



# THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

September 13, 2022

## 2022-2023 Board Members

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Robert Shaw

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## Terry Shook, Urban Design Mover and Shaker

by Rick Handford

**Chris Thomas**, who has worked with Terry Shook for over 20 years, introduced him as the person primarily responsible for the development of Charlotte's South End. Additionally, he led the design of the Birkdale mixed-use development in Huntersville, has been responsible for reimagining the campuses of both Aldersgate and Sharon Towers, and led the team working with Chris and others on the Waverly Project at I-485 and Providence Roads. Shook is a founding partner and principal of Shook Kelley, which operates from offices in Charlotte and Los Angeles. He has lectured at the Executive Education Program at Harvard University Graduate School of Design for 25 years, and also is an advisor to the dean of the College of Architecture at UNC Charlotte.

Chris noted that he is a nationally recognized expert in New Urban Planning and designs new communities in both the suburbs and within urban cores, and asked that we welcome him to Charlotte Rotary.

Terry grew up in Gastonia, and never played any organized sport because he had asthma. He used downtown Gastonia as his playground, and watched the city grow and evolve as he grew and developed himself. He has applied the lessons he learned growing up to everything he has done as a practicing Urban Designer.

He attended UNC Charlotte, where he had a "real interesting time". His father was a subcontractor with a limited education, and he met his second father, Kevin Kelley, who was a professor at UNCC and later became his business partner. Terry runs the practice in Charlotte, and Kevin runs the

practice in Los Angeles.

They started their practice in an office in Atherton Mill in 1992, and started to develop ideas about how to improve the South End. He described the grassroots, citizen-driven effort as a collaboration between the City, the business community, and the people of the area. Community matters, people matter, and people invest in the development of the city with the cooperation of the government and the politicians and the businesses.

Terry went on to describe the evolution of the South End revitalization, and then moved on to a discussion of the Brightwalk development. It was originally conceived as a 300-unit community of tax-subsidized, low-cost housing in the Double Oaks area, and he declined to take the project, which he believed was likely to result in a segregated development that the residents wouldn't care about. He did say that if the city was interested in a full-on, intergenerational, mixed income neighborhood that would do a lot of things the right way and become a fully functional, nationally recognized success, then he would be interested. He got the job to make it happen, and he did.

Brightwalk was meant to be a template for creating places where people from all walks of life could live together and celebrate their differences instead of fearing them. It was in many ways a success, and Terry's daughter chose to live there when she got out of college. Unfortunately, it was too successful, and the prices of the houses quickly grew to the point where the target audience could no longer afford to live there. It was a classic example of supply vs demand, where the supply of this type of neighborhood housing was way too small to accommodate the demand, thus driving up the price. Solution is to find a way to build more.

Brookhill Village was to be a sister community, but he has been working on trying to make it happen for more than 13 years and it has yet to get done. He is in the process of writing a book about the process. The Griffin Brothers Companies have now gotten involved, and he is expecting that a way to move forward will be found. He is hoping to incorporate a lot of 'tiny homes' into the neighborhood—attractive and livable but at an affordable price point. He named them Katrina Cottages.

He moved on to talk about the West End and the need to improve it, and gave kudos to J'Tanya Adams of the Historic West End Partners, and her understanding of land use and the need to sustain neighborhoods while improving and growing them. They, in collaboration with the Knight foundation and several others, developed a plan for the Five Points area near Johnson C. Smith University. One of the principal goals for the project was to keep it inclusive, preserve the area's history, and not create something that would increase values to a level that becomes economically exclusive.

In response to questions, he stated that further development in the city would tend to be built around communities and neighborhoods where people of dis-similar backgrounds could live and

work in close proximity. Similar to, but different from South End and Brightwalk. Terry wouldn't say what the zoning laws should be, but he thinks that the BDO might be a good start.

On the future of cities going forward, he thought that it will take more than just government making good decisions, it needs businesses to get involved. Uptown Charlotte needs to become a neighborhood, and empty office buildings need to be reconfigured to include residences, where people can live in close proximity to where they work.

I encourage anyone who missed the meeting to watch the Zoom recording and see Terry's PowerPoint presentation, which was (not surprisingly) very well designed!

\*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/749795766>  
The speaker's introduction begins at 19:25 minutes.