

MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION ON JOINT PLANNING MATTERS
HELD BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF
CHAPEL HILL, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, TUESDAY,
JUNE 10, 1986, 7:30 P.M.

Mayor James C. Wallace called the meeting to order. Council Members present were:

Julie Andresen
David Godschalk
Jonathan Howes
David Pasquini
Nancy Preston
R. D. Smith
Bill Thorpe
Arthur Werner

Also present were Town Manager David R. Taylor, Assistant Town Manager Sonna Loewenthal and Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos.

Proposed Land Use Plan for Joint Planning Area

Manager Taylor commented that the the Town had been in the process of developing a joint land use plan for some time. He asked Planning Director Roger Waldon to give a general overview of the proposal, and then asked the Council to discuss specifics so the staff could get a general consensus of what the Council wished to include in the plan.

Roger Waldon said Orange County and Chapel Hill had approved a Joint Planning Agreement in 1984 which called for joint preparation of a land use plan in the area known as the joint planning area to be adopted by both Chapel Hill's Town Council and Orange County's Board of Commissioners. He said the agreement also called for revision of Orange County's Zoning Atlas to reflect this new land use plan and the incorporation of Chapel Hill's development standards into Orange County's development regulations for application in transition areas. Mr. Waldon said the Town and County were approaching completion of the land use plan for the joint planning area and that the Orange County Commissioners expected to consider adoption of the plan in early July, while Town staff proposed to present it to the Council on June 23.

Mr. Waldon said one of the key concepts of the plan was to draw an urban boundary around Chapel Hill and Carrboro where, within its lines, it was expected that urban development would occur and the full range of urban services would ultimately be available. This line would serve as the potential future municipal boundary of Chapel Hill. He said the location of this line was proposed to follow the alignment of Interstate 40 (I-40) to the north and east, and to the south, the proposed boundary would follow a ridge line that generally followed the alignment of Old Lystra Road and the proposed Laurel Hill Parkway.

He said special attention had been given to the area surrounding the I-40/NC-86 interchange where the proposal called for office uses all around the interchange, high density residential beyond the offices, and expansion of the existing light industrial area north of Eubanks Road. Mr. Waldon commented that the staff concurred with recommendations for office/mixed uses at the southeast and southwest quadrants of the interchange, and recommended that all areas north and east of this interchange be designated rural buffer and that office designations replace the proposed expansion of the light industrial area.

The Council asked for clarification of the boundary line, rural buffer and the potential for annexation of areas beyond the proposed boundary.

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Mr. Waldon replied that the rural buffer had a 1.2 acre minimum lot size and would exist outside of the boundary of Chapel Hill and that the Town would probably not annex these areas unless a petition was received.

Manager Taylor commented that setting a boundary and maintaining a rural buffer around that boundary was part of the concept of the goals and objectives as discussed by the Council earlier in the year and was a primary tenet of the joint land use plan.

The Council indicated that the idea of a set boundary, especially to the north, might require further discussion and deliberation.

Mayor Wallace commented that there should be joint planning approval by Chapel Hill of the entire joint planning area, especially the area surrounding Duke Forest and adjacent to Durham County.

Council Member Andresen asked if it would be possible to amend the Joint Planning Agreement to allow for actual joint planning approval of the entire joint planning area.

Manager Taylor responded that it was possible to amend the agreement and that the Council could propose to Orange County that joint planning and joint approval be granted to Chapel Hill for the entire joint planning area, but that urban standards should apply to the transition zone and county standards in the rural areas. Mr. Taylor also said that he felt the joint land use plan and the policy issue of joint approval were two separate issues and that the County and the Town needed the land use plan resolved before they could proceed.

Council Members Godschalk and Howes agreed saying the two issues could be discussed separately.

Council Member Pasquini expressed concern over the proposed development of the I-40 interchange. He said he did not feel it had enough Council input into its proposed development and spoke against office and institutional designations adjacent to residential development at the I-40/NC-86 interchange.

Mr. Waldon responded that based on the Council's Goals and Objectives, Chapel Hill employment base, and information on the economy, the staff had perceived the need for more office development in Chapel Hill. He said the area around the interchange afforded the best opportunity with its ease of access for traffic for office development.

Council Member Werner commented that he liked the mixed-use proposal but was concerned about the ability to control the types of use. He pointed out that the Town had just passed the conditional use zoning which could mean the interchange area could be zoned office/institutional and use conditional use zoning for mixed-use.

Council Member Howes said he was uncomfortable with what had been proposed for the interchange area and suggested leaving it as a transitional area until the interchange was close to opening. He said the methods of control for development needed to be different for this area.

Council Member Andresen disagreed saying there needed to be a plan now rather than waiting for the pressures to create change. She also expressed concern about the mixed-use designation for the I-40/NC-86 interchange area.

Council Member Godschalk said Chapel Hill needed to be proactive in land use planning and needed to have general kinds of land use designations prior to changing the zoning atlas.

Council Member Preston said she felt it would be better to zone the southern quadrant of the I-40/NC-86 interchange as office/institutional and use conditional use applications rather than mixed-use designations. She asked when the actual zoning of individual parcels would take place.

Mr. Waldon replied that once the joint land use plan was adopted the staff would look at the zoning atlas to zone parcel by parcel and there was a possibility that the entire area would be zoned R-1 which would require each parcel to be rezoned prior to development. He said this could be a way in which to ensure the tenets of the land use plan were upheld.

Council Member Andresen commented that she supported the staff recommendation with regard to the Star Point area, feeling this area would be more attractive if it could be redeveloped as a commercial area with a rural buffer surrounding it.

Council's comments then centered around the question of setting a specific boundary, especially in the north, for the Town limits and its implications on possible annexation of areas. The question was also asked as to how the Town could ensure there would be a rural buffer surrounding it and prevent another municipality from annexing those areas.

Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos replied that there was a standard as to the distance from one municipality to another with regard to annexation, i.e. one municipality could not annex an area that was closer in distance to another municipality. He also said annexation was based on density standards like the number of residents per acre, minimum lot size, and commercial development.

Manager Taylor stated that there appeared to be a philosophical question involved as to what, if at all, were to be the boundaries of Chapel Hill, and suggested that the Council and staff regroup and set up another work session to discuss these issues. He said, in response to a question as to what the Town could do to prevent another municipality from annexing an area, the Town could annex the area first. He commented that what was needed was a joint agreement with Orange County, Durham County, Durham City, Carrboro and Chapel Hill with regard to future growth and services.

The general consensus of the Council was to schedule another work session on July 1, 1986 at 7:30 pm in the Municipal Building meeting room to discuss the Joint Land Use Plan, the Chapel Hill Land Use Plan, and the proposed Orange County - Carrboro Joint Planning Agreement.

Council Member Godschalk suggested that individual Council Members meet with the Manager to go over the land use plan to get further insight into the proposal.

Executive Session

Mayor Wallace, at this point, called the meeting of June 9, 1986 back into session in order to continue the Executive Session regarding litigation. The time was 10:05 p.m.

Mayor Wallace called the meeting back into regular session at 10:24 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOWES MOVED, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, (9-0).

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Mayor James C. Wallace


Nancy J. Wells, Town Clerk