

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF A BUSINESS MEETING
OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30 2004, AT 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council members present were Sally Greene, Ed Harrison, Cam Hill, Mark Kleinschmidt, Bill Strom, Dorothy Verkerk, Jim Ward, and Edith Wiggins.

Staff members present were Town Manager Cal Horton, Deputy Town Manager Florentine Miller, Assistant Town Manager Bruce Heflin, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, Town Information Officer Catherine Lazorko, Traffic Engineer Kumar Neppalli, Engineering Director George Small, Planning Director Roger Waldon, Senior Planner Kay Pearlstein, Senior Long Range Planning Coordinator Chris Berndt, Housing Director Tina Vaughn, Library Director Kathy Thompson, Assistant Library Director Mark Bayliss, and Acting Town Clerk Sandy Cook.

Item 13 - Concept Plan: North Carolina Botanical Garden

Council Member Ward asked to be recused from this discussion. He had been a curator at the Botanical Garden for more than 25 years, he explained, adding that he had been fully involved with developing the plan being presented tonight. Council Member Ward asked to be recused during this and any other Council deliberations on the matter in order to remove any appearance of a conflict of interest.

COUNCIL MEMBER VERKERK MOVED, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GREENE, TO RECUSE COUNCIL MEMBER WARD FROM ALL CONSIDERATION OF BOTANICAL GARDEN APPLICATIONS. THE MOTION, WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0).

Mr. Waldon reviewed the application and pointed out a section of Laurel Hill Road that the applicant would propose closing.

Botanical Garden Director Peter White reviewed the project, including its state-of-the-art, environmental-designed building that would become the first "platinum" building in North Carolina under the American Green Building Council's certification system. Dr. White described various environmental features, including cisterns, a geothermal heat system, day-lighting, solar water heating, photovoltaic panels, recycled products, and certifiably sustainable harvested wood. He said that materials would come from a 500 mile radius around Chapel Hill and that there would be a stringent recycling program for construction waste. Dr. White explained that the building would demonstrate solutions to sustainable living, and he expressed hope that the Council and community would support the project.

Dr. White stated that the Botanical Garden was particularly interested in Council feedback on the proposal to close Lauren Hill Road Extension to through traffic. He also noted their request for 164 parking spaces, which would be fewer than the Town's Land Use Management Ordinance requires.

Peter Krawchyk, Assistant Director of Facilities Planning at UNC, presented the concept plan, noting the current estimated cost of \$7.1 million. He showed the SUP boundary on a map and indicated surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Krawchyk told Council members that the Botanical Garden had notified property owners well beyond the required distance. He indicated landmarks on an aerial map and showed the Resource Conservation District (RCD) limits from Meeting of the Waters Creek.

Mr. Krawchyk stated the two key elements of the plan were a 29,000 square-foot visitor's education center and a relocated parking entrance. The project's goal was to set a new standard for environmentally friendly public buildings in North Carolina, he said. Mr. Krawchyk described the inside of the visitor's education building, listed materials that would be used, and reviewed environmental design features.

Dr. White then explained that the Botanical Garden planned to submit a proposal to close Laurel Hill Road Extension to through traffic from the staff parking entry to the bypass. The Botanical Garden had worked with a committee from the Kings Mill/Morgan Creek neighborhoods for the last two years, he said, explaining that they had explored and identified neighborhood concerns. Dr. White proposed that a bike and pedestrian corridor be built within the existing road corridor and that there be a bike and pedestrian link to Glenwood Elementary School and Glen Lennox through abandoned golf course holes along the bypass.

Dr. White said that the Botanical Garden would supply the land and funds to improve the intersection of Laurel Hill Road and Coker Drive, an area that was of major importance to the neighborhood. They would also provide a right-of-way and advocate for a right turn lane from Manning Drive Extension to the bypass, he said. Dr. White stated that the Botanical Garden would also support the neighborhood in additional improvements, would advocate for a bike and pedestrian crossing at Old Mason Farm Road, and would request a public bus stop.

Dr. White said that the plan would not adversely impact emergency service to the neighborhood. He explained that the Botanical Garden was seeking the closing of Laurel Hill Road, which bisects their property, for increased safety and a "seamless visitor and educational experience." Dr. White spoke about creating a smooth transition "from human gardens to nature's gardens" and proposed that closing Laurel Hill Road would help achieve that. Closing that road would also address a neighborhood concern about the increasing use of this street as a cut-through by northbound motorists trying to bypass the light at Manning Drive, he said.

With regard to closing Laurel Hill Road, Mayor Foy commented that the process the of engaging neighbors and providing a rationale was the right way to proceed.

Council Member Greene remarked that she was a Botanical Garden neighbor and she knew first hand that it had been a good process. Improvements to the three-way intersection were important, she said, noting that the Botanical Garden owns the space on both sides. The area would be much improved by having the Botanical Garden control all of that, said Council Member Greene.

Council Member Hill commented that he had a sentimental attachment to Laurel Hill Road, where he had ridden his bike as a child. But, he said, he and others probably would learn to live with the change. Dr. White pointed out that there still would be a bicycle path there.

Council Member Harrison remarked that the Botanical Garden would, at some point, have to add protected bicycle parking. He asked where the emergency access to the Garden would be. Architect David Swanson indicated emergency fire truck access points on the map.

Council Member Verkerk pointed out that Dr. White had recently won an award of excellence from the National Garden Club, Inc.

COUNCIL MEMBER STROM MOVED, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VERKERK, TO ADOPT R-22, THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY (8-0) WITH COUNCIL MEMBER WARD RECUSED.

A RESOLUTION TRANSMITTING COUNCIL COMMENTS ON A CONCEPT PLAN FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA BOTANICAL GARDEN (2004-06-30/R-22)

WHEREAS, a Concept Plan has been submitted for review by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill, for the North Carolina Botanical Garden; and

WHEREAS, the Council has heard presentations for the applicant, and citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Council has discussed the proposal, with Council members offering reactions and suggestions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill that the Council transmits comments to the applicant regarding this proposal, as expressed by Council members during discussions on June 30, 2004, and reflected in minutes of that meeting.

This the 30th day of June, 2004.

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BOTANICAL GARDENS VISITOR EDUCATION CENTER SUP

19. CONCEPT PLAN SUMMARY

The Visitor's Education Center was presented to the CDC on June 16, 2004 and to the Town Council on June 30, 2004.

The only significant change from the concept plan to this plan is the removal of the herbarium/library building.

Comments on the concept plan are attached. They were generally supportive of the project and the comments regarding Laurel Hill Road have been dealt with through the closure of Laurel Hill Road. The proposed parking surface is appropriate for the vision and the mission of the Garden and the Visitor's Education Center.