

MINUTES OF A PUBLIC HEARING AND SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN, TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL, MUNICIPAL BUILDING,  
MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 1977, 7:30 P.M.

Mayor Wallace called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. Present were:

Gerald Cohen  
Robert Epting  
Thomas Gardner  
Shirley Marshall  
Marvin Silver  
R. D. Smith (arrived late)  
Edward Vickery

Also present were Town Manager K. Jenne, and Town Clerk D. Roberts.

Mayor Wallace announced that the meeting and public hearing had been called to consider the solid waste recommendations made to the Board of Aldermen in December 1975. The study was made by Wiggins-Rimer Associates. Mayor Wallace asked Mr. Rimer to explain to the public his recommendations, after which the Board would hear comments from citizens.

Mr. Rimer stated the presentation had been prepared in slide form so that everyone could see it. The firm had first looked at the kind of service which is now offered Chapel Hill citizens. They had found six types of service: commercial garbage collection, residential garbage collection, rubbish collection, special rubbish collection, leaf collection, and recycling bins for newspapers and glass. They had then conducted a telephone survey to see how the residents felt about the garbage collection. Residents response to the collection service was good; most were pleased with the garbage collection as it is now. In considering Chapel Hill's system of collection, the consultant firm had found that the cost for Chapel Hill is much higher than nationally, and that the injury rate is very high--one injury every thirteen days. The attrition rate is approximately 30% turnover per year. Salary and wages amount to 81% of the total cost for garbage collection. The consultants had made several recommendations for cutting costs, reducing injuries, improving working conditions, and coping with a lack of future manpower. These recommendations included more bulk containers for businesses and multi-family units as well as curbside pick-up with the green roll-out containers for residential collection. They hoped to reduce the three trips made throughout the community each week to two trips. Mr. Rimer then discussed the reasons for the recommendations. He did not anticipate any firings or lay-offs for personnel due to the attrition rate over the implementation period. In many of the cities in which this system has been implemented, the injuries have been reduced to only a few per year. Mr. Rimer also reviewed the potential within the system for recycling papers, glass and metals easier than is now done.

Mayor Wallace then asked for comments from the audience. Mr. Wilson McKerrow, representing the Orange County Council on Aging, stated the green can curbside pick-up would create a hardship for the elderly who could not move 80 gallon cans, especially where there are steep hills and driveways. They could not lift the cans to clean them. Residents leaving their homes for a length of time would leave the cans on the curb, where they would not only be unsightly, but would be an indication of any empty house for burglars. Dumpsters in the apartment complexes would also cause difficulties for the elderly who would have to walk distances to the dumpsters. Mr. McKerrow was also concerned about the inconvenience of having to push the can out to the curbside, and the appearance of the can sitting at the curbside of houses during the day.

Mr. R. H. Lamberton spoke against the implementation of the curbside pick-up. He felt the cans would be left at the curb for several days at a time, that kids and dogs would turn the cans over. The cans would block the sidewalks and bike paths. He did not think the savings on equipment would be as much as Mr. Rimer had indicated. Mr. Lamberton was afraid that some garbage collection employees, who could not get other types of jobs, would be out of work. He said if the city would permit the burning of leaves and other material, some of the rubbish pick-up would not be needed.

Alderman Epting asked for the depreciation cost of the equipment. Mr. Rimer answered that depreciation had been included in the figures. Approximately \$160,000 would be spent for the cans. The rest of the money, \$255,000 must be spent by the Town for new equipment no matter what system they decided on.

Ms. Linda Muse was opposed to asking citizens to carry their own garbage. She felt the garbage containers would detract from the appearance of Chapel Hill. Most of Chapel Hill's residents are in a high income group, and these residents would rather pay for services than carry their own garbage. She said the garbage collection was the one service which citizens were pleased with, and it should not be changed, except to have the garbage men roll the containers out to the trucks and back to the yards.

Dr. Eugene Mayer did not want to change a service that is good. He suggested that garbage men be allowed to leave any garbage which is not legal. A notice could be left on the garbage can to this effect. He didn't think attrition would be so high if working conditions were improved to make the job safer for employees.

Ms. Margaret Seeford stated the town had two problems--unleashed dogs and parking. Parked cars would make access to the trash cans difficult. This type of collection would also discourage elderly citizens from coming to Chapel Hill to retire. A large number of hardships, which is possible, would cancel the savings from going to this type of collection. She thought the cans would remain at the curbside of student residences while the students were away on vacation. Dogs or scavengers would open the cans, leaving trash and debris to blow over yards. She said that many of the problems causing injury to the garbage men would be transferred to the homeowners.

Mr. Ross Scroggs was opposed to changing the garbage service. He said his street was unpaved, and the garbage was kept about 200 yards from the road. He could not push the green cans over the rough terrain for this distance.

Ms. Eula Watts read a petition signed by approximately 100 residents who were against changing to the green can system. They believed that cans at the curbside would detract from the community. Most of the time wives and children have to take out the garbage, and they could not push the cans over some of the steep drives in Chapel Hill. These residents were afraid the cans would be left out overnight for dogs to get into. They believed the backyard pick-up was worth the extra cost.

Mr. Henry Whitfield said there were many people who could not push the cans. He had gone over the budget and figured that the savings from changing the garbage system would amount to approximately \$10 per household per year.

Mr. Cary Shaw said he was happy with the garbage collection as it is. All of his cans were concealed within brick walls or behind shrubbery. He asked if anyone could give him the cost of garbage collection per household per year. No one could.

Dr. Van Horn asked if residents of apartments would have some opportunity to speak regarding the decision to use dumpsters or other containers at the multi-family dwellings. Mayor Wallace replied that there would be an opportunity for more public input.

Mr. Arthur Hurov asked why the turnover rate was so high and why Chapel Hill's cost was so much higher than other places. He said that some of the recommendations such as the route restructure could be instituted without changing the backyard pick-up.

Mr. Ronald Link, a member of the Appearance Commission, said the Commission had not been consulted about the appearance of the green cans. The cans would be dented over time and would become unsightly.

Mr. Rimer replied to a question on how the garbage men felt about the change. The Town staff had talked with the garbage men in Garner and the administration there. They had also talked with other communities who had implemented the green can system. The garbage men and the staff were enthusiastic about the system after trying it, and in most places it had been successful.

Mrs. McKerrow asked why the Appearance Commission had not been consulted. Mr. Rimer explained that the Town held its public hearing before sending any project to the Appearance Commission. They would be consulted before any changes.

Mr. Bill Hobbs, representing the Glen Lennox Corporation, stated the apartments had been built with a place for garbage cans, but no provision for dumpsters. There is no place to put the dumpsters that they would not stand out. Most of the residents in Glen Lennox are elderly residents who cannot take their own cans out to the streets. He added that if the cans were so easy to roll, children would be using them for play. Mr. Hobbs had a slide presentation of apartment complexes around Chapel Hill and their problems with dumpsters. He showed the deterioration of many dumpsters and the difficulty in screening them.

In response to a question, Mr. Jenne said the salary of a garbage collector was between \$5500 and \$6500 per year. It was then suggested that the salary be raised to satisfy the garbage men instead of changing the system.

Mr. Dave Moreau said the hydraulic lifts could be used to improve the working conditions for garbage men, but let the garbage men roll the cans instead of having residents move them.

Mr. Watts Hill asked if the alternative of letting the garbage men use the green cans had been considered. Mr. Rimer said it had but that it would not be as efficient as the present system of backyard garbage. Mr. Hill then asked some questions about the cost of changing the system of collection.

Mrs. Nancy Preston had been asked to express the opposition of the Preservation Society to the recommended green can system.

Alderman Cohen explained in response to a question on outside contractors picking up the garbage, that the Town could pick up the garbage for less than an outside contractor would do the work.

Dr. Garwin, the health inspector, emphasized the importance of enforcing the rules concerning maintenance and ordinances of the Town regarding dogs and rubbish. He suggested that the garbage men be allowed to put a mimeographed sheet on any garbage can containing the wrong type of materials, and not pick up that garbage.

Mrs. Jane Sharpe was interested in the proposal because it would lead to separation of garbage for recycling. She pushed the can to show that it was easy for her to roll, and suggested that people leaving their homes on vacation could hire children to take out their garbage just as they hire someone to sit with their pets. The green cans would be much more efficient than the present system of collection. She believed the cans could be hidden behind shrubbery so as not to create an unsightly appearance. She reminded the audience that not all garbage men were young and strong. She thought the wheeled containers were a good suggestion.

There were some questions on recycling which Mr. Rimer answered. Alderman Cohen asked if residents renting from a homeowner would receive their own can or use the same as the homeowner. Mr. Rimer said there would be one can per home, unless the home was classified as a boarding house.

Alderman Marshall said there were very serious problems with the garbage pick-up. She had been interested in the cans the first time she had seen them in 1972. In speaking with residents of other towns with the system, she had found that everyone was pleased with the system. The residents in those towns had had the same fears as the residents of Chapel Hill, but had found their fears ungrounded.

Alderman Vickery stated he thought it important to provide an alternative to the present system of collecting garbage in order to prevent so many injuries. He felt that the private costs of providing the containers and volunteer labor of homeowners were underestimated. He reviewed several other factors such as the cost of helping the elderly, maintenance and repair costs, and the psychic cost of the unaesthetic appearance of the green cans.

Alderman Cohen answered comments about residents not knowing about the study or hearing until the day before the meeting by saying that it had been advertised, but unfortunately such items did not become news until they happened. He had not decided what position he would take with regard to the study and recommendation.

Aldermen Smith stated the green can system would give benefits to the low income residents, and that most of the high income professionals who hired maids and gardeners, would not carry their own garbage anyway, but would have the maids carry it. He thought this system would eliminate some of the burden from the garbage men which they now have. He added that some people were not able to pay more to have their garbage carried for them from the backyards. He said he would like one of the cans.

Alderman Epting said he liked the system but had heard many objections from citizens. He would like to institute a system whereby those who were willing to roll their own garbage out to the curb, and those who were not willing or able, could have it done for them. He felt it important that some of the danger be removed from the present system. He also favored providing more resources for people who wanted to recycle.

Alderman Gardner asked if the town garbage men had been consulted. Mr. Rimer explained that during the study they had ridden with the garbage trucks and asked the garbage men about several alternatives, not just this one. They all wanted safer jobs. And, the men would be pleased not to have to do as much work. There was some discussion on the revenue from recycling if this system was implemented. Alderman Gardner asked if the men would have to go to an 8-hour day rather than the task basis which they were now on. Mr. Rimer said the task system could still be employed if the staff wished to.

Alderman Silver stated the consultants had done an honest job which they had been asked to by the Board of Aldermen, and he was upset with some of the comments which had been made about the consultants and the staff. He said he would make his decision based on what he felt the people wanted and what he thought would benefit them most.

Mayor Wallace thanked the citizens for attending in the cold weather and for their comments, and declared the public hearing adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

*David B. Roberts*

Town Clerk, David B. Roberts

*James C. Wallace*

Mayor James C. Wallace

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, JANUARY 24, 1977, 7:30 P.M.

Members Present:

Gerald Cohen  
Robert Epting

Members Absent:

Thomas Gardner  
Jonathan Howes  
Shirley Marshall  
Marvin Silver  
R. D. Smith  
Edward Vickery  
James C. Wallace, Mayor

Alderman Cohen called the meeting to order. Alderman Epting noted there was less than a quorum of the Board of Aldermen present due to the inclement weather and hazardous road conditions. It was noted that under the circumstances the Board could not proceed with scheduled business, and in accordance with accepted parliamentary procedure, Alderman Epting moved that the meeting be adjourned to Monday, January 31, 1977, at 7:00 p.m. Alderman Cohen seconded and the motion was carried by unanimous vote of those present.

On January 31, 1977, at 7:08 p.m., Mayor Wallace called the adjourned meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to order. Present were: