

CHAPEL HILL DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

Driving Downtown's Destiny

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May 17, 2006

Mr. Kevin Foy, Mayor
Members of the Town Council
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dear Mayor Foy and Members of the Town Council:

Convenient parking is one of the most important basic needs for a downtown. The basics, including such factors as cleanliness, safety, and social issues, determine whether or not a downtown district is successful. The CHDP board of directors met this morning, on May 17, 2006, and discussed parking at great length. We commend you for the work that you are doing in this area and appreciate the support that you are offering to make parking more user-friendly. Our board would like to make the following recommendations / offers to the Town Council in an effort to assist you with this issue.

1. We would like to offer our staff to serve as the staff liaisons to the Citizens Parking Committee. Our staff has experience with the elements involved in conducting a parking study and we have been working over the past two months already to gather up much of the information that will be pertinent to the recommendations that the committee will make back to the Town Council. We would of course use the proposal that you have already established and adopted as the guidelines for the work that is to be done by that committee.
2. We support the Town Council's recommendation to offer two-hour free on-street parking on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m.– 6:00 p.m. and support an increase in the Municipal Service District tax of \$.026/\$100 to financially fund this benefit.
3. We recommend that the Town Council offer two-hour free parking in lots 3 & 5 on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m.– 8:00 p.m. in addition to the on-street meters. Our organization is offering the Town \$10,000 from our budget to offset a loss in revenue for this benefit, and would ask that any additional loss be covered in the form of a match from the Town. We feel this is a vitally important addition to the parking proposal that you have made in an effort to make downtown as user-friendly as possible.

4. The CHDP board of directors strongly urges you to address the timeframe in which a visitor must pay for parking in lot 3 on the West End. This lot was converted from meters to a self-pay station approximately two-weeks ago and in that conversion there was a change in the time in which free parking began. A downtown visitor does not pay for parking in a metered space after 6:00 p.m., but in the self-pay lots, does not pay for parking after 8:00 p.m. Representatives from the West End restaurants spoke at our board meeting this morning and conveyed the citizen outrage that they are observing and experiencing with this change. Our board urges you to offer free-parking in this lot after 6:00 p.m. as it has been historically.

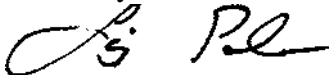
Many of the merchants have asked for a way to offer their customers free parking through the purchase of tokens for the metered spaces. This is already available for lot 2 and the Wallace Deck, but is realistically not of benefit to the west end businesses since only a small portion of their clientele are willing to park on the east end if their destination is the west end. The Board of Directors encourages the Town Council to quickly find a token that will work in the meters. This is a win-win for everyone. The merchants that are willing to purchase tokens will do so and those that do not feel that they can financially afford to pay for their customers parking are not penalized for the service. It can be marketing, as an example, as "Come downtown on us" and even if a customer has already paid for parking and receives a token after-the-fact, it encourages them to visit downtown again. In addition, if our office can assist you as a site in which tokens can be purchased, we will gladly make that service available.

In addition to these recommendations, the Downtown Partnership is planning to launch a valet parking service in cooperation with the west end restaurateurs beginning in late August, and will be working over the next couple of months to develop a marketing campaign to promote the changes in parking. We want both local citizens and visitors to know that their presence in downtown is important and we want to make it easy for them to choose downtown as their destination.

Improved parking in downtown Chapel Hill is dependent upon finding creative public-private solutions to the problems that we face. Our organization is here to partner with the Town Council in making that happen.

Again, thank you for your assistance with parking.

Sincerely yours,



Elizabeth H. Parham, CMSM
Executive Director

Cc: Cal Horton
Kay Johnson