

MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL AND THE PARKS AND
RECREATION COMMISSION AND TRANSPORTATION
BOARD, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, WEDNESDAY,
JUNE 1, 1988, 7:30 P.M.

Mayor Jonathan B. Howes called the meeting to order. Council Members present were:

Julie Andresen
David Godschalk
Joe Herzenberg
David Pasquini
Nancy Preston
Arthur Werner

Council Members Wallace and Wilkerson were absent, excused. Also present were Town Manager David R. Taylor, Assistant Town Managers Sonna Loewenthal and Ron Secrist, and Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos.

Parks and Recreation Commission

Members present were:

Richard Baddour
Joel Bulkley
Kani Hurow
Caroline Lindsay
Gertrude London
Eleanor Scandlin
Hershel Slater
Prince Taylor



Leandra Bedini and John Schaenman were absent.

Gertrude London stated that the Commission had enjoyed working on the parks and recreation issues of the Town. She said they were excited about working on the development of the Southern Park but that there were areas in existing parks which also needed to be addressed. She said the Commission would like to see Cedar Falls Park expanded, especially the parking facilities and the addition of the Merritt property to the Southern Park site.

Council Member Werner commented that he was not sure that Cedar Falls Park was being utilized to its fullest potential. He suggested that a more active publicity campaign of some sort could be beneficial.

Mayor Howes said that he hoped the Commission would be instrumental in identifying tracts of land for purchase as parks and open space. He said the Council needed this kind of input from the Commission.

Joel Bulkley asked if the Town was committed to purchasing the Merritt property as additional land for the Southern Park. Mayor Howes said the Town wished to acquire the land, but that it would depend on the costs involved.

Council Member Andresen spoke in support of efforts to make a city park in the downtown area.

Council Member Werner suggested that Parking Lot #5 could be used for this purpose.

Eleanor Scandlin stated that benches were needed downtown, even if a centralized park were not available.

Council Member Preston said that she had suggested previously that part of Parking Lot #2 be used as a park with trees planted and benches installed.

Council Member Godschalk asked what was the Commission's philosophy on the nature of parkland in subdivisions, whether or not they preferred small, decentralized parcels of parkland or a payment-in-lieu of recreation area to be used for larger, centralized parks. Kani Hurow replied that the Commission evaluated each project on who would reside there, the proximity of a public facility and what the developer was proposing in the way of recreation facilities before making a recommendation on either recreation area on site or a payment-in-lieu.

Hershel Slater agreed with Ms. Hurow's comments and also stated that the Commission had concerns about "pocket" parks and what would be their future as subdivisions change their demographic structure. He pointed out that subdivisions went through cycles of ownership and that the recreation needs changed. Mr. Slater also said that there was an ever present need for ballfields, etc. for active recreation and that the payments-in-lieu helped acquire the land for the large recreational needs.

Council Member Godschalk asked if there were a system for identifying areas where small parks were needed. Ms. Hurow responded that the Community Facilities Report of the Comprehensive Plan identified areas in each neighborhood and as such should be a planning step for identifying land available and for potential purchase.

Caroline Lindsay said that through subdivision development the Town had been able to acquire a lot of land for the greenway system and that there was a definite need to have the opportunity for payment-in-lieu.

Council Member Andresen asked if it were possible to require a developer to make a payment-in-lieu of recreation space. Attorney Karpinos replied that the Town could not require a payment-in-lieu but if the land suggested for recreation area by the

developer did not meet the suitability requirements then a payment-in-lieu could be suggested.

Gertrude London commented that the changes in the way of calculating the payment-in-lieu has led towards an decrease in its use.

Council Member Andresen questioned whether or not the method of calculation should be changed.

Council Member Pasquini said that he felt the current method (fair market value) was correct way to establish payment-in-lieu. He said this problem had been around for a long time and that it worked both for and against the Town.

Mayor Howes said that the Town needed a dedicated revenue stream to fund the purchase of land for parks and open space.

Council Member Godschalk suggested using the revenue from the hotel/motel tax to fund improvements to parks and entranceways.

Dick Baddour said that the Commission would like further direction from the Council on the purpose of the hotel/motel tax funds.

Council Member Preston asked how much was available from the hotel/motel tax funds. Manager Taylor replied that the Town had received \$250,000 in hotel/motel taxes and that the Town was obligated by the State to spend 10% of those funds (\$25,000) for visitor information services and cultural events. He stated that the budget for FY 1988-89 included \$50,000 for these purposes.

Mayor Howes asked that the Commission discuss ideas of how to use the funds and bring it before the Council for discussion. He said once this was done, then they could prioritize the areas of need.

Richard Baddour said that the staff also needed to be aware of the requests being made for Town funds so that they could advise the Commission on any duplication of requests.

Council Member Godschalk agreed and said he felt that with more clarification of how the funds were to be used, there would be less overlap in funding requests.

Council Member Preston said that she would like to see a better definition of what constituted cultural events.

Mr. Baddour asked how the Council felt about funding Town agencies with the hotel/motel tax funds.

Manager Taylor asked for guidance from the Council on whether or not the funds should be used for any governmental agency.

Mayor Howes said that this was something that needed to be discussed as to whether they should be eliminated outright or whether the Request for Proposal process would determine who received the funding by stating what the Town wished to obtain from the use of the funds and then they all compete.

Council Member Werner asked if the Commission had any comments on incremental funding versus major funding of projects. He said he was concerned that by funding several projects with small amounts that the impact would be negligible.

Mr. Baddour responded that the Commission had discussed this and felt some concern about funding the start of programs in one year and then feeling obligated to continue funding.

Council Member Herzenberg stated that often small grants could be important to specific programs.

Mr. Slater said that this also applied to governmental agencies. He said it allowed for projects to begin and if they appear successful then they could become part of the normal operating budget process and no longer part of the hotel/motel tax funds.

Ms. Lindsay said that she felt start up funds should be a high priority.

Mayor Howes said that the Commission should work on the guidelines for the use of these funds and then the staff would put it on the Council's agenda for discussion.

Council Member Werner asked how the development of the library site would occur and if the Parks and Recreation Commission would be involved.

Mayor Howes said the Library Committee was working on the architectural selection and once this was done then the Parks and Recreation Commission would be involved in how to integrate the library site with the park development.

Kani Hurow said the Commission felt their working relationship with other boards was improving. She said their liaison with various other boards was receiving the packets and communicating information. She said the Commission would prefer to see input on parks issues in the staff reports prior to their being written and that there needed to be a consensus on terminology used. She said the Commission would like to see a glossary of terms and definitions added to the Development Ordinance. She said the Commission had also been under the impression that the Comprehensive Plan's Community Facilities Report on parks was to have been the plan for park development but now the Planning staff was indicating that there needed to be a master park plan. She said the Commission needed guidance in this area. She stated that the Commission would also like for developers to address the staff and Commission with their proposals before final drawings were

made so that they could work out the park space or payment-in-lieu at an early date.

Mr. Baddour stated that the Commission would also like to be involved as soon as possible in any parks and open space acquisition.

Ms. Hurow also said that Council attendance at the Parks and Recreation volunteer recognition festivities was important. She said the entire Town needed to show its support for all the volunteers who help with the recreation programs.

Manager Taylor said that as a way to summarizing the discussion, the Commission was to work on the guidelines for use of the hotel/motel tax funds and the request for proposal process and review the payment-in-lieu policy and report back to the Council in the fall.

Mayor Howes thanked the Commission for their work on park development and parks and recreation issues.

Transportation Board

Transportation Board members present were:

Richard Palmer, Chair
Charles Antle
Jennie Capparella
Larry Lanset
Robert Moorhead
Mario Pieroni
John Thomas

Clinton Jones and Don Thomson were absent.

Richard Palmer stated that the Board had several issues it wished to discuss. He said that Durham was currently not taking advantage of UMTA funds for the Durham Urbanized Area but if they did then Chapel Hill's funds would be greatly reduced. He said as such, the Board was interested in ways of supplementing the Transportation Fund.

Larry Lanset stated that the costs for the Transportation system could be broken down into 29% paid by riders, 37.5% paid by local support and 33.5% paid by federal assistance. He said that the national average of costs paid by riders was 43%. Mr. Lanset said of the local support, 23% was paid by the Town, 13% by UNC and 1.5% by Carrboro. He stated that the Town needed to look at the distribution of funding in the local support with the idea of possibly increasing the amount funded by UNC and Carrboro.

Mayor Howes asked what was the current status of the Durham situation. Bob Godding, Transportation Director, said that the

possibility of Durham City taking over the transportation system from Duke Power appeared unlikely in the near future.

Charles Antle stated that the University supported the Town's bus system and had paid \$1.3 million into that system. He said there was some concern on campus as to why the University was supporting the Town bus system to such an extent.

Richard Palmer stated that there needed to be continued cooperation with the University. He said there needed to be active participation between the University and the Town in trying to solve transportation problems. He stated that in an effort to better communicate with the University, the Board was soliciting representation from the University on the Transportation Board.

Mr. Palmer said the Board had felt the first draft of the Transportation Management Ordinance was not favorable and felt there were other ways to address the problems. He asked where the Council expected to go from here.

Mayor Howes said the draft ordinance had been a first step in the process and that it was evident that a lot of work still had to be done. He said the staff and advisory boards were to be reviewing the proposal and developing alternatives.

Council Member Godschalk asked for comments on how the Transportation Board would suggest addressing the transportation problems. Mr. Palmer replied that the Board felt the demand side for transportation began with land use and that designating land use was not a function for the Transportation Board. He said transit systems work best in areas of concentrated demand, i.e. concentrated housing and work areas. He pointed out that the Town had decided to develop in a different way but that he felt the Town could implement better ways of transit use. He suggested directing efforts for transit use in those areas where concentrated transit users would occur. He said the Board was wary of trying to legislate transit usage and the establishment of on-site transit managers. He said the Board felt this would be too restrictive and cumbersome.

Robert Moorhead stated that the Board felt the draft transportation ordinance would not work if the University were eliminated from its provisions. He pointed out that the University was the major area of concentration of workers in the Town.

Council Member Werner asked if it were feasible to look at the demand side of the transit issue given the way the Town had and would develop. Mr. Palmer responded that he was not sure but that the Board was cautious about accepting solutions without alternatives being suggested. He said for example, the four-laning of Estes Drive, if this were not done what were the alternatives to ease traffic congestion, the costs involved and the timing of such a proposal. He said each problem and potential solution needed to be addressed in a systematic way and once

this was done then the Transportation Board could advise on the issue.

Council Member Godschalk commented that he was glad these types of questions were being raised and that it might be necessary at sometime to make some politically unpopular decisions in order to make the Town's transportation system work. He said it was also possible that a segment of the Town's population would change the way they did business, i.e. flex time, ridesharing, etc. in order to avoid widening roads, etc.

Council Member Andresen said the problems were numerous and confusing and she was glad the Board was still working on them. She said she was also glad the Board felt the need to keep working with the University. She stated that she did not feel the solution to all traffic problems was bigger and wider roads. Ms. Andresen said that park/ride lots could be a viable alternative and that she would like to see the Transportation Board take a lead in the efforts to instigate alternative means of transportation and use of park/ride facilities.

Mr. Lanset commented that the park/ride lots worked wonderfully for the special events in the area. He said he was concerned, however that the proposals for additional parking decks on the central campus of the University would only be detrimental to the traffic situation. He said placing park/ride lots on the periphery of the Town and University would be better.

Mr. Palmer said that there appeared to be a lack of planning within the University as to how the proposed parking decks would affect the current road structure within the Town.

Council Member Andresen commented that until the University had a parking lot in the downtown area, University personnel and students would continue to use Town parking lots. She said this was hurting the downtown businesses.

Council Member Werner asked what were the Board's plans for future transportation planning. Mr. Palmer replied that the staff would be getting computer equipment and software packages to allow for further transportation analysis. He said the data input could take a long time. He said the Board did not want to devise a set of interim solutions but rather alternatives and solutions that fit well within the long range plans of the Town. He said in the meantime the Board would work at bettering communications with the University and identifying possible scenarios and alternatives.

Mr. Moorhead said that there was some confusion by citizens on the benefits of a transit system. He said the buses take cars off the roads. He said the University could look at either not providing parking for its employees and/or increasing the fees so that it would be more economically beneficial to use alternative methods of getting to and from work.

Mr. Palmer commented that the Board was concerned with issues that have been and are being discussed and decided without input from the Board. He said from a transportation point of view, the site of the new library was poor. He said the Board was wary of the Downtown Shuttle proposal because the Town would have to purchase the trolleys outright, the service would "steal" riders from the usual service, and questions whether the community as a whole benefit from this program.

Mr. Moorhead said the shuttle proposal would not solve any transportation problem but might help aid a commercial/business problem.

Mayor Howes said the trolley system was being reviewed at present and the report was expected to the Council soon. He said the proposal was attempting to satisfy multiple objectives and some would get satisfied and some would not.

Council Member Preston said she was appreciative of the Transportation Board reviewing development proposals and the interest in bicycle issues. She thanked Ms. Capparella for her work on the bikelanes with NCDOT.

Council Member Preston commented that pedestrians also needed to be considered when dealing with transportation issues, especially at busy intersections. She said crosswalks needed to be easily identified and attractive.

Council Member Godschalk commended the Board for its analytical approach to problems and said that the Board also had to be open to experimental ideas.

John Thomas stated that he was concerned that the Chapel Hill Transit system was not keeping up with demand for transportation for disabled persons. He said Chapel Hill's E-Z Rider program was one of the finest but that in the last few years, the number of patrons had increased without an adequate number of additional trips being added to the service. He suggested that the system be reviewed in light of the increasing need for service.

Council Member Pasquini said that when the Library Committee and staff began working on the Library site with the architect then the Transportation Board needed to be included for input as to access points. He also said that even though the transportation ordinance's first draft had not been well received, it was an issue that was still in the forefront of peoples' minds and was still a concern for the Council that they felt needed to be addressed.

Mayor Howes thanked the Board for their work in the areas of Transportation planning and system design.

A MOTION WAS DULY MADE AND SECONDED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, (7-0).

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.