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Friday, September 22, 2006

Dear Mayor Foy, Chapel Hill Town Council members and manager;

The citizens of Hillsborough St., the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District, and nearby communities want to express our sincere thanks for your attentiveness to our concerns and the many issues that the RAM / Town House Apt. development project raises. While a "marathon" session that left most of us exhausted, the "silver lining" was to see our council members in action over the 4 hours on a variety of issues. We were very impressed and pleased with your general concerns, approaches, and comments. We are glad to see how well represented the community is by its elected officials.

We have bulleted our thoughts about the issues raised on Monday's meeting below, as they are quite far-reaching and complex. To be honest, it is a task beyond our abilities to solve most of these and we whole-heartedly agree with Mayor Foy's closing comments that major staff efforts need to be dedicated to developing a comprehensive plan about the impact and approach to development in our area.

Lastly, we want to invite you to visit our neighborhood. Besides the traffic issue (which appears to need little convincing), we would like you to visit the properties nearest to the proposed developments and the Mill Race development would also like you to see their concerns from the lower end of the street. In particular, the Donnan's property is truly a special place and they have a strong sense of "public servitude" in their maintenance and sharing of the property. They leave an open invitation to the neighbors to visit and enjoy their yard, garden and spring – which we do. It is a delightful place.

We recognize that this is very short notice, but our annual neighborhood potluck picnic is this Sunday afternoon at the Horace Williams House beginning at 4:30 pm. We would be happy to show any members around prior to that and you are welcome to stop by the picnic – a great event and opportunity to meet more of the community. If this is not a good time, we urge you to contact us and set up a more convenient date for this.

Sincerely,

Citizens of Hillsborough St., Franklin-Rosemary Historic District, and Mill Race Development.

Please Contact either the Benfeys or Freemans to coordinate a visit to our neighborhood.

This note is our attempt to summarize neighborhood discussions. Because of wanting to get it to council members quickly, not everyone whose opinions were considered have seen this letter yet. The following have specifically reviewed this letter and concur:

Tanya and Keith Freeman, 407 Hillsborough St., 928-0232

Dick and Caroline Donnan, 301B Hillsborough St., 942-3023

Elisabeth and Philip Benfey, 307 Hillsborough St., 967-6903

Mark Scroggs – President, Mill Race Homeowners Association, 100 Mill Run Dr., 929-4925

Nicole Calakos and Russell Mead, 208 Hillsborough St., (919) 968-6733

Dabney Grinnan and Greg Ruff, 113 Campbell Lane

Ed Holub, 109 Campbell Lane

R.J. Sims Preston and Olympia Stone, 404 Hillsborough St., 967-0175

Pamela and Conrad Wieden, 301 Hillsborough St.

Transportation and Traffic Issues

## Short Term Goals:

- Continuous sidewalk that is user friendly and accessible to wheelchairs and strollers to get from Franklin to MLK, Jr.
- Provide for a bike friendly solution to traveling on Hillsborough St.
- Regarding RAM Residences at Grove project: Limit number of cars using Hillsborough St. by a "real" not "virtual" barrier to access. Bollards that would allow emergency vehicles potentially. Would allow and be consistent with "urban planning" design concepts to instead create a connection of the townhouses to condo high rises by public pedestrian space/garden instead of the less friendly roads.
- 3 way stop sign at North and Hillsborough, key site because of limited visibility and nearby slope to slow traffic. Would be cheap and easy to install as well as remove if needed.
- Additional traffic calming devices, perhaps speed bumps midway between Bolinwood Dr. and North.
- Address traffic solution for new volume accessing MLK, Jr.
- Prevent pedestrian access to OWASA trails (See further comment in footnote.)
- Construction vehicle access through MLK, Jr, not Hillsborough St.

## Long Term Goals:

- Evaluate traffic projections considering the multiple development proposals
- Make 10, 20 year projections
- Evaluate additional public transportation strains/needs and accommodate (consider "clean" buses)
- Expand/Create Greenways

Housing Needs

- Evaluate long term needs and development growth plan for the area
- Evaluate current apartment residents/demographics/travel methods and patterns
- Evaluate success/impact/demographics of nearby similar recent condo developments
- Concern: What are community goals? – displace students? High priced condos vs. rentals? Be sensitive to low income, long-term residents of our area. Define affordable housing priorities, consider population density goals/limits
- Concern: Developers are favoring dense, pricey condo models – to what extent does this truly reflect the community needs and how will it alter the community? Is it realistic to assume parents will buy condos for the student? If so, how will this affect the student body, campus community, and attractiveness of UNC-Chapel Hill as a college option?

Neighborhood Aesthetics

- Ensure scale and height of development are in line with neighborhood aesthetics
- Don't allow zoning exceptions that would put rooftops visible over tree line from Historic District
- Have story pole structures built on site (including height of any rooftop stacks/structures) to assess visibility and allow for community comment before approving
- Concern: as the current RAM concept plan exists, we believe the height of many buildings will likely need reduction.
- Attractive physical barriers between development and adjacent residential properties to be provided by developers and exist on development property.

**\*\*Regarding stewardship of pedestrian paths:** We don't think it is likely that the new development residents will be good stewards of the paths they use for pedestrian access and for this reason strongly support the request for a barrier to OWASA trails. Currently, pedestrians using the Hillsborough St. sidewalk have caused major problems for the residents. We recognize that the culprits are most certainly a minority of the total users, nevertheless, their impact is significant. Routinely, boisterous speech and behavior awakens many of us between the hours of midnight and 3 am. There is frequent littering of beer bottles and petty vandalism. Most recently, it was entertainment to smash creamery style milk bottles grabbed from a recycling bin making a horrendous noise and terrible amount of glass littering the sidewalk and street. In just the last year, petty theft of a child's bicycle, patio furniture, Halloween pumpkin, and wind chimes have occurred.

**\*\*\*Regarding traffic safety of Hillsborough St.:** We just wanted to relay a couple of not so fun facts: In the last 2 years, someone **crashed** into the stone **wall** of 208 Hillsborough; someone crashed into the **house** of 307 Hillsborough; and someone crashed into the **person** of 301B Hillsborough. And finally, at least one person that we know of, **Ms. Oakes, is dead** as a result of a pedestrian vs. MVA incident on Hillsborough in the 1990s.