14 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked if Fiesta is receiving any members in the public in
15 the new location.

16 **Pastor Villasenor** said if someone wants to seek services from Fiesta, they are
17 referred back to the Family Resource Center because that's where the support team is
18 housed. He said there is an Outreach Event Coordinator who currently is housed at the
19 House of Hope but she also goes back and forth between House of Hope and the Family
20 Resource Center.

21 **Reverend Stern** said what the future looks like is their conversations is the Family
22 Resource Center would move.

23 **Councilmember Zegerman** said he's trying to link the two properties and understand
24 how they are linked to the directly receiving community members. He said that service seems
25 like it's in a different building than the properties being discussed.

26 **Reverend Stern** said it's all on the same block so it's not a big distance. She said you
27 take those two combined properties and you've got a much larger space for the Family
28 Resource Center. She said the conversations Apex UMC has had with Fiesta Christiana is
29 around lack of space.

30 **Ms. Horna** said the Family Resource Center could be the space where the
31 administrative part remains and where immigration law services are housed. She said the two
32 properties would allow Fiesta to expand their meeting rooms and offer more classes,
33 workshops, healing circles, and support groups.

34 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked in their vision, who is building the resource
35 center? He said he'd like to get more information to determine if it's in the best interest for
36 town funds.

37 **Pastor Villasenor** said the vision is to serve all residents holistically, and particularly
38 those who have been historically marginalized.

39 **Councilmember Zegerman** said there is no argument on that, and that's not what he
40 is saying at all. He said he was wondering if these two properties would be what was needed
41 to unlock that service, or are there are alternative ways of working together to achieve the
42 same or better outcome.

1 **Pastor Villasenor** said as of right now the reason this has been the location is because
2 of Apex UMC's vision in 2008. He said he's open to other opportunities but that's where
3 Fiesta started and has been since 2008. He said they put forth dreams, but it requires a
4 partner on the other end to engage in the relationship. He said as a Latino Apex resident, he
5 does care about hearing that the town cares about its Latino residents. He said this gives an
6 opportunity for the town to show they are really listening.

7 **Councilmember Zegerman** said he isn't trying to question the services offered or the
8 path with Fiesta Cristian and the town, but rather connect the conversation back to the
9 transaction they are talking about. He said the two properties are located on the same block,
10 but there is one house on the corner which is not owned by Apex UMC. He said the rest of
11 the block is owned by the church. He asked what the view on the other properties that are
12 currently in that space.

13 **Reverend Stern** said one is a private residence, and the other is a church where the
14 Apex UMC church staff is and the back is where the Family Resources are currently. She said
15 she understands the town would not want to house any worship services on town-owned
16 land, rather the community service arm.

17 **Mayor Gilbert** said Councilmember Mahaffey has to leave and asked if he had any
18 questions.

19 **Councilmember Mahaffey** said he strongly supports their mission. He said the way
20 Towns support nonprofits like this is through an annual grant program. He said it was around
21 \$72,000 last year and maybe around \$75,000 this year. He said Fiesta Christiana applied last
22 year and there was some issue. He asked why are we talking about property acquisition to
23 build a center for Fiesta Cristian as opposed to further or more support to our nonprofit
24 programs. He said they do a great work, but so do many other non-profits in Apex, so the
25 money has to be allocated appropriately.

26 **Reverend Stern** said both Apex UMC and Fiesta Christiana are capped with their
27 space.

28 **Pastor Villasenor** said Fiesta Christiana was invited to be part of a cohort of 8
29 nonprofit organizations in Wake County, that are led by people of color. He said what all
30 these nonprofits have in common is the struggle to have any property to deliver their
31 services. He said properties are essential to provide services. He said a lack of access to
32 properties is something that a lot of people of color-led organizations have to face.

33 **Ms. Horna** said this is a space that could be a one-stop-shop. She said if they were to
34 take that corner of the property and create a space where there are job opportunities and
35 more space to gather for the community. She said it's not just the Town investing in Fiesta
36 Christiana, she said Fiesta plans to apply for available grants or looking for affordable
37 housing grants that would allow Fiesta to invest with the Town.

38 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that this location has more of a historical relevance
39 to it, since Fiesta has been there for 16 years.

40 **Reverend Stern** said there are also some practical reasons because of where the lot is
41 and where the Resource Center currently is.

1 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked what was currently behind the property at 210
2 Moore Street.

3 **Councilmember Mahaffey** left the meeting at **4:37 p.m.**

4 **Reverend Stern** said that's a staff house. She got up to see what specifically see what
5 Councilmember Zegerman was looking at and she identified it as a bio retention pond. She
6 said in terms of why to invest is also because this is a particular population that the town
7 would be investing in.

8 **Mayor Gilbert** asked to hear from Fiesta Christiana and staff on how their vision
9 connects with the town's vision with affordable housing.

10 **Pastor Villasenor** said one of the first ways Fiesta started was with the Inaugural Fiesta
11 Builds with Habitat. He said Fiesta really wanted to reach the Hispanic community. He said
12 since Fiesta Builds, there have been over 30 Hispanic homeowners in Apex. He said they
13 have been engaged in the Hispanic community and had those conversations about
14 displacement and strategizing to keep those families in Apex. He said families that face
15 potential homelessness or evictions is why Fiesta applies for the grants and advocates for
16 housing justice. He said programs aren't the only way they serve, and they have a sort of
17 higher calling. He said Fiesta is a member of ONE Wake and is the only Latino organization
18 that is a member of ONE Wake.

19 **Ms. Horna** said there was a vision about transitional housing, but she said that
20 wouldn't be enough. She said Fiesta would like a space where people can learn financial
21 literacy and how to build that capacity. She said there are conversations about connecting
22 people with the Latino Credit Union to receive loans. She said those types of things they
23 would like to offer.

24 **Assistant Town Manager John** said what the town's Community Development
25 department is doing is taking different approaches to connecting residents to organizations
26 that can ensure access to safe, quality housing. She said the town is collecting that
27 information and engaging with those partners like Wake County, in order to get resources to
28 those organizations. She said Apex doesn't have any organizations like that currently so the
29 town will partner with agencies where the service is offered and bring those services to
30 residents of Apex. She said also part of that is getting that information on the Town's website.

31 **Ms. Horna** said Fiesta met earlier this month with White Gold Foundation to look at
32 what they are doing around affordable housing. She said they are exploring how they can
33 implement something like that in their organization as well. She said it is not affordable to live
34 in Apex right now, but they would like to remain connected to their friends and organizations
35 in the area.

36 **Assistant Town Manager John** said her and Marla Newman, Community
37 Development and Neighborhood Connections Director, met with Pastor Luis last week to be
38 able to understand Fiesta and its mission ad the people they serve. She said as the town
39 builds out these resources, the town also wants to know how we can serve the Latino
40 Community better and the Asian Community and any Apex residents who are in need for
41 housing.

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Mr. Oz said with the 15 years in working with DHS that they would not qualify the work Fiesta does that’s overlapping with the work that DHS does. He said the programs DHS has are protective custodial programs. He said these organizations do very different things in different landscapes. He said a lot of what they talked about is about the connections with people in the community, and DHS would not be able to step in and do what Fiesta does.

Mayor Gilbert asked Council if they had anymore questions.

Councilmember Zegerman said he appreciates everyone coming in and Pastor Jose calling in from El Salvador. He said he appreciates Fiestas services and enjoyed learning a little bit more about that they do. He said he thinks he has what he needs right now.

Councilmember Killingsworth said they covered the questions she was looking for more information on. She said nobody here would debate that Fiesta provides amazing services. She said as a Council they have to decide what their goals are, and whether purchasing this property would be the best way to do that.

Mayor Gilbert said he has been standing with Pastor Jose for 16 years and will continue to stand with him today. He said he fully supports this and hope to figure out a solution. He asked Town Clerk Allen Coleman to put this on the next Closed Session.

Councilmember Gantt said it should be the one after the next Council Meeting because the next meeting is already set to be very long.

Ms. Horna thanked the Mayor and Council for listening to their petition. She said even in making the decision in buying the land or not buying the land that Fiesta and the town will still continue to work together.

[ADJOURNMENT]

Mayor Gilbert thanked everyone and declared the meeting adjourned at **4:57 p.m.**

Jacques K. Gilbert
Apex, Mayor

Allen Coleman, CMC, NCCCC
Apex, Town Clerk

Submitted for approval by Apex Town Clerk Allen Coleman.

Minutes approved on _____ of _____, 2023.