

STATEMENT OF JUSTIFICATION
HOMESTEAD PARK AQUATIC CENTER

Revised: August 1, 2005

**APPLICATION FOR
MODIFICATION OF SPECIAL USE PERMIT :**

**NORTHERN COMMUNITY PARK
TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL**

INTRODUCTION

This proposal is a modification of an existing Special Use Permit. The Town of Chapel Hill is the Developer of this proposal. The Town's goal is to construct an aquatic center in an existing town park, Homestead Community Park. Homestead Community Park (aka Northern Community Park) was permitted as a Special Use in 1995 and a modification to that Special Use Permit was made in 1997. This proposal will be the second modification to that Special Use Permit. The Special Use Permit approved in 1995 included a 30,000 sq. ft. community building, the function of which to be decided later. This Aquatic Center is the community facility that has been chosen by the Town of Chapel Hill to occupy this park.

SITE DEVELOPMENT

The site slopes down from an existing improved parking area and faces east. The western edge of the building site is the existing parking area. The eastern boundary of the building site is bordered by Booker Creek. The proposed building location is between the existing parking area and a Resource Conservation District that follows this upper reach of Booker Creek. Vehicular access to the facility is by way of an existing access road serving Homestead Community Park. Pedestrian access is from the east, through the eastern portion of this park. Adequate parking exists in the developed parking areas of Homestead Park. These parking areas were designed to accommodate this proposed facility. The dumpster pad and enclosure will be tucked within a corner of the building, screened from view but accessible by trash removal trucks.

Extending from the existing parking area is a proposed connector road with some handicapped parking and a drop-off lane for the facility. This type of paved connector was also anticipated in the original Special Use Permit.

INFRASTRUCTURE

This building site is within the Homestead Community Park. Sufficient infrastructure was developed when the park was developed (1997) to support an anticipated community building at this building location. Water, sewer and electric are currently available at the site. Parking in sufficient quantity is available at this site. Gas is not extended into this site and we will be recommending the extension of gas service for this aquatic Center. Routing for this service will be designed when Public Service Company of North Carolina identifies the gas line closest to this facility.

FACILITY DESCRIPTION

The Chapel Hill Aquatic Center is a complete indoor swimming pool facility. This includes a natatorium featuring a 25-meter x 25 yard lap and training swimming pool and a leisure swimming pool.

The 25 meter by 25 yard pool would accommodate most swimming training requirements and will provide lap swimming. Necessary support space would be provided for storage and staff requirements. The deck will be a minimum of ten feet wide around the perimeter of the pool

This facility would feature a recreational pool with zero-depth entry and the warmer water temperatures necessary for water aerobics. Ample deck space will be provided around this pool. Gender specific locker rooms and family locker rooms are located within the core facility. The core facility also includes an office and as classroom space for training purposes.

The park is located within Chapel Hills zoning jurisdiction and was approved as a Special Use in 1995 for recreational and community function uses. The specific parcel is identified by the Orange County GIS as map block/lot 7.24.-.19 and is owned by the Town of Chapel Hill. Appended to this request please find a copy of the original approved Special Use Permit of 1995 and the approved Modification to that Special Use Permit of 1997

FINDINGS OF FACT

A modification to an existing Special Use Permit requires the following information to be provided in support of the four findings of fact described in Article 4.5.2 of the Chapel Hill Land Use Management Ordinance.

FINDING #1: That the use or development is located, designed, and proposed to be operated so as to maintain or promote the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The proposed Aquatic Center will provide an indoor venue for recreational swimming for all ages. This addition to the Community's recreation facilities will promote and contribute greatly to the health and general welfare for Chapel Hill and surrounding Orange County citizens. The Center will be designed to be fully accessible.

FINDING #2: That the use or development complies with all required regulations and standards of this Chapter, including all applicable provisions of Article 3 and 5 and the applicable specific standards contained in the Supplemental Use Regulations (Article 6) and with all other applicable regulations.

This proposed Aquatic Center submission is in compliance with the Development Ordinance and land development regulations and standards, including:

- 1) Use and Dimensional standards defined in Article 3 of the Land Use Management Ordinance: This site is allowed a floor area of 143,266 square feet. The total number of square feet, including existing and proposed uses, is 28,113, less than the maximum permitted. The building setback is required to be a minimum of 11 to 13 feet. This building setback is 212 feet, more than 15 times greater than the required minimum. The number of required parking spaces, based on the approved Special Use Permit is 274. We are proposing an increase of 11 spaces in order to provide regular and handicapped parking in closer proximity to this facility. The maximum secondary height for buildings in this zone is 50 feet. The proposed height of this building is 47 feet.
- 2) Application Procedures outlined in Article 4: This application has been submitted using, and is following, the procedures outlines in Article 4.5 of the Land Use Management that addresses procedures for Special Use Permits. The application submittal requirements found in Article 4.5.3a have been met; the preliminary conferences required by Article 4.5.3c have been held.
- 3) Design and Development Standards set out in Article 5: The attached drawings indicate compliance with the design and development standards included in Article 5 of the Land Use management Ordinance.
- 4) Special Regulations for particular uses in Article 6: This Aquatic Center use is not identified in Article 6 of the Land Use Management Ordinance as a particular use for which there are special regulations.

FINDING #3: That the use or development is located, designed, and proposed to be operated so as to maintain or enhance the value of contiguous property, or that the use or development is a public necessity.

The proposed Aquatic Center is located within the existing Homestead Park in a site originally proposed and approved for a Community Center Facility. The proposed Aquatic Center location within the Park is surrounded on two sides by existing improved park facilities. The north and east side of its location presents a heavily wooded area separating the proposed facility from the adjoining Parkside residential development. There is not an apparent visual conflict between the adjoining uses.

The Aquatic Center is an indoor swimming facility. The indoor nature of this facility will preclude noise conflict with the adjoining residential neighborhood.

This proposal conforms with the Zoning Atlas and the Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Chapel Hill. See the Project Fact Sheet attached hereto and the discussion under Finding #4, below.

A public vote to consider the issuing of bonds to support the development of this facility received overwhelming support and was passed by the voters of Chapel Hill. This public vote proves the need for this facility and makes the development of the facility a public necessity.

FINDING #4: That the use or development conforms with the general plans for the physical development of the Town as embodied in this chapter and in the Comprehensive Plan.

This proposed facility development is in conformance with the Zoning Atlas and the Comprehensive Plan for the development of Chapel Hill and its environs.

This proposed aquatic facility will be a part of the existing Chapel Hill Homestead Park. This park was developed under an approved Special Use Permit which included a proposed community recreational facility. This proposed aquatic facility is that proposed community center building sited and approved in the earlier SUP. The specific site for the proposed aquatic center is adjacent to Booker Creek and a Greenway Plan trail which run through the park.

The Comprehensive Plan articulates a vision and direction in which we want the community to move. It is the culmination of a year of work by the citizens of Chapel Hill. The citizens of Chapel Hill helped prepare the plan through the work of a task force and public work sessions. The Chapel Hill Town Council, as representatives of the citizens of Chapel Hill subsequently approved the Comprehensive Plan. The citizens of Chapel Hill also overwhelmingly voted to support the issuing of bonds to create this Aquatic Center. By their actions in supporting the sale of bonds, the citizens of Chapel Hill have voted to include this facility in their vision for the future. Therefore it is consistent with the Chapel Hill Comprehensive Plan.

Further, in Article 11A-7 of the Comprehensive Plan a strategy is described to enhance existing parks and recreation areas to improve and increase utilization. Locating this facility, approved by voters, within the existing Homestead Community Park, is a good example of enhancing an existing park and increasing the utilization of the park.