

7.3.09

Dear Mayor and Members of the Town Council:

Residents in the 400 to 600 block of East Rosemary Street recently learned of plans to install nine to thirteen pedestrian level street lamps on the north side of our block.

At a recent meeting at one neighbor's home with very polite and helpful Town of Chapel Hill and Duke Energy officials, the available residents reviewed the proposal, received answers to questions; and concluded as a group that the proposed additional lighting was undesirable, unwarranted, redundant, poorly designed and a potential threat to existing mature trees and shrubs and historic stone walls, as well as a detriment to the appearance of this block in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District.

To a person, those present, representing a majority of the block's permanent residents, oppose continuance of the project. This same opinion was voiced by several residents who attended the hearings held on this issue earlier in the year, a meeting that a significant number of block residents could not attend or did not receive notice of.

This letter serves to document that the opinions expressed at that meeting by our trusted neighbors were representative of a majority of the permanent residents affected by the proposed plan.

For almost half of each academic year, the already low student population along our block drops to zero with the closures of the Delta Upsilon fraternity and the Alpha Delta Pi sorority for summer, university breaks and holidays. As you might imagine, at other times the activity around these two extremely well lit and bustling residences serves as its own protection at all hours of the day and night against unwanted and unwelcome neighborhood intruders. As neighbors, these wonderful young people add to the pleasure of living close to campus.

As East Rosemary Street residents, we empathize with the need of students who spend four years at UNC-Chapel Hill to feel safe and secure wherever they may be in town or on campus. We also want them to have fond memories of Chapel Hill's peace and beauty.

Indeed, our collective total long-term residency in our block of East Rosemary Street—averaging above 15 years per person—has taught us that ours is one of the safest, most beloved blocks in Chapel Hill for students, visitors or town citizens. None of us recall any type of non-traffic crime, especially assault or robbery, occurring in our block over the past 35 years, whether involving students, town

residents or visitors -- day or night.

The quiet ambience of our block attracts many daytime walkers, joggers, and cyclists but relatively few nighttime pedestrians. The gravel paths, low stone walls, large shade trees, and beautiful old homes viewed on a Spring day's stroll live in many memories as the embodiment of Chapel Hill's charm. It's why we choose to live here.

Even at night, the existing pole lighting on the south side of our block—when lighting is properly maintained—illuminates the north side pedestrian path so that one can see both sides of the street, ahead or behind, along the entire length of the block from Hillsborough Street to Boundary Street and beyond. Automobile traffic is frequent enough to supplement existing pole lighting, meaning that it is rare to have a landscape that is not illuminated. In addition, a number of residences have external flood lighting, landscape lighting, or motion-activated yard lighting, all of which increase the safety of our homes and the local nocturnal ambient light levels.

Homeowners along the block certainly feel their families, guests, and the few pedestrians who walk by are safe under the current nocturnal lighting conditions.

The selection of our block of East Rosemary Street for enhanced lighting fits no rational pattern. Indeed, it is either an arbitrary selection or one driven by factors that have not been revealed to us. It is frankly a matter of mystery to us why our neighborhood was targeted.

It is our understanding that the donation of money from UNC students to the Town of Chapel Hill to enhance town lighting was made in response to Eve Carson's abduction and murder in 2008. The abduction occurred two blocks west on Friendly Lane, an area with much more student traffic than our block, one that is near the Lutheran Church. Ms. Carson's death occurred on Hillcrest Circle, a mile or so from her abduction site. Yet no enhanced lighting is proposed for either of these two areas.

Thus we are confused as to why the Town has selected our block, where the need for enhanced lighting does not exist, the environmental and aesthetic damage will be born by residents, and the majority of UNC students will neither see the enhanced lighting nor realize any direct benefit. It seems like a waste of the students' donation altogether.

In view of these facts, we request that the Town use the funds given by students to enhance lighting in a location or locations where students will gain the maximum benefit, not along the 400 to 600 block of East Rosemary Street. In the strongest terms we wish to voice our opposition to any additional lighting at the pedestrian level and urge that the existing pole lighting be maintained at the highest standards; or, if necessary, be modified to improve the quality and distribution of pole lighting

so as to maximize safety while minimizing local light pollution while improving fixture aesthetics, instead.

As citizens, friends and neighbors the long term residents of the 400 to 600 block of East Rosemary Street stand together in our hope to preserve the historic peace of our block for the town. We know this neighborhood will exist long after we are gone, too. At the same time, we wish to express our solidarity with the students who come to Chapel Hill for education and fun and with their need to feel safe, secure and protected from harm. We believe students who visit and transiently live in our neighborhood feel both the peace and safety they require in our block, as it now exists.

We do not agree with the Town's assessment that placement of enhanced lighting on our block of East Rosemary Street will necessarily advance these goals further— lighting that has not been sought, is not desired, has no proven benefit, has no rational relationship to the gift given by students; nor which has been approved by the homeowners and taxpayers of our neighborhood.

We look forward to a mutually acceptable resolution to this chapter in our historic neighborhood's life, one that does not involve the placement of cheap, tacky, inappropriately designed and haphazardly spaced pedestrian level street lamps. To implement the current plan would squander the student's money and violate the spirit of their gift to the town. It would also alter the current appearance of one of Chapel Hill's iconic neighborhoods while opening up the possibility that future arbitrary extension of such lighting might occur in adjacent blocks or streets without an end in sight.

Please don't let these things happen. Please help us preserve a rational stance toward safety, security, and community responsibility.

Sincerely,

The Residents and Neighbors of the 400 to 600 block of East Rosemary Street

Name	Address	Date
— [Signature] (VINCE & KATHLEEN, MARGARET, EUGENIE & KATHLEEN)	501 E. ROSEMARY STREET	7.6.09
— Shaegent W. Rice James N. Armons	602 E. Rosemary St.	7/6/09
— Bruce Runberg	506 E. Rosemary St	7/7/09
— Randall K & Sally G Sather	206 N. Boundary St (corner of Rosemary & Boundary St.)	7/7/09
— Sallie Shaping Russell	507 E Rosemary	7/10/09
— [Signature]	412 East Rosemary St CLARE PERIN	

- Anne + Paul Mansley

516 East Kennedy

7/13/09

- K. Victoria Threlfall
Molly K. O'Neill 575 East Rosemary Street
7/13/09