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**SUMMARY MINUTES OF A PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2006 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Mayor Kevin Foy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Council members present were Laurin Easthom, Sally Greene, Ed Harrison, Cam Hill, Mark Kleinschmidt, Bill Strom, Bill Thorpe, and Jim Ward.

Staff members present were Deputy Town Manager Florentine Miller, Assistant Town Manager Bruce Heflin, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, Town Information Officer Catherine Lazorko, Planning Director J. B. Culpepper, Development Planning Coordinator Gene Poveromo, and Acting Town Clerk Sandy Cook.

**Item 4 – Concept Plan: UNC Park and Ride Lot at the
Chapel Hill Bible Church Park**

Mary Jane Felganhauer, with UNC Facilities Planning, provided an overview of the Concept Plan. She distributed to the Council an area map of the site and pointed out the location of the proposed park and ride lot. Ms. Felganhauer said no changes were being proposed for the site except for a new bus shelter at the existing bus stop along with signage. She then explained the route they proposed that the buses take to the site.

Ms. Felganhauer noted that a public meeting had been held at the Church on April 17 to explain the plan to interested neighbors and others. She stated that the University was committed to addressing the neighbors concerns, and would continue to monitor the use of the lot as well as any potential problems brought forward by the neighbors. Ms. Felganhauer displayed slides that included a location map, an aerial map of the surrounding areas, a chart highlighting the park and ride demand in the area, the location of other park and ride facilities, existing transit routes, and several photos of the site.

Ms. Felganhauer stated that the Traffic Impact Analysis just completed indicated that this proposal would have no significant impact on traffic. She noted that the lot would not be used on weekends or for other UNC events, as per their agreement with the Church.

Kevin Hewison said the meeting on April 17 brought out a number of concerns, with traffic and potential noise and air pollution being the most mentioned. He said when you move into a neighborhood with several churches you expect that they would be good neighbors. Mr. Hewison said when one of them suddenly becomes a parking lot for 241 vehicles, the nature of the neighborhood would certainly be changed.

Mr. Hewison said the neighbors were also concerned about other larger changes in the neighborhood, such as the Wilson Assembly and a large office building at the end of Old Sterling Drive, would change the nature of traffic in the area. He said this was one more change to be added, and he believed this park and ride lot proposal needed to take that into consideration when talking about traffic impacts.

Mr. Hewison said another concern was the potential impact on existing bus services. He said if there was an express service operating from that site to the campus, it would be attractive to many, including him. Mr. Hewison said it would also be attractive to people who lived outside the neighborhood, and they were concerned this would act as a magnet. He said it could result in increased street parking throughout the neighborhood, as well as the use of other parking lots belonging to nearby businesses or organizations. Mr. Hewison said the impact on the local community was a concern because they would be forced to become parking police.

Mr. Hewison said he was concerned because they had not heard from the Church how they plan to monitor parking which might overflow from the Church. For example, he said, the University had indicated it would monitor its parking, but there were another 400 to 500 spaces there and the Church had not indicated how it would control parking in those areas.

John Hutchinson, developer of Presque Isle, said the map provided by the University did not indicate nearby large developments or office buildings, including one that was under construction. He asked how the neighborhood was suppose to fend off illegal parkers, and why they should have to. Mr. Hutchinson said the Church was gaining \$48,200 per year but the neighbors would have to provide the monitoring. He said the bus access would be "extremely" attractive to commuters, and would not be limited to just the 241 users of the park and ride lot.

Mr. Hutchinson asked if the Council was focusing on the entire picture of what was taking place in that area, noting the Wilson Assemblage, the Residence Inn, and this proposed park and ride, with no traffic light proposed for the Erwin/Sage intersection until 2009. He added that they had no assurance that a traffic light would be placed at the entrance to Lowe's and the Wilson Assemblage entrance. Mr. Hutchinson said then they have to take into consideration the inclusion of the already obsolete superstreet planned for that area.

Harvey Krasney apologized for a statement made to the CDC regarding an existing ordinance that prohibited commercial parking in a residential area. He said his information was incorrect, but he believed there should be such a rule.

Dr. Krasney said he agreed that there needed to be a park and ride lot for commuters coming in from Durham, but not in this neighborhood. He said UNC had had four years to locate an existing site elsewhere, as suggested by the Council in 2002. Dr. Krasney asked if they had sought rights to use a fraction of the large parking areas at New Hope Commons or Patterson Place, or other space in the Garrett Road area. He said he believed the University had not looked elsewhere because they wanted to take the easier and cheaper way out, and without a doubt some of that expense would come from tax dollars.

Dr. Krasney stated that the University should think about what it was doing to the surrounding neighborhoods, which totaled 12 by his count. He said they were already fighting traffic congestion caused by the explosion of growth in the area. Dr. Krasney said the Council recently approved two more developments, Wilson Assemblage and Dobbins Hill, with 450 parking spaces and a bank. He said the traffic consultant said there would be no significant increase in

traffic, but he asked if any of the Council members had visited the area and viewed the traffic congestion at peak hours.

Dr. Krasney said on April 29, 2002, the Bible Church had submitted a letter to the Town requesting 317 additional parking spaces, noting that due to current space constraints and due to their anticipated growth, space in their lot was very tight on Sundays and was growing more tight on weekdays. He said if that was the case, how could they afford to give up 241 spaces to the University. Dr. Krasney said the letter had indicated the next phase of growth for the Church would be the addition of an athletic gym, which he said would attract people at peak hours. He said of those 317 spaces granted in 2002, he understood that only 70 had been built out to date.

Dr. Krasney stated that perhaps the University anticipated building and paving those remaining 247 spaces approved for the Church, and for the Church to add to those 247 spaces when a gym was built. He said if that happened, that would amount to an additional 500 vehicles being added to their neighborhood to contend with at peak hours, as well as with more mass transit. Dr. Krasney said mixed use could be an asset to the community but it could also be a burden, and that would be the case particularly in the Erwin/Sage area. He urged the Council to draw the line on more facilities that would result in more unmanageable traffic in these neighborhoods. Mr. Krasney said the University needed more park and ride lots, but not in residential neighborhoods.

Andy McWilliams pointed out that he was a commuting biker to campus, a University employee and a resident of the neighborhood. He said the most direct route for commuters to take coming from 15-501 was to turn onto Old Sterling Road and then into the park and ride lot. Mr. McWilliams stated that would mean 250 additional cars on a road with no lines or markings that was frequently used by pedestrians and bikers, including many children. He said that road was not built to handle that type of traffic, including the additional buses. Mr. McWilliams said the safety of those residents would be in jeopardy, and asked the Council to carefully consider that.

Joanne Watson said that 23 bus runs a day were projected to serve the 241 parking spaces proposed. She said that parking permits were proposed for the parked cars, but no permits were proposed for the riders. Ms. Watson said that would allow for any local or non-local persons to access the bus at that location. She said that at peak travel times that would be an attractive and express service to many.

Ms. Watson said she understood there were nearly 3,000 employees living in this area of Durham who had no easy access to a UNC park and ride lot, and only 241 permits would go to these employees. She said while the park and ride lot would be monitored by the University, there was real concern that others would park in the surrounding neighborhoods and make use of the express bus service from this lot.

Ms. Watson said with the addition of the Wilson Assemblage and Dobbins Hill, a bank, an office building and a hotel, she wondered if there had been a unified approach to study the traffic impacts of these combined projects. She said that Erwin Road was seriously congested with speed restricted to 35 mph, but that restriction was mostly ignored. Ms. Watson said her children were unable to safely cross the street to play with neighboring children, and with the effect of these combined projects as well as the park and ride lot the problems would only increase.

Brent Clark, representing the Chapel Hill Bible Church, said this was clearly a congested area, and the Church was eager to work with the neighbors and the University to address these concerns.

Council Member Kleinschmidt said he was confused about the bus routes. Ms. Felganhauer displayed a map of the existing bus routes. Council Member Kleinschmidt asked if any change to the existing bus routes were proposed. Ms. Felganhauer responded no, but said they were proposing to add a dedicated line for this lot, which would travel directly to the campus.

Council Member Kleinschmidt said he did not think this was the best location for a park and ride, although he understood why it was attractive to the University. He said he believed that people would not cut through Eastowne to get to the lot, rather they would travel to Sage Road and turn there. Council Member Kleinschmidt said if he had a permit to park there, he supposed he would go out of his way, but it did not appear to be an optimum area. Ms. Felganhauer stated that many people travel down that corridor and head to one of the other park and ride lots. She said the lot was close to the corridor, and both the Town and the University had been searching for a site for a park and ride lot in this area for several years.

Council Member Harrison said this was a corridor where a park and ride was needed, but the Town had missed the opportunity to provide one in the Lowe's parking lot and may have missed the opportunity at Eastowne as well. He said this area of 15-501 at 1-40 was in need of such a lot, but aside from this Concept Plan he would like to see documentation on how many spaces were needed in this corridor. Council Member Harrison said he knew that the Friday Center lot was at maximum, as well as NC 54.

Council Member Harrison asked about bus movement through the site. Ms. Felganhauer said the bus would travel 15-501 to Eastowne and Old Sterling and stop at the existing bus stop, then go back out to Sage Road to 15-501. Council Member Harrison said that no traffic light was now proposed for Old Sterling and Sage, but there would eventually be one at Lowe's required by the Wilson Assemblage. He said he was unaware that the traffic light at Erwin and Sage Roads was three years away. Ms. Felganhauer said the traffic impact information they had recently received indicated installation was planned in 2009 and was associated with the TIP project to realign Weaver Dairy Road. Council Member Harrison said in the long term that would be a better location for the buses to turn.

Council Member Harrison asked, regarding monitoring the lot, if the University intended to provide oversight for twelve hours each day. UNC Police Chief Derek Poarch responded that it was their intention to have an officer out there daily, but would not commit to having an officer there for a 12-hour period. Council Member Harrison said that needed to be a stipulation added to the project by the Town.

Council Member Harrison said the transit system could not control who rode the bus, and asked how the issue of neighborhood parking by commuters would be controlled. Chief Poarch said it was their belief that the dedicated route that would have 20-minute headways from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and then again from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. would not be attractive for many persons commuting

to Town when that headway slowed to once per hour. He said they would have officers in that area during those times to help control it, but it was certainly true that they could not control who rode the bus. Chief Poarch noted that they had been told that some of the neighbors wanted to walk to the lot and ride the bus, so they would be added to the ridership of that route as well. He said he understood the residents concerns regarding neighborhood parking, and believed there would have to be some partnering between the University and the Town as far as enforcement of no parking on Town streets.

Council Member Ward said he was glad to hear that the University recognized that people would use this route even if they did not use the park and ride lot. He said as this plan matured, he would like the University to identify elements where pedestrian and bike safety could be improved, and that a pedestrian crossing should be included at Sage Road to assist people in accessing the lot.

Council Member Ward said that adding this type of intensity would require the addition of a traffic light at Sage Road/Erwin Road, and it could not wait three years. He asked that the University explore that and move the date of installation up if possible.

Council Member Ward said he would be interested in hearing the details regarding screening, as well as safety issues such as lighting.

Mayor Foy inquired about the target date for opening the lot. Chief Poarch said they would be prepared to begin use when the project was approved and when Chapel Hill Transit was prepared to service it. He said their discussion with the Church was to use the lot on a year-to-year basis, and their transit year started in August. Chief Poarch said they would like to make use of the lot until March or April to see how it worked. He said if it was not working they would discontinue use of the lot.

Council Member Easthom said it was noted that the traffic statement showed no impact. Ms. Felganhauer said the traffic impact analysis showed no impact from this project. Council Member Easthom said there were 241 spaces for 241 cars, and wondered what the usage was of that lot during the week and how that was weighed against the analysis. Ms. Felganhauer said the analysis was done according to the Town's Traffic Impact Analysis guidelines, and a full document would be submitted when they brought the plan forward. Council Member Easthom said she would wait until they received that document, noting she found it hard to believe that 241 cars would have no impact.

COUNCIL MEMBER THORPE MOVED, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER KLEINSCHMIDT, ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION R-3. THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0).