
From: Cal Horton [mailto:calhorton@townofchapelhill.org]
Sent: Friday, June 16, 2006 10:48 AM
To: Heavner, Jim
Subject: Sidewalks

Jim:

It was a pleasure to be in your neighborhood yesterday. Truly, it is one of the most beautiful in Chapel Hill.

As you think about requesting installation of sidewalks on your street, I recommend that you consider the following points that are based on our experience in other neighborhoods.

- Priority should be given to tree preservation and protection. Special precautions should be taken to avoid tree root damage. Some short sections may need to remain unpaved (just covered with Chapel Hill gravel) in order to protect trees.
- Most neighborhood sidewalks are five feet wide and bordered by a planting strip. It is better to have some narrower sections, or to omit the planting strip, or to do both in order to save valuable features of the existing landscape.
- Allow some variability in sidewalk alignment and width to preserve existing retaining walls and decorative walls that help establish the character of the neighborhood. Our first choice always is to leave walls undisturbed, if possible.
- New curb and gutter may be necessary to correct drainage problems, establish consistent grades and provide for uniform appearance. Typically, we also would install concrete driveway aprons as new sidewalks are installed.
- There are existing sidewalk sections that already are paved. Materials, appearance and quality vary. It likely would be best to remove existing sections that would be substantially different from the typical section of a new sidewalk.
- Our two highly-skilled Landscape Architects, Curtis Brooks and Emily Cameron, pay great attention to the details of sidewalk projects in historic neighborhoods to attain the best possible results, and should be considered as key consultants for any concern that might be raised by neighbors. We would not be able to expend substantial time on this work unless the Council authorizes a project.
- The Historic District Commission will review any proposal for sidewalks in your neighborhood and will have to determine whether the proposed work is harmonious with the design of the neighborhood.

Finally, as I mentioned yesterday, the Council's list of sidewalk requests is long. Our staff will be pleased to evaluate your neighborhood's request, once submitted, and apply the established rankings system to it. Once that is done, your neighborhood's request would be

considered along with all others already in the process for consideration. Gordon Sutherland, with whom you already have established communications, is our key staff leader for this work.

I will brief Deputy Manager Flo Miller and Assistant Manager Bruce Heflin on your neighborhood's interest in sidewalk installation so that they will be able to assist you after my retirement.

Best wishes,

Cal

W. Calvin Horton Town Manager 405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514 919-968-2744 Office 919-967-2626 Home 919-969-2063 FAX

Petition to the town for sidewalks

Date _____

To: The Town of Chapel Hill

As a property owner in the Gimghoul neighborhood, I support adding brick walks to Gimghoul Road in a manner consistent with the Town's guidelines for historic district sensitivity, existing trees and walls.

Because there is a possibility of different configurations, I support the configuration that is supported by the most residents.

The configuration I support is:

▪ On both sides of the street for the length of the street, including accommodating a new curb in front of the Newton property, preserving all existing walls _____

▪ On the full length of the south side of the street only _____

On the full length of the south side and on the north side from Country Club to Ride Lane only _____

▪ On the full length of the south side and on the north side from Country Club to the last curbed lot, eliminating Newton property. _____

Name of property owner _____

Address _____

Sidewalk Petition Team

Barbara Schutz

300 Glandon Dr
Phone: (919) 942-3696

Mary Ann Kasarda

707 Gimghoul Rd
Phone: (919) 929-6170

Catherine B. Williams

724 Gimghoul Rd
(919) 967-4973

Elston Miles

240 Glandon Dr
Phone: (919) 968-3614

Jim Heavner

719 Gimghoul Road
(919) 929-2550

Gimghoul Sidewalk Committee

June 28,2006

W. Calvin Horton
Town Manager
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

Memorandum:

To: Cal Horton

From: Barbara Schutz
Catherine Williams
Elston Miles
Mary Ann Kasarda
Jim Heavner, Chair, Sidewalk Petition Project

On behalf of the residents of the Gimghoul neighborhood whose wish is to petition the Town to build brick sidewalks on Gimghoul Road, we present the petitions herewith.

This formal petition process was preceded by an informal neighborhood survey in the spring that found a general support for brick walks.

In that unofficial tally, 80% of the respondents indicated support for sidewalks, expressing differing opinions about how the sidewalks should be configured to deal with special issues where rock walls or trees would seem to present unusual problems. Ten of the forty property owners did not respond to the unofficial canvas.

After your good explanation of the Town's policies was distributed to the neighborhood, much of the concern about the preservation of trees and walls abated.

Then, this formal petition to the Town was circulated in late June. To ensure maximum participation, the distribution of the petition was followed by a vigorous effort on the part of a committee of the four of us to reach all property owners. This extended to those who live in other parts of the world, including Singapore and Hawaii.

As a result, thirty nine of the forty property owners have been contacted. We believe, then, that this is an unusually comprehensive representation of the community's wishes.

Here is the summary of the Gimghoul petitions, which are attached:

Signing the petition to ask the town for Sidewalks 32 (thirty two)
Those who declined to sign because of opposition 3 (three)
Those who asked to be shown as "abstained" 3 (three)
Those reached but who have not responded 1 (one)
Those who could not be reached 1 (one)
Total number of property owners 40 (forty)

As a percentage, among those who voted, 91% voted yes, 9% were opposed.

All those who voted yes indicated that they would support the configuration" chosen by the most of those who wanted sidewalks. "Configuration," is our word for whether brick sidewalks should be built on both sides of the street, one side of the street, both sides except that sidewalks on the south side would stop at Ridge Lane, or the full length of both sides except for the Newton property, which, with no curb and gutter and a curved rock, seemed to present special problems.

Among the 32 who petitioned for sidewalks, 28, or 88%, voted for sidewalks on the full length of both sides of the street, an overwhelming majority. No other choice was supported by more than two property owners.

The Gimghoul subdivision is one of Chapel Hill's most treasured historic neighborhoods and we trust that the Town will be careful in executing its policies to preserve existing trees, its special rock walls, and the character of the neighborhood.

We understand that there is a system to establish priority for the building of such sidewalks. We believe that Gimghoul is likely the most heavily traveled pedestrian street in town, primarily because of the number of UNC events, those who use the neighborhood for their constitutionals, and runners.

So, we hope that we will qualify as a high priority neighborhood in your consideration of our petition.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Kasarda, Catherine Williams, Elston Miles, Barbara Schutz, Jim Heavner,
Chair
The Gimghoul Sidewalk Committee

Enclosure: Petitions from Gimghoul neighborhood

Copy: E-mail to Town Manager Cal Horton

August 22, 2006

To: Cal Horton, Town Manager
From: Jim Heavner, Chair, Gimghoul Sidewalk Committee

Dear Cal,

Thank you for providing me with a copy of the reports associated with the Gimghoul neighborhood's petition for brick sidewalks. It is helpful in understanding the process, the rankings and the projected costs.

As we move forward, may I take gentle exception, please, to the review of your staff member who determined that we now have "existing facilities" where we wish the sidewalks to go. This is to ask, please, for your further review of this particular interpretation.

There may be a subjective interpretation that *some* of the area on each side of the street is sufficient to attract and accommodate typical pedestrian usage. Yet, I cannot think of any interpretation that would conclude that this is the case up and down either side of the street so that a person would choose it to the street to walk its length. Because there is no *adequate* facility, people walk in the street.

Much of the existing area is less safe for walking than the street, because of its slopes, roots and ruts. Other areas are grass or have no hint of a sidewalk. This is inherently dangerous at any time and very dangerous after sundown.

In effect, there is no "existing facility" sufficient to be used by the overwhelming majority of people who walk on Gimghoul and virtually none of them who plan to walk or jog the length of the street.

Finally, the best interpretation that I believe can be put on the areas that have been cleared would be "worn path," both on the side where we petition for sidewalks and the opposite side. In the town's point system as I understand it, such an interpretation would qualify Gimghoul for another 13 to 15 points on each side, moving it significantly up the list. So, that makes this an important matter.

The need for sidewalks and the absence of existing ones are the reasons that 32 of 35 petitioners, 80% of the property owners and 90% of the petitioners, have requested sidewalks on this street of such heavy pedestrian travel. Thank you for considering this review.

Jim Heavner
719 Gimghoul Road

CC: Committee: Mary Ann Kasarda, Elston Miles, Barbara Schutz, Catherine Williams