

**Orange United Methodist Church
1220 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514**

**Planning Board Meeting & CDC Meeting
December 18, 2007 & December 19, 2007
Orange United Methodist Church Responses:**

Orange United Methodist Church is pleased that Resolution A passed unanimously with the stipulation change that a start date shall occur within 4 yrs. of approval and completion shall occur within 15 yrs.

Orange United Methodist Church membership is keenly aware of the erosion-control concerns expressed by Lake Ellen resident, Rick Kagan, at the Planning Board meeting. The church shares those same concerns. Mr. Kagan was not present at our meeting with the Lake Ellen Homeowners' Association on October 29, 2007. Mr. Kagan is new to the Lake Ellen neighborhood and, like others in the community, he has not yet had the opportunity to be fully informed of the steps Orange United Methodist Church has taken to insure that erosion control during construction and storm water issues related to impervious surface upon completion of construction are all addressed to the fullest extent. The church property, too, has experienced problems that were a direct result of DOT widening of MLK Blvd. This is an issue to which we are extremely sensitive. We look forward to the opportunity for our civil engineer, Mr. Phil Post, to fully explain our bio-retention storm water control system to the Town Council and the citizens of Chapel Hill. Mr. Post was allowed the opportunity to better explain the bio-retention system at the Community Design Commission. We appreciated the favorable recognition of the effort and expense the church has undertaken to provide this state-of-the-art system for water storage, treatment and gradual release. It will mean that those downstream from us will see virtually no impact from the entire church plan.

With respect to the condition of having to plant 3" caliper trees, the church respectfully requests that a compromise be reached at a requirement to plant 2.5" caliper specimens. The church has taken great care in preserving all the existing vegetation along MLK Blvd. and is, in fact, keeping its footprint very much within what is already cleared property now. It is difficult to justify the increased expense of the 3" caliper specimens to the congregation when a 2" or 2.5" caliper specimen will accomplish the same environmental and shade canopy goals and meets current ordinance requirements. We ask specifically for consideration in the back parking lot area where tree loss will not be noticeable to the general public.

The church appreciates that Planning Board comments and Community Design Commission comments about the NC 86 corridor "streetscape plan" are specifically targeted to Town staff to address with the town's sidewalk budget money, if it is determined that there could be something done in the northern portion of the church property to make improvements consistent with the plan. It was reiterated at the CDC

meeting that these comments were in no way meant to be a financial burden placed upon the church to address. It has been determined that the existing sidewalks along the front of the existing buildings cannot be moved because of the large trees that would be compromised in the process. The church is happy to consult with town staff as to what improvements could be made at the town's expense in the northern portion of its property to serve as an example for the future.

In regard to the request for further consideration of "shared use" of some portion of parking spaces during weekday business hours, the church is continuing to investigate the matter. The church is in the process of contacting other area churches to gather information on their experiences with shared use of spaces to see what might work at Orange. The church would like it noted that the existing parking lot is never empty on weekdays. The church does not sit empty except for preschool and after school during the week (we'd be happy to offer a monthly calendar of events as evidence of this). We have a long history of "shared use" of our facilities. Parking space use directly correlates to the building space that is being used. We want to have the time to carefully plan how we are going to share parking spaces so that we don't get into a situation that we later regret. There are many liability and security issues that are inherent with shared use of a facility. We need to have time to fully investigate those matters especially as they relate to being able to control access throughout the campus during preschool (9am – 1pm, M-F) and after school hours (2pm – 6pm, M-F). We also have various scout groups and youth activities that require availability of parking spaces during afternoon and early evening weekday hours. There are times when we offer our meeting facilities to outside groups for conferences during the day as well, and they need parking to accommodate their needs. The church needs time to further investigate how it might designate some portion of spaces for some kind of shared use that encourages mass transit use and/or walking & biking into town that doesn't interfere with its own parking needs and that doesn't present a problem with security of the campus. We appreciate patience while we research this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia N. Parks
OUMC Building Team Vice Chair