

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF A PUBLIC HEARING  
OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 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, Edith Wiggins and Jim Ward.

Staff members present were Town Manager Cal Horton, Deputy Town Manager Florentine Miller, Assistant Town Manager Bruce Heflin, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, Planning Director Roger Waldon, Principal Planner Gene Poveromo, Interim Public Works Director Bill Terry, Senior Development Coordinator J.B. Culpepper, Transportation Director Mary Lou Kuschatka, Traffic Engineer Kumar Neppalli, and Town Clerk Joyce Smith.

**Announcements:**

**Item 2 - Concept Plan: Proposed Family House on Old Mason Farm Road**

J.B. Culpepper explained that this two-story, residential support facility was being proposed in cooperation with UNC Hospitals. It would house 40 families on a 5.8-acre leased site next to the existing Ronald McDonald facility, she said. Ms. Culpepper told Council members that the Historic District Commission (HDC) had reviewed this proposal on December 17, 2003, and a summary of those comments had been provided. She recommended that the Council review this concept plan, receive comments from the Community Design Commission (CDC) and citizens, and adopt Resolution R-1 transmitting comment to the applicant.

John Morris, chair of the Family House Board of Directors, described the proposed facility as something that was needed at every major medical center in the country. He said that the applicant had broad support from UNC Hospitals for this project, which would service families of critically ill and injured adult patients. Mr. Morris explained that they were in the midst of getting lease approval and were engaged in an aggressive fund-raising campaign. He hoped to finish that by the end of the year and to be prepared to build the first phase of Family House, Mr. Morris said.

Architect David Clinton said that the amount of impervious area had already been reduced by half since November. He pointed out that the applicant was asking for fewer parking spaces than required. Mr. Clinton stated that the University had suggested collaboration with the Botanical Garden on a trail system. He displayed features of the lot, including the vegetation, a possible pond, and a tie-in to the trail system. Mr. Clinton displayed a floor plan and an artist's rendering of the outside of the building. He proposed building 22 of the 40 rooms in the first phase of the project.

Mayor Foy asked how parking for this facility compared with that at the Ronald McDonald House. Architect Michael Hining replied that there were more spaces at Family House because there were nine more rooms. A family support facility requires a maximum of 31 rooms under the ordinance, he said. Mr. Hining explained that the applicant would come back later with an amendment to raise that number to 40 rooms for this project.

Council Member Ward asked if Highland Woods neighbors would be looking down on the Family House roof. Mr. Hining replied that those neighbors had been involved in the planning of this

project. Council Member Ward expressed concern about the curve at Mason Farm Road. Mr. Hining said that the alignment had been specifically requested by the leaseholder, which is UNC. Council Member Ward recommended that the project include a sidewalk along Old Mason Farm Road.

Council Member Greene also requested a sidewalk, and asked if this project would justify raising the Mason Farm Road sidewalk to a priority higher than #23 on the Town's plan that begins in 2006. Mayor Foy replied that one factor would be whether or not the sidewalk fills in a gap. If this project built a portion of that sidewalk then that could change the rating, he explained. Council Member Greene wondered when that list would be revisited. Mayor Foy replied that it would be soon.

Mayor Foy asked why the connection between the parking lot and the one at Ronald McDonald House was not on this plan, since it had been on Plan A. Mr. Hining replied that some at Ronald McDonald House did not like the idea. So the applicant had agreed to remove it from the plan, he said, noting that doing so would allow them to keep more trees.

Council Member Harrison asked the staff to analyze moving the Highland Woods Road/Mason Farm Road intersection away from Highway 15-501, as had been discussed in a December letter from Paul Neebe. He noted the problem of lining up one intersection with another problem intersection and asked for an analysis of that as well.

Council Member Ward remarked that he had been discussing this with Traffic Engineer Kumar Neppalli, who had discussed it with UNC, Ronald McDonald House, and Highland Woods residents. There is reason to be optimistic that Highlands Woods Drive would be relocated away from the Highway 15-501 intersection, he said. Council Member Harrison asked who would pay for it, and Council Member Ward replied that it might fall under NCDOT's budget for small safety projects.

Mayor pro tem Wiggins expressed excitement about having a projects such as Family House in the community. As a former member of the Ronald McDonald House Board, she said, she knew how important it was for family members to stay with those in treatment. And as a former social worker at UNC, she said, she had spent many hours trying to find affordable housing for family members who needed to stay in the community for extended periods of time. Mayor pro tem Wiggins described this project as a wonderful addition to the community, if approved, and a great service to the families that come to the hospitals by the hundreds each week. She was very supportive of this project, Mayor pro tem Wiggins said, and she could see the community having more than one in the future.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENE MOVED, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER STROM, TO ADOPT R-1 REFERRING COMMENTS TO THE APPLICANT. THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0).

**A RESOLUTION TRANSMITTING COUNCIL COMMENTS ON A CONCEPT PLAN FOR THE FAMILY HOUSE ON OLD MASON FARM ROAD (2004-03-15/R-1)**

WHEREAS, a Concept Plan has been submitted for review by the Council for the Family House on Old Mason Farm Road; 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 discussion on March 15, 2004, and reflected in minutes of that meeting.

This the 15<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2004.