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**CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY MINUTES
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2006, 7:30 P.M.**

Vice-Chairperson Jonathan Whitney called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Commission members present were Mark Broadwell, George Cianciolo, Eleanor Howe, Laura King Moore, and Charlotte Newby. Staff members present were Development Coordinator Gene Poveromo, Senior Planner Kay Pearlstein, and Planning Technician Kay Tapp.

GREENBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT (File 7.92.C.2.2A, 2C, 2D, 2E, 14, & 15)

A request for a Concept Plan Review has been submitted to construct an office/residential/retail development proposed to be located on the south side of West Rosemary Street, with frontage on North Merritt Mill Road and North Graham Street (see area map on back). The development proposal includes the demolition of several commercial and residential structures and the construction of 184,000 square feet of mixed use floor area. The proposed project includes a 9-story building and a 2-level underground parking area with 195 spaces. The 1.32-acre site is located in the Town Center-2 (TC-2) zoning district. The site is identified as Chapel Hill Township, Tax Map 92, Block C, Lots 2, 2A, 2C, 2D, 2E, 14, and 15.

CONCEPT PLAN PRESENTATION

The 4-member design team presented a concept plan for 184,000 square feet of mixed use floor area including 40,000 square feet of retail space. The height and floor area are proposed to exceed the dimensional requirements permitted for the Town Center-2 zoning district. The applicant is proposing that the building be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified employing solar energy, green roofs, and rainwater recycling. A letter from the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership was also presented to the Commission (attached).

CITIZEN COMMENTS

1. The UNC Director of Carolina Environmental Programs endorsed the project for the proposed carbon reduction. He is enthusiastic about the educational opportunities for students proposed with the Educational Center, especially demonstration of sustainable environments.
2. A neighborhood building owner supported the inclusiveness for the minority business owners and community.
3. A professor in the department of City and Regional Planning believes this project is the most exciting and best project he has seen for Chapel Hill.
4. A neighborhood business owner stated that the business community is excited about the project's plan to provide downtown residential opportunities and create a 24 hour

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community. She also likes the public spaces proposed in close proximity to the business community.

5. The Executive Director of Empowerment, believes that the project will enhance the Northside Community however, she expressed concern with the size of the building. She wants the developer to better blend the building into the surrounding community.
6. A member of Chapel Hill Solar Roofs endorses the project. He believes it is time to mainstream solar energy technology and reduce carbon emissions.
7. A Graham Street neighbor believes that project too big for the area and not in keeping with the small mill-type houses surrounding it.
8. A 25-year resident of the community thinks the proposal is exciting, especially the inclusion of an education center depicting the history of the surrounding black business community.

COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1. Commissioner Eleanor Howe supports the developer's involvement with the community; underground parking, and accommodations for pedestrian and bus access.
2. Commissioner Howe believes the project has great aspects but is concerned about the creation of a tall, deep canyon formed by the two main buildings and the potential for unappealing outdoor space created by building shadows. She requested additional information on how the proposed height compares with the requirements in the Land Use Management Ordinance.
3. Commissioner Laura King Moore believes that project is well-timed with the interest in redevelopment of the west end of Rosemary Street and the interface with Carrboro.
4. Commissioner Moore requested additional information on the scale, massing, maintenance of rooftop gardens, and neighborhood context and suggested the applicant prepare cross-sections through the site to include the adjacent neighborhoods.
5. Commissioner Charlotte Newby believes this initial LEEDS-certified building in downtown should be perfect for 25 years into the future.
6. Commissioner Newby wanted to know what other buildings are as tall or taller and the building schedule proposed for construction – will it coincide with the construction of Lots 2 and 5?
7. Commissioner Newby requested additional information on the:
 - landscape buffer proposed adjacent to Knott's Funeral Home;
 - maintenance required for the rooftop vegetation; and
 - kinds of activities anticipated for the Education Center. .

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8. Commissioner Newby endorsed the Education Center concept looking backward in time to history of the neighborhood and a looking forward in time as a LEEDS-certified building.
9. Commissioner George Cianciolo does not believe the building height is an issue. He stated that the pedestrian scale of 3 stories currently exists several places on W. Rosemary Street.
10. Commissioner Cianciolo requested additional information on how the building would look at night suggesting that a 100-foot building can appear as a nighttime beacon.
11. Commissioner Cianciolo was concerned about the site lighting both above and below the tree canopies, especially in the well-traveled pedestrian areas. He notes that shadows and shade at nighttime are frequently caused when the lights are above or within the tree canopies.
12. Commissioner Cianciolo supported the underground parking and wide sidewalks encouraging pedestrian use.
13. Commissioner Mark Broadwell endorses the infill proposal of a landmark building, however he emphasized that the architecture must be outstanding. A tall, glassy building can produce an unwanted appearance. The applicant responded saying that most of the glass would be at the top of the building and the ratio of glass to building would be mostly 50/50.
14. Commissioner Broadwell asked for additional information demonstrating how the proposal relates to the surrounding area.
15. Commission Amy Ryan's comments are attached (attached).
16. Commissioner Jonathan Whitney praised the citizen participation at the meeting.
17. Commissioner Whitney believes that the building is too large for the area. He requested additional information to be provided by cross-section views showing adjacent neighborhoods, heights of surrounding buildings, and parking lots.
18. Commissioner Whitney expressed more sensitivity is needed to shadows cast by the proposed buildings.

Prepared for: Jonathan Whitney, Vice-Chair
Prepared by: Kay Pearlstein, Staff