

MINUTES OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORK SESSION HELD BY  
THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL,  
MONDAY, MAY 1, 1989, 7:30 P.M.

Mayor Howes called the meeting to order.

Council Members present were:

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

Mayor Howes said that Council Members Wallace and Wilkerson were absent.

Also in attendance were: Town Manager David Taylor, Assistant Town Manager Sonna Loewenthal, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, Planning Director Roger Waldon, Planning Staff Chris Berndt, Kimberly Brewer and Brad Torgan, and Transportation Staff David Bonk.

Mayor Howes stated that the Council was holding a work session on the Comprehensive Plan this evening. He added that if the Council did not complete consideration of the goals this evening, another work session might be held.

Mayor Howes recognized Brien Lewis, President of the UNC student body, who was present in the audience. Additionally, Mayor Howes announced the recent appointment of Bill Hildebolt as Student Liaison to the Council.

Planning Director Roger Waldon introduced staff members Kimberly Brewer, Brad Torgan, David Bonk and Chris Berndt. Mr. Waldon stated that these employees had been involved in the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan and could answer Council questions relating to the document.

Mr. Waldon reviewed the proposed Council schedule concerning the Comprehensive Plan and related processes. He noted that the proposed schedule was somewhat ambitious, but was a good target to shoot for.

Mr. Waldon said that there was a small number of key policy issues, as follows:

- (1) Infill/Compact Development--Making alternatives to the auto feasible.
- (2) Quantifiable Targets & Standards--suggested use of the language "the Town shall seek to.."

as applied to targets, with explanation of specific numerical targets.

- (3) Affordable Housing--stressed the importance of the Town assuring diversity of housing opportunities.
- (4) Transportation--achieving a balance between auto movement and neighborhood protection.

Council Member Andresen asked Mr. Waldon whether he felt these two items were not balanced in the 1986 Goals and Objectives. Mr. Waldon said that the 1986 document stressed neighborhood protection as a more important goal than automobile movement. He said that discussions with the Planning Board had indicated more balance was needed.

Council Member Andresen asked Alan Rimer, Planning Board Chairperson, whether he felt there was an imbalance between the neighborhood protection and automobile objectives. Mr. Rimer responded that there had been a change in the way things were looked at between 1986 and the present. Mr. Rimer stated that the Planning Board was seeking Council direction about balancing the two objectives. Council Member Andresen noted that area topography did not lend itself to a street grid system. Mr. Rimer agreed.

Mr. Waldon initiated a review of major controversial points throughout the document, beginning with the economy and employment section. He noted that there were relatively few changes in this section. He added that a new section on the University was included, as was new language addressing mixed-use development.

Council Member Preston inquired about "economically feasible" mixed-use development, as referenced in the Goals, Objectives and Policies. Chris Berndt noted that this phrase would be deleted from future drafts.

Council Member Preston asked whether it would be possible to provide small commercial areas in some neighborhoods. Council Member Werner said that new neighborhoods abutting older neighborhoods had said they did not want this type of development. Council Member Preston proposed the creation of neighborhood commercial districts. Mr. Waldon noted that one of the policies in the document encouraged, but did not require, this type of development. Council Member Andresen said the idea was a great one in principle. Council Member Werner said the concept might not work in Chapel Hill.

Council Member Werner said he had problems with policy 1 as stated, since it was a statement of fact rather than a policy objective. He suggested that the language be used as a statement of introduction.

Continuing with the Environmental section of the document, Mr. Waldon said that language about air quality had been added. He added that special protection was recommended for drinking water supplies and scenic views.

Council Member Preston asked whether the Town currently examined development submittals for conservation and energy efficiency measures. Mr. Waldon said that more could be done in this regard. Mayor Howes asked whether natural environment policies and standards were codified in one place. Mr. Waldon said no.

Council Member Pasquini inquired about developers providing payment-in-lieu to the Town. Mr. Waldon said that the Planning Board and Parks and Recreation Commission were discussing this matter. He noted that the Parks and Recreation Commission would like to use the payment-in-lieu option more aggressively. He said that the payment option was not a very attractive to developers at present.

Addressing greenways acquisition, Mayor Howes asked how specific or quantifiable the Council wanted to be. Council Member Preston noted that there was more to acquiring land than buying it. Kimberly Brewer said that between 85 and 90% of the land had been acquired. She noted that the remaining parcels would be the most difficult to acquire. Ms. Brewer said that approximately 5% of the greenways system was currently in place.

Mayor Howes suggested the use of the term "the Town shall seek to" throughout the Goals, Objectives and Policies. Town Manager Taylor concurred. Mayor Howes noted that he did not want to put the Town in a difficult position in these litigious times. Council Member Preston agreed with Mayor Howes' comments.

Mr. Waldon said that the Town should think regionally in providing a "fair share" of affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income families. Council Member Preston suggested changing language on page 7 to read "its" citizens rather than "all" citizens. Mr. Waldon said the statement was intended to refer to all Chapel Hill citizens. Council Member Werner suggested changing the statement to read "all its citizens".

Mr. Waldon said that more than 10% of housing is now affordable to low income families.

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ms. Brewer said the fair share concept was intended to spread out the responsibility of providing affordable housing among the communities in the Triangle.

Council Member Werner suggested that the term "fair share" be taken out of the document, due to its jargon nature.

Kani Hurow, President of the League of Women Voters, said she was concerned about terms in quotes.

Mayor Howes noted that the term "fair share" was commonly used among planners.

Council Member Godschalk said that "fair share" meant that all communities would do their part in providing affordable housing.

Council Member Preston asked what percentage of housing units were considered "affordable" at present. Mr. Waldon said between 10% and 20% were affordable for those in the low-income bracket. Chris Berndt said that low income was defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) as families making between 50 and 80% of the median income. She added that those making between 80 and 100% of the median income were categorized as moderate income.

Mr. Waldon said that annual building activity of approximately 500 housing units were anticipated in the Town. He said that approximately 50 units should be provided for those in the low and very low income categories (0-80% of median income).

Council Member Pasquini inquired about the number of affordable housing units constructed in the past five years. Mr. Waldon said that federal cutbacks in the past five years had made construction of affordable housing very difficult.

Council Member Werner asked whether the free market would have the impetus to construct affordable housing or whether Town intervention would be necessary. Mr. Waldon said there were many ways to construct low and moderate income housing.

Council Member Pasquini urged the Council to stay away from quantifiable goals. He said that unattainable goals should not be outlined.

Council Member Preston asked whether the 10 units for elderly and handicapped persons were part of the 50 unit objective. Mr. Waldon said yes.

Council Member Werner said that if the Town were unable to obtain enabling legislation for inclusionary zoning, other methods would have to be employed. Council Member Godschalk suggested that

monies could be allocated in the budget for low and moderate income housing programs. Mayor Howes said that program implementation could be included in the Strategic Report.

Council Member Pasquini said he had heard little consensus on many items in the Housing Goals, Objectives and Policies section. He indicated that the staff and Council may need to give more thought to these issues.

Town Manager Taylor said the key question was whether the Town should take an active role in providing affordable housing opportunities for those of low and moderate income means. Council Member Werner said there appeared to be a consensus on low income housing, but not moderate income housing.

Chris Berndt said that the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had recently evaluated income in the Triangle and found the median to be \$40,400 for a family of four. She added that 80% of this figure is \$32,320.

Council Member Preston inquired whether Tandler was targeted at those earning 80% or less of the median income. Ms. Berndt said this was correct. She added that the median income had increased by \$8,000 in the last two years.

Council Member Godschalk said that past Town efforts to provide affordable housing had generated controversy. He said that if the Town did not take a leadership position, any future programs would not work. Council Member Andresen said the Town had taken a leadership role, by virtue of its taking over the housing authority.

Council Member Preston requested information about getting the private sector to provide affordable housing opportunities.

Moving to the Transportation section, Mr. Waldon said that emphasis was given to encouraging selectively compact and denser development.

Mr. Waldon said the Town faced three transportation choices in the next twenty years:

- (1) A rapidly increasing level of automobile congestion.
- (2) Significant widening of arterial streets.
- (3) More active development of collectors.

Noting the minimum standard of service level "D", Council Member Godschalk asked whether the Town was experiencing this level at

present. Mr. Bonk said this standard was a continuation of the 1983 Thoroughfare Plan and that several intersections currently operate at service level "D".

Council Member Andresen inquired about the status of a collector road system. Mr. Bonk said the main thrust of a collector road system would be in new areas. He added that there were not many opportunities for providing such systems in existing developed areas.

Council Member Pasquini said that the policies in the Housing section were very detailed, as contrasted with three or four vague, all-encompassing policies in the Transportation section. He asked why there was such a difference between the two policies. Mr. Bonk responded that in transportation, each situation is relatively unique. He said that a combination of efforts is required to form a good transportation policy.

Council Member Pasquini asked why a statement about cross-connectors was not included in the document. Mr. Bonk said there was difficulty in defining what constituted a cross-connector. Council Member Pasquini said that one-half mile intervals and service levels were the only quantifiable standards in the Transportation section. Council Member Pasquini said a lot of people were interested in the use of cross-connectors.

Council Member Andresen said she would like to see the four policies on the bottom of page fourteen, recommended for deletion, included in future drafts of the document.

Mayor Howes requested clarification of the recommendation that parking availability be minimized to discourage automobile use. Mr. Waldon said that a distinction should be made between long and short-term parking. He said that short-term parking must be made available to maintain economic vitality. Ms. Berndt noted that this objective was stated on page 11 of the document.

Council Member Werner noted that the downtown area had the worst traffic and congestion problems. Mr. Waldon said the worst problems occurred at peak hours. Mr. Bonk added that commuters contributed the most to peak hour problems. Mayor Howes suggested using parking prices that would discourage use by commuters. Council Member Werner said commuters were either going to their office or a park and ride lot.

Mr. Bonk said that efforts were being made to encourage the use of public transportation. He noted that park and ride lots cater to people living in peripheral areas of communities.

Council Member Godschalk said that attempts at behavior modification were being discussed. He said it would be desirable to have a whole transportation ordinance in place.

Mayor Howes said there had been a lot of productive discussion this evening. He suggested that Council hold another work session in the near future. Town Manager Taylor noted that the schedule was set at the Council's pleasure. Mr. Taylor suggested that the next work session occur on Wednesday, May 24th. He added that this would permit Mr. Waldon and his staff to provide additional information concerning housing and transportation policies and issues.