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August 15, 2003

The Honorable Kevin Foy
Town of Chapel Hill
306 N. Columbia St.
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Dear Mayor Foy:

The Chapel Hill Herald, as part of its commitment to a discussion of issues important to the community, is planning to hold a series of electoral forums this fall. Among these forums will be one for the Town Council race and another for candidates to the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education.

These forums, to which all candidates have already been invited, will be free and open to all members of the community and to all local media as well. We had hoped that these forums would take place in the Council chamber at Town Hall.

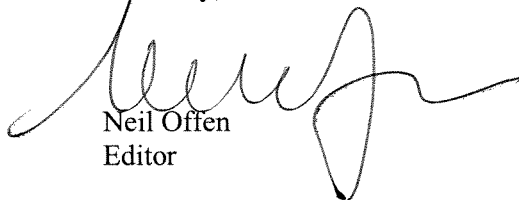
In addition to being the traditional venue for forums of this kind, the chamber is the most centrally located and appropriately equipped facility for this use in the community. It also has the distinct advantage of not being associated with any particular group, thus making it more likely that a wide variety of local residents would feel free to attend.

Working with these assumptions, we have already, in fact, booked the Council chamber for two evenings this October. However, we recently have been informed that Council policy only allows the chamber to be used by outside groups that are designated as nonprofits.

Since the sole purpose of these electoral forums is to inform citizens and promote civic engagement, we respectfully ask the Council to change its policy and allow The Chapel Hill Herald — and any other organization that might wish to do so — the right to use the chamber for events of this kind.

I thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Neil Offen
Editor

cc: Town Council
Cal Horton, Town Manager