



TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

Appointed Boards Application

If you are a Town of Hillsborough resident and willing to volunteer your time and expertise to your community, please complete this form. Volunteers for the Parks and Recreation Board must be at least 13 years old, and volunteers for all other boards must be at least 18 years old.

The town strives to reflect the diversity of its residents in the makeup of its boards. Demographics and residence location are considered during the appointment process.

First name (required):

Christian

Last name (required):

Schmidt

Home address (required):

206 S Nash St, Apt 268

Home phone number:

5204278534

Work phone number:

Email address (required):

schmidt.e.christian@gmail.com

Place of employment:

Clarion Associates

Job title:

Associate Urban Planner

Birth date (required):

July 25, 1997

Gender (required):

Male

Ethnic origin (check all that apply) (required):

Hispanic or Latino

First choice (required):

Planning Board

Second choice (required):

Historic District Commission

Third choice (required):

Parks and Recreation Board

Reasons for wanting to serve (required):

I love small towns. I moved to Hillsborough fairly recently for work (as an urban planner for a Chapel Hill-based consultant) with the clear intent to stop being so transient and to actually get involved in my community. I've lived in 10-some states in the past 6 years, and am tired of being so mobile, especially because I know how valuable proximity is to creating the good relationships that make life so worthwhile. I moved to Hillsborough specifically because I thought it (as compared to places like Durham, Cary, or Chapel Hill) offered the greatest potential of being a place where I could genuinely feel like I was a part of my community and helping the people who live here. Being involved

on a board and putting my skillsets to the use of my own community (rather than just those in South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia, as I currently do as a consultant) would give me that on-ramp into being a part of Hillsborough, rather than just "being here" and not giving back in a meaningful way.

Have you served or are you currently serving on a town board? If so, which ones and when? (required)?

I am not currently on a town board! Back in high school, I served on the Youth Council in my hometown (Tucson, AZ), but it always felt somewhat like a joke and I'd be excited to spend my time on a board where I would actually have the ability to contribute to the community.

Relevant work, volunteer or educational experience (required):

I work at Clarion Associates in Chapel Hill. We're a national urban planning (we do a lot of small towns and counties, though, but we wrote Philadelphia's zoning code a couple years ago too) and zoning consulting firm that does a lot of work in North Carolina. Currently, we're working on the new Orange County Comprehensive Plan, and generally live and work in Orange County. As for education, I graduated from Harvard with my masters in urban planning before moving to North Carolina, and got my bachelors in political science with minors in urban studies and municipal political theory. I also volunteer as a catechist at Holy Family Catholic Church!

How are you connected to Hillsborough (live, work, play, shop, own property) (required)?

I live at Bellevue Mill Apartments next door to Gold Park and Hillsborough BBQ.

Have you reviewed the Vision 2030 plan, and what are your thoughts about it (required)?

I have! I'm impressed by its conciseness, its focus on things other than land use, and its emphasis on measurable implementation. In terms of specific policies, I appreciate Goals 2B and 2F a lot (celebrating diverse neighborhoods and encouraging live/work arrangements in residential areas). That said, I wish there was even more emphasis on increasing quality of life in Hillsborough (especially for low-income populations and for our workforce), and that the character section was not focused so predominantly on aesthetic but also on promoting welcoming, neighborly, and friendly culture.

Have you reviewed other town documents (budget, strategy map, small area plans), and what are your thoughts about them?

On the welcoming, neighborly, and friendly culture front, I really appreciate that the new Comprehensive Sustainability Plan is keen on improving Social Systems & Public Space. I especially like the implementation goals—even the little things like keeping the community calendar updated, which can be a big boon to newer residents seeking out connections, or encouraging crime protection not through increased police presence but through environments that make people less likely to want to commit crimes. On a different note, I'm super impressed with the clarity of the budget summary. While I'm someone who greatly enjoys combing through budgets (and am paid to do so at work), I think documents like this that simply and honestly explain these sorts of concepts really help bridge the gap between citizens and their government and lower the barrier for people to genuinely get involved. I've reviewed some of the other documents as well but will address those in the next section.

What challenges do you see the town facing that could be addressed by the board or boards on which you wish to serve (required)?

The sewer capacity situation seems like a bottleneck that's going to be tricky to resolve, and is going to require the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee to work with the Planning Commission and Council to all work together. Between the situation with Falls Lake effluent restrictions and the lack of funding, Hillsborough seems to be nearing full buildout, and it's difficult to see where new development is going to fit. That said, Hillsborough is super cute, and the demand for housing here is only going to go up, so if proactive measures aren't taken to make sure that some housing stays affordable despite the inability to potentially build large swaths of new housing, the workforce will continue to dwindle and eventually the town will find itself in a tough place, economically. Innovative, adventurous solutions that press on different financial, social, and infrastructural levers are going to be key to making sure the town stays its vibrant self going forward. What else? Interjurisdictional conversation is going to be important, especially with Orange County looking at the Rural Buffer, OWASA working on figuring out what it's going to do with the new Jordan Lake treatment station, and Mebane's continued growth. Working with the State to try and figure out what's going to be done (if anything) about Churton traffic is going to be important as well, especially with new traffic pressures in Danville. Lastly, I'm a smidge unimpressed by the Parks plan. While there's nothing deafeningly wrong with it, I would love to see further emphasis on programming and working with Orange County Parks and private providers, even if the town isn't planning to create its own systems. Passivity, in my opinion, doesn't necessarily breed the sort of community spirit that makes small towns such wonderful places to live. Lastly, the Churton Street strategic corridor plan hits a lot of points I'd like to make squarely on the head. South of the river, Churton suddenly takes on the character of a generic suburb, to the point of making it feel like Hillsborough has simply exported all of the "ugly but necessary" things south of the river, and especially south of I-85. Does Hillsborough want to stay cute, vibrant, and unique throughout town limits? Or is the area south of I-85 simply being sacrificed to the corporate developers to provide the windfall to keep "Real" (frightening in its own right) Historic Hillsborough looking the way it does? What does a modern version of Hillsborough with 15 or 20,000 people look like?

How did you hear about this opportunity (required)?

Other

Check the box to confirm (required):

