

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: W. Calvin Horton, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Response to Request for Information about the Pines Community Center

DATE: June 26, 2000

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the results of inspections conducted at the Pines Community Center facility located at 107 Johnson Street.

The Pines Community Center, Inc. is a private non-profit organization. The Center's Board of Directors owns the building and governs activities at the facility.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

At the June 12, 2000 meeting the Council asked the staff to obtain information about results of the inspections of the Pines Community Center facility. The following information is provided for the Council's consideration.

- On May 23, 2000 a follow-up inspection was performed by the Town Inspections Department at the Pines Community Center facility. The building was found to be in compliance with the Chapel Hill Minimum Housing Code.
- We contacted the Orange County Health Department regarding this matter (please see Attachment 1). The Health Department staff investigated the facility on October 26, 1999 (please see Attachment 2). The results of the investigation were forwarded to the N.C. Division of Child Development that provides regulatory guidance for facilities providing childcare.
- A letter from the Knolls Development Association discusses the current use of the Community Center (please see Attachment 3).

We will forward any additional information to the Council.



Orange County Health Department



Jonathan Kirn, MD, Chair
Orange County Board of Health

Rosemary L. Summers, MPH, DrPH
Health Director

Joan Southland, DDS, Vice Chair
Orange County Board of Health

Environmental Health Division
Ron Holdway, Division Director

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June 21, 2000

ATTACHMENT 1

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Davis, Building Inspections Supervisor, Town of Chapel Hill

FROM: Ron Holdway

RE: Pines Knolls Center

CC: Rosemary Summers, Orange County Health Director
Kay Lowrance, NC Division of Child Development

I am responding to your request for a re-evaluation of the Pine Knolls Family Resource Center on Johnson Street in Chapel Hill. As you know, we did a courtesy evaluation at the request of the director of the center last year and found what we considered to be significant problems with moisture control and ensuing mold growth problems in the building. I expressed our concerns by letter in November to the director, Karen Stegman, since, by her account, there were many children who spent considerable time in the structure on a regular basis. Molds can be allergenic and also act as asthma triggers, especially in children. Since it was unclear to me whether the center should be regulated a child care facility, I also referred the situation on to Kay Lowrance of the NC Division of Child Development.

To date, I have heard nothing further from the center or from Ms. Lowrance. I assume the center is still operating as it was late last year. In speaking with you earlier this week, I understand the center has undergone renovation and the moisture sources have been eliminated. I hope this is the case given the use of the facility by children.

Before we can enter the building for a re-evaluation, one of two things must happen. First, the owners or legal occupants could request us to come out for a follow-up visit. If asked, we will try to schedule the visit as soon as our work schedules allow. The second scenario would be a determination from Ms. Lowrance's office that the center is indeed a regulated child care facility. We would then have legal right of entry into the building to fully evaluate the operation, not only in terms of construction, but also in terms of general sanitation and food service requirements. As with the letter last year, I am forwarding this memo on to Ms. Lowrance for her consideration.

Please give me a call if you have questions or comments concerning this matter.

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Orange County Health Department



Timothy J. Ives, Chair
Orange County Board of Health

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ATTACHMENT 2

November 1, 1999

Pine Knolls Family Resource Center
ATTN: Karen Stegman, Center Coordinator
107 Johnson Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Dear Ms. Stegman,

On October 26, 1999, Perry Burns of this department and I met with you to investigate and discuss the problems with indoor air quality at the Pine Knolls Family Resource Center (PKFRC) and what might be done to eliminate or lessen any adverse effects of the air quality at the center. According to our conversation that day and a follow-up phone conversation today, the PKFRC is home to an after school program with 23 children for 2.5-3 hours each week day and also houses a preschool with 4-5 children for approximately 2 hours once each week. As I understand the situation, PKFRC is not currently under permit or license as a child care facility and therefore not subject to regular sanitation inspections by our department.

Because of the possibility that the center may be classified as a child care facility, I am forwarding a copy of this letter to Kay Lowrance, the NC Division of Child Development consultant for this area. She may be contacting you for additional information or to give regulatory guidance.

During the investigation on the 26th, there were several things that were of concern to us. First and foremost, there was extensive evidence of current and past roof leaks into the structure and excessive moisture inside the structure. These leaks, over time, will saturate porous building materials (sheetrock, carpet, particleboard, etc.) and give rise to the growth of molds. There were areas of what appeared to be mold readily visible in some places in the facility and as I walked through the entrance, I immediately smelled a "musty" odor, indicative of molds and mildew. There was also some evidence of poor surface drainage on the grounds of the property which can add moisture to the inside environs as well as breed mosquitoes. Molds are a well known allergen and can be an asthma "trigger." Given the increase in recent years in childhood asthma and serious asthma events requiring emergency care, I do not feel it is prudent to keep children in an environment where molds can flourish.

as Burns, ES Perry Burns, ES Alan Clegg, MS, LSS Greg Orman, ES Tom Kessler, ES David Vance, ES Jon Hedrick, ES Jon Johnson, ES Wendy Thigpen, ES
EH Specialist EH Specialist Soil Scientist EH Program Specialist EH Supervisor EH Specialist EH Specialist EH Specialist EH Specialist

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Stegman, 11-1-99
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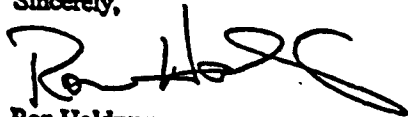
Secondly, the physical layout of the building does not lend itself to efficient air or ventilation flow. Without knowing the specifics of the HVAC system, poor air circulation may also contribute to indoor air quality problems and may need to be assessed if children continue to be kept in this facility.

Next, there were several places on the exterior of the building where the eaves were rotting, the roof was in disrepair or a particular area was collapsing. I do not know the structural implications of these items, but they contribute to leaks and may be safety concerns. I would advise having a building contractor or inspector investigate their hazard potential.

Finally, I do not have a good grasp of the extent of the children's activities while they are at your location, but it appeared inadequate in several areas such as handwashing facilities, diapering facilities, general storage, and food preparation and service facilities to be utilized as a child care center serving upwards of 30 children in a given day. Please take this as only an observation since you are not currently under permit or license from any regulatory agency. If Kay Lowrance determines that you are not exempt from regulation, all of these areas, and perhaps more, will have to be addressed before the license could be issued.

Please call if you have questions or comments on this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Holdway
Environmental Health Director

cc: Kay Lowrance, NC Division of Child Development



107 Johnson Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Phone: 919-924-6837

Knolls Development Association

ATTACHMENT 3

**A Community Working Together
in Chapel Hill**

Board Members

Camden, NC 27510
George Sanford
President
113 Roberts Street

Ruban Hayes
Vice President
111 Roberts Street

Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Kevin Cook
Secretary
205 Somerset Drive

Theodore Parrish
Asst. Secretary
741 Merritt Mill Road

Anthony Gachis
Treasurer
109-A Park Road

Bonnie Bailey
117-D Cole Street

Virginia Barbee
104-A Grant Street

Esphur Foster
743 Merritt Mill Road

Chris Harlan
109-B Park Road

Adrienne Marrow
123-B Cole Street

Meyerette Miles
1801 Fayetteville St.
Jones Building, NCCU
Durham NC 27707

June 20, 2000

Mr. John Davis, Director
Housing Inspection for the Town of Chapel Hill
North Columbia St.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dear Mr. Davis:

In response to your inquiry regarding the uses made of the Community Center at 107 Johnson St., I present the following information.

1. **Board Meetings**
Each second Tuesday at 7 p.m., the Pines Community Center, Inc. Board meets. For the last four months, the range in attendance has been between 10 and 30 persons. Usually they are all adults, but occasionally parents have brought their children. Attendees have been primarily African Americans, but others include European Americans, Africans, and a Haitian. Not one of these persons has complained about air quality or any other health related matter while at the center. In fact, most people have commented on how clean and attractive the facility is. People have made special mention of the freshly painted walls and ceilings, computers and the pictures on the walls.
2. **Grandma Support Meetings**
This group has a range of between 5 and fifteen participants. It is all female and all members are African Americans except one white person. This is the group that recently had the crawl space bleach washed. It also cleaned out the shed that the Family Resource Center had apparently stored things in. Further, it engaged a man who recently reshingled the shed's roof. The shed is where the water had seeped in and caused a smell that some people had talked about. The reason the shed's roof was compromised is because over the last few years, children had climbed on top of the shed to get onto the Center's roof. We had repaired the roof in March. All these problems have been corrected by the removal of the shed's inner wall

Mr. John Davis, Director
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material, the replacement of the exterior with T111, the bleaching and the shed roof repair. (Of course, since the Family Resource Center had been in charge for more than five years, it could have taken care of these problems just as easily as we have. A few people prefer to complain about the rain rather than to put up umbrellas.)

3. **Men's Group**

This is a group of about five men ranging in age from 22 to 35. It met first in April, missed May, and it will be meet again as soon as my new student is placed at the center. This group was designed to provide men an opportunity to talk about common concerns, and to engage in mutual interest projects.

4. **Unplanned Drop-Ins**

When staff persons, board members, student or community volunteers are around, the children using the basketball court or play ground come into the center to get water or use the rest room facilities.

5. **Summer Camp**

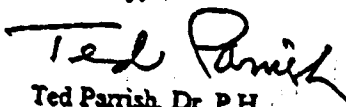
While this has not yet gotten started, we have obtained financing for it. We are scheduling a visit from the local health department to check the center for its compliance with all local environmental health standards. We are aware that a few people are trying to use imagined health threats to keep children from using the building. Their plan is characteristically divisive and self-serving. It is unfortunate that any responsible officials would pander to them. This Center will be used for the purposes for which it was intended, despite Ms. Check's constant cries that the "house is on fire."

6. **Future Uses involving Children**

The Center has been contacted by a couple of agencies regarding lease arrangements for next fall. It is not necessary to identify who they are at this time.

If you or any city official is interested in attending a board meeting please do so at any time. If you are interested in reinspecting the Center, please feel free to do so. As far as Check is concerned, the Board is unimpressed. Although, you might be interested to know that even she has attended two events at the Center since the Family Resource Center left.

Sincerely,



Ted Parrish, Dr. P.H.