

March 20, 2002

Mayor Kevin Foy and Members of the Chapel Hill Town Council
306 North Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dear Mayor Foy and Members of the Town Council:

Habitat for Humanity, Orange County requests that the Town of Chapel Hill grant expedited review for a new affordable housing subdivision that Habitat for Humanity is proposing in the Rogers Road community in the Chapel Hill planning jurisdiction. Habitat for Humanity currently owns a 2.2-acre tract of vacant land off of Rusch Road, and has additional adjacent parcels under contract totaling about half an acre. The site is close to New Homestead Place, the eleven home affordable housing subdivision completed by Habitat in early 2000. Access to sewer for the new subdivision will be from the terminus of the New Homestead Place line.

The granting of expedited review for Habitat's proposed subdivision is in keeping with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Section 7.2 of the Comprehensive Plan states the Town's goal is to "increase the availability of well-designed, affordable, safe and sanitary housing for all citizens of Chapel Hill." Section 7A further says, "Government at every level should work to increase affordable housing opportunities." One strategy, as presented in 7A-1, is to "work with housing providers to aggressively develop affordable housing in Chapel Hill." Habitat for Humanity has worked in partnership with local government throughout its history to expand affordable housing opportunities for residents who most need them. Expedited review for this affordable housing project will enable Habitat to develop as many as 18 new units of affordable housing, which in turn will allow residents currently living in substandard housing conditions to move out of unsafe, overcrowded, and /or unaffordable situations. Of 23 applicants approved by Habitat for Humanity who are waiting to build and purchase a home, fourteen currently live in substandard housing in Chapel Hill, and twelve work in Chapel Hill. Until the subdivision in the Rogers Road community is completed, Habitat for Humanity cannot offer any of these families a home in Chapel Hill. With expedited review, Habitat for Humanity expects to start construction on the homes in September 2003. For the families waiting for a decent home in which to raise their children, this will be none too soon.

The Town of Chapel Hill has previously committed funds to the development of this affordable housing subdivision: \$50,000 in 2001-2002 CDBG funds for the acquisition of property (which we expect to expend in April 2002) and \$50,000 from the Chapel Hill Housing Trust Fund, for design, survey, and engineering costs, which we will also begin spending in April 2002. Orange County has committed \$110,000 in Affordable Housing Bond Funds to the project. We have also requested additional funds for infrastructure construction from the upcoming fiscal year's HOME and CDBG program. The rest of the project will be funded through private contributions which Habitat will raise, and other state and national housing program funds that we will apply for.

Habitat for Humanity will request use of the Residential-Special Standard Zoning District to develop the site, since ***all of the homes that will be built on the site will be affordable to households earning at or below 50% of the area median income.*** We will submit a concept plan to the Design Commission on April 1, 2002. Our concept plan allows for 15 lots, 12 of which will be reserved for detached, single family homes to be sold to Habitat-approved applicants earning 50% of median income or less. The remaining 3 lots will be reserved for attached rental units that will serve special needs populations. These households are expected to earn at or below 30% of the median income. All of the homes will remain affordable for at least 99 years, through the use of deed restrictions. Alternatively, Habitat may request that the lots be placed in the Community Land Trust.

Habitat for Humanity thanks you for your thoughtful consideration of our request for expedited review. We look forward to continuing to work in creative partnership with the Town to better meet the housing needs of all of Chapel Hill's citizens.

Sincerely,

Susan Levy, Executive Director
On behalf of Habitat for Humanity, Orange County