



**CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY MINUTES
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2006, 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson Jonathan Whitney called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Commission members present were George Cianciolo, Chris Culbreth, Gretchen MacNair, Charlotte Newby, and Robin Whitsell. Staff members present were Senior Planner Kay Pearlstein, and Senior Planning Technician Kay Tapp.

University of North Carolina Park & Ride Lot @ Chapel Hill Bible Church
(File 7.26..18 &46)

The Town has received a request for a Concept Plan Review to use the Chapel Hill Bible Church parking lot for a University of North Carolina employee park and ride lot for 241 vehicles. No site changes are proposed. The site is located on Sage Road between Old Sterling Road and Erwin Road (see area map on back). The site is located in the Residential-3-Conditional zoning district and Resource Conservation District and is identified as Orange County, Chapel Hill Township Tax Map 26, Lots 18 and 46.

CONCEPT PLAN PRESENTATION

Staff members from the University of North Carolina presented a Concept Plan for a Park and Ride lot at the Chapel Hill Bible Church parking lot.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

1. A resident of Presque Isle expressed displeasure with the area map used by the University because adjacent neighborhoods were not shown. He does not believe that traffic in the area was correctly reflected by the developments shown on the area map. He was also concerned that overflow parking may occur on the adjacent streets and impede bus traffic and traffic in general.

The resident listed several developments in the area that are currently being constructed or slated to be developed in the immediate future that will increase traffic on 15-501 and surrounding road network, including the "super street."

It was mentioned that adjacent day care centers and child care facilities were in the

area and the need to take child safety into consideration with the additional traffic was stressed.

2. A resident of Englewood expressed concerns with the traffic. He wanted to know who the users of the parking lot were going to be and how they were to be chosen. The applicant responded that the traffic coming from the North, (from Durham) would be targeted and staff would be the users. The citizen then asked why the Friday Lot on Hwy 54 couldn't be used. The applicant responded that nothing prevented them from using the lot now or in the future and further responded that there was no data currently developed for who the 241 parking spaces were going to be leased to.

The citizen further expressed concerns with the lack of data for the prospective users, traffic in the area, and time of day to be leased (just 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. or for special events too).

3. Another citizen from Presque Isle asked about overflow parking availability at the Friday Center. The applicant responded that 2 parking lots were owned by the university and one was owned by the Town. Patrol of the Chapel Hill Bible Church parking spaces was expected with towing enforced.
4. A resident of Sommerfield Crossing stated that he has expressed concerns with traffic in the area since 1998. He understands that the University needs the additional parking area but feels that this is the wrong place. There is too much existing traffic to add a park and ride lot. The main access to the future Wilson Assemblage is planned for Sage Road too. The citizen further stated that the DOT in 2002 labeled Erwin and Sage Road intersections as congested as 15-501 and Sage Road intersection.

He believes that an existing 1995 ordinance states that no commercial parking can be established in a residential neighborhood.

5. Another resident of Presque Isle stated that while the University is not proposing changes, considerable more traffic on side roads will create more traffic lights and signs. He stated that he regularly rides the " D Bus from work and it is hard to cross Sage Road after getting off the bus. He believes that a thorough look at pedestrian traffic must be carefully evaluated in relationship to a potential park and ride lot in the area.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

1. Commissioner George Cianciolo supported a park and ride lot in this area of Town but hard to find locations. He believes that this is a reasonable utilization of the Bible Church lot during the day. He would like to see an updated Traffic Impact Analysis done and that if approved, a condition of the Special Use Permit be that the hours of operation are from 6 am to 6 pm and no parking be permitted on Old Sterling Road and Sage Road.

He wondered if the parking lot lighting was proposed to change. He was concerned about safe lighting on the lot after work hours, especially during the winter when it will be dark.

He is also concerned about buses on Old Sterling and Sage Roads and believes that a traffic light may be warranted at that intersection and wants a careful look at the traffic issues in the area: He also believes that a bus shelter is needed, one that is upscale and has input from the Public Arts Commission.

2. Commissioner Charlotte Newby asked for information on the number of spaces currently being provided in Park and Ride lots that serve UNC. The applicant responded that a couple of thousand spaces are provided by a combination of lots in Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and soon in Chatham County. Commissioner Newby responded that this request for park and ride lots is not a unique situation although she recognizes the sensitivity of the neighbors.

She asked the applicant if the Bible Church would be receiving money for the leased spaces. The applicant responded that the spaces would each rent for \$200 a year.

Commissioner Newby noted the explosion of growth in this area and requested an area map that would reflect all growth changes taking place. She noted that as growth expands into the area, problems may also move into the neighborhoods to change their texture.

3. Commissioner Gretchen MacNair asked the applicant if UNC staggered hours of employees work day to create a flexible schedule. The applicant responded that UNC encourages flex hours and was not sure if those proposed to lease spaces would be "flex hour" employees.
4. Commissioner Chris Culbreth has tremendous concern about traffic and the neighborhood impacts. He feels that the lot should be closer to I-40.
5. Commissioner Robin Whitsell supported concerns shared by the other Commissioners for traffic and impacts to the neighborhoods. She believes that problems are being created that will not be overcome.

Commissioner Whitsell does not want other UNC users without leased spaces to overflow on adjacent streets. She is concerned that parking may occur in adjacent Providence Glen.

She feels strongly that the applicant listen to the many resident's concerns and to bring someone from the church to the next meeting.

6. Commissioner Jonathan Whitney wanted to know how the number of 241 spaces was arrived at. The applicant responded that dialogue with the church identified the number they needed and where they were needed on the site. Commissioner Whitney felt satisfied with the need for a park and ride lot in this location.

SUMMARY

Most Commissioners mentioned that a better flow of information was needed between the University and the surrounding neighbors. The Commission agreed that additional information was needed overall including:

- A better Area Map that encompassed a larger area that showed current and pending future developments as well as more nearby residential developments;
- A current Traffic Impact Analysis;
- More data provided on the potential users;
- More data on current park and ride lots (locations, numbers, users)
- More informational meetings with the neighbors;

An increase in traffic and impacts resulting from the increase was the single-most concern raised by the Commissioners. They all believed a thorough analysis of traffic in the area was warranted.

Prepared by: Jonathan Whitney, Chair

Kay Pearlstein, Planning Staff liaison