

SUMMARY OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL WITH ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 1998 AT 6:00 P.M.

Mayor pro tem Capowski called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m., noting that Mayor Waldorf would be arriving later in the meeting. Mayor Waldorf arrived at 6:55 p.m. Council Members in attendance were Julie Andresen (arrived at 6:30 p.m.), Flicka Bateman, Joyce Brown, Pat Evans, Kevin Foy (arrived at 6:37 p.m.), Lee Pavão and Edith Wiggins. Also in attendance were Town Manager Cal Horton, Assistant Town Managers Sonna Loewenthal and Florentine Miller, Assistant to the Manager Ruffin Hall, Finance Director James Baker, Housing Director Tina Vaughn, Interim Parks and Recreation Director Bill Webster, Human Services Coordinator Karen Rose, Library Director Kathleen Thompson and Town Clerk Peter Richardson.

Housing and Community Development Advisory Board

Housing Board Members in attendance were Charlie Zimmerli, Mary Winne Sherwood, Charles deBose, Michael Ullman and Margaret Edwards.

Housing Board Chair Charlie Zimmerli said that given federal funding ties, there was not a lot of flexibility in the Housing Department budget. Stating that the cost of maintenance per public housing unit was going up rather dramatically, Mr. Zimmerli said that the Board had some creative suggestions for improving the Town's Housing Department operations.

Housing and Community Development Advisory Board Vice-Chair Charles deBose said that the Board interested in establishing a family self-sufficiency program to assist people in getting out of public housing and into homeownership opportunities. Mr. deBose stated that the City of Lexington had a good existing program of this type which might serve as a model for the Town. He noted that the program would include elements such as budget management, parenting skills and setting up of escrow accounts for program participants. Mr. deBose said that the Board would be coming back to the Council for support of this program in the future.

Michael Ullman briefly reviewed public housing related statistics such as median rents and the number of residents per different types of units. Mr. Ullman said that the Housing Board would attempt to talk to other public housing agencies about how they handled the number of tenants relative to the size of units.

Mr. Zimmerli said that the Board needed the Council's assistance in filling a total of three vacancies on the nine member board, including two public housing residents and one resident for the community at large. He noted that each Board member had been assigned as liaison to one of the Town's public housing neighborhoods. Mr. Zimmerli said this suggestion by the Public Housing Residents Council had worked well. Council Member Brown asked whether the Board had actively solicited applications from public housing residents. Stating that the Board had made such efforts, Mr. Zimmerli said that it was very difficult for some residents to participate on the Board given their other commitments. Council Member Bateman suggested the possibility of having four residents to serve as Board members.

Council Member Evans inquired whether the self-sufficiency program would include topics such as making minor repairs to units. Mr. deBose said this type of program was definitely a possibility. He also noted that the Housing Board and staff were trying to develop a system to take advantage of the Town's resources. Mr. Zimmerli said that the Community Resource Team was in operation and was working well. Mayor pro tem Capowski thanked the Board for their attendance this evening.

Greenways Commission

Greenways Commission Chair Pam Hemminger noted that Commission Members Mark Broadwell and Joe Herzenberg were also in attendance this evening. Ms. Hemminger said that the Commission hoped to have a dedication ceremony for the second phase of the Bolin Creek greenway during the early summer. She also reported that progress continued on the development of the Southern Village Community Loop and Lower Booker Creek trails. She also said that about \$30,000 to \$40,000 each was needed to complete the Dry Creek greenway trail, near the East Chapel Hill High School campus and the proposed linear park near Eastgate.

Greenways Commission Member Mark Broadwell noted that the Council had traditionally provided annual funding of \$50,000 for greenway projects in the Town's capital budget. He noted that these funds were supplemented by an additional \$12,000 during the current fiscal year, for projects such as printing of trail maps and producing conceptual plans for a number of new greenway trail projects. Mr. Broadwell stated that approximately \$200,000 in additional funding was needed to complete the Lower Booker Creek trail. He said that the Commission recommended that the Town seek additional funding sources for greenways, including funding from the State Department of Transportation.

Greenways Commission Member Joe Herzenberg said that there was a considerable amount of enthusiasm for the proposed Lower Booker Creek trail. He noted that this proposed trail would mainly adjoin the rear of existing commercial structures. Council Member Andresen said she was very concerned about the manner in which this project would be developed, given the environmentally sensitive nature of this area. She also suggested the possibility of getting participation by business owners at Eastgate Shopping Center regarding design of this proposed project. Mr. Herzenberg also said that the Commission encouraged the Council to grant \$25,000 in requested funding to the Triangle Land Conservancy for the purchase of open space/greenways.

Council Member Evans inquired about the possibility of high school student's community service time to assist with greenways construction. Ms. Hemminger said that the Commission attempted to secure this resource, as well as assistance from Eagle Scouts. Council Member Evans also suggested the possibility of working with the Court system regarding community service workers.

Council Member Evans inquired whether any standard precluded the Town from acquiring greenway trail outside of the Town limits. Mr. Horton said that State Law was controlling in this

matter and it prohibited such acquisitions. Mr. Herzenberg said that the Southern Village trail was outside of the current Town limits.

Interim Parks and Recreation Director Bill Webster said that more help was needed to complete larger-scale greenway trails. Council Member Foy asked whether there were any ongoing community service efforts for greenway trails. Ms. Hemminger said that there were no formal arrangements. Mr. Webster said that community service projects undertaken by Eagle Scouts and fraternities and sororities had worked fairly well.

Mayor pro tem Capowski inquired about the proposed source of funds for the Bolin Creek greenways project. Mr. Horton said possible funding sources included the contingency account for this project or fund balance. Mayor pro tem Capowski asked why the Town was not using Duke Power easements for greenway trails. Mr. Webster said that the issue of private property was a significant one in these matters. Mr. Herzenberg said that a full-time staff person could be devoted to getting more greenways easements. Mayor pro tem Capowski asked whether the Commission had been involved with the University's planning of its Horace Williams tract. Ms. Hemminger said although there had been no contact to date, she hoped that this would occur in the future. She noted that the Commission was in the process of putting together a list of potential easements and tracts for possible future greenways projects.

Parks and Recreation Commission

Parks and Recreation Commission Chair Martin Feinstein introduced Commission Members Dianne Lemasters and Patricia McCracken. Mr. Feinstein said that the Commission was frustrated by the status of the county-wide joint planning cooperation issue regarding parks and recreation facilities. Council Member Foy said that this joint planning group would be meeting tomorrow evening. He stated that the goal of the group was to determine genuine means for cooperation. Council Member Foy noted that the County's efforts in this matter had been slowed somewhat by existing vacancies in a number of senior management positions. Council Member Bateman inquired whether Orange County had appointed a new representative on the Town's Parks and Recreation Commission. Mr. Feinstein said that this position was currently vacant.

Council Member Bateman said that filling this vacancy would be a basic first step in the process.

Council Member Andresen noted that efforts for joint cooperation between local governments and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools were proceeding slowly. She noted that Alice Ingram was Chairperson of the group. Mr. Feinstein said that the current joint process for facility use was rather cumbersome. Ms. Lemasters said that the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools had agreed to a pilot project during the upcoming spring break wherein three local school gymnasiums would be open 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. each weekday for supervised free play, using contract help. Mayor Waldorf inquired about the projected cost of the pilot project. Mr. Webster said the estimated cost would be \$2,000 to \$3,000.

Stating that there was an agreement in place regarding joint facility use by local governments and the City schools, Council Member Andresen suggested the possibility of renegotiating this agreement. Noting that the existing agreement tended to be especially favorable toward the Town of Carrboro, Mayor Waldorf said it was a good idea to renegotiate the agreement to make it more equitable for all parties.

Mr. Horton said the chief difficulty regarding the proposed pilot project would be finding reliable contract labor to staff the gymnasiums.

Ms. Lemasters said that the current School Board was very approachable on the matter of joint facility usage. Council Member Bateman asked whether staff was in charge of renegotiating such agreements. Mayor Waldorf suggested that the Parks and Recreation Commission could study the existing agreements. Council Member Pavao said that efforts should focus on making the agreement fairer to the Town. Noting that there had been good discussions regarding usage of facilities at the Southern Village School, Mr. Horton said that staff could initiate discussions about facility use if the Council desired. There was Council concurrence for staff to proceed with such discussions. Council Member Bateman suggested that contact be made with the PTA Council and the School Governance Committee about joint facility use. Mr. Feinstein said that these groups would be invited to review the existing agreements with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Feinstein noted that the Bikeways Task Force was attempting to build access for children to get to various destinations with a minimal amount of traffic. Council Member Andresen inquired when the Task Force might be presenting a report to the Council. Noting that he did not currently have information on this matter, Mr. Feinstein said that information about the status of the Task Force could be forwarded to the Council.

Mr. Feinstein said that Parks and Recreation staff was working efficiently, doing more with fewer staff people.

Ms. Lemasters said that attention needed to be given to providing more activities for area teenagers, including co-recreational football and softball. Mayor Waldorf inquired whether the Commission had specific program recommendations for teenage activities. Ms. Lemasters said yes, noting that programs were especially needed during the day and evenings on Saturdays. She said that a major stumbling block was inadequate staffing for such programs.

Mr. Feinstein said that the Commission was concerned about the sufficiency of active recreation areas. Mr. Webster said that it might be advisable to review the payments-in-lieu section of the Town's Development Ordinance. Mayor Waldorf said it would be helpful for staff to prepare a report for the Council on this matter.

Ms. Lemasters said that cooperation between the Town's Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments regarding maintenance of parks facilities had been hit and miss at times. Mr. Horton said he would be glad to look into this matter.

Council Member Capowski inquired about the possibility of using parks and recreation payments-in-lieu for siting recreation facilities on parking decks in the downtown area. Mr. Feinstein said that there were a number of possibilities for siting recreation facilities in the downtown area.

Library Board of Trustees

Library Board of Trustees Chair Fred Black invited newly seated Council Members Bateman and Foy to tour the library at their earliest convenience. Noting that the Board consisted of seven Town residents and one Orange County resident, Mr. Black and the Board thanked the Council for their continuing support of library services. Mr. Black said that per resident annual circulation of library materials was 19.47 books. He noted that beginning in April, library patrons would have access to the Internet via the State Library's "NC Live" system. Mr. Black also reported that the Library Needs Assessment Task Force would be making a report to the Council in early 1999 to outline the library's future needs. Noting that the Council had authorized the Library Board to make a presentation to the Orange County Board of Commissioners regarding Town library funding needs, Mr. Black said that the Board hoped to receive additional County funding to assist with the library's expanding technology needs.

Library Board Member Paul Farel noted that Wake County contributed twice per capita as much for library services as Orange County. He said that the Town's library was experiencing very heavy usage by school-age children. Mr. Farel also stated that the library's reference staff was a very heavily utilized terrific resource.

Council Member Foy inquired whether or not the Town's library was the only municipal library in the Wake, Durham, Chatham and Orange County region. Library Director Kathleen Thompson stated that there were relatively few municipally-operated libraries in North Carolina, with the Chapel Hill Public Library being the second largest municipal library in the state. Mr. Black said that the Town's library continued to lead the State in the number of books loaned per resident. Mr. Black inquired whether the Council had specific items which the Library Board should discuss with the Orange County Board of Commissioners. Council Member Evans suggested staffing of technologically-related programs needed to be discussed. Mayor Waldorf suggested that the Library Board note that the Town was saving the County money by running its own library facility.

Council Member Capowski inquired about Orange County Library's access to the Internet. Ms. Thompson said that the State Library was working with county and municipal libraries for linkages to "NC Live", with local governments responsible for staffing and software.

Council Member Wiggins inquired whether children would also have access to the Internet. Mr. Black said yes, noting that Board had adopted an Internet use policy for young persons, adapted from the Chapel Hill-Carrboro School Board's Internet use policy.

Council Member Andresen inquired how the Town might serve the reading needs of older citizens at assisted living facilities. Mr. Black noted that the library had a fairly large collection

of large print books. Noting that the library had provided bookmobile services in the past, Ms. Thompson said that these services were little used because many assisted living facilities had their own on-site library facilities. Council Member Andresen inquired about the status of outreach efforts to public housing communities. Ms. Thompson said that the library was currently providing books to five public housing communities and that the Council had approved the purchase of a van for the Public Housing Residents Council.

Council Member Foy inquired whether the library's catalogue was available via the Internet. Ms. Thompson said that patrons had direct dial-up access to the library catalogue. Mr. Black said this site showed the library's operating hours and other information. Ms. Thompson noted that the dial-up approach was less expensive than establishing a Library home page, given the requirements of the library's automation provider. Council Member Andresen inquired how much it would cost to get the Library's catalogue provided on the Internet. Ms. Thompson said that staff could provide this information to the Council.

Council Member Foy inquired whether or not the Library had an art lending collection. Mr. Black said that the Library did not have such a collection or program. Council Member Foy asked whether such a program had been contemplated. Mr. Black said one could be initiated if funding were provided. Ms. Thompson noted that the library had hanging space for Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission shows.

Mayor Waldorf suggested the possibility of the Library Board asking the County Commissioners for a series of funding increases over a number of years. Council Member Capowski noted that the County Commissioners also had competing demands for County funds. Council Member Andresen stated that three or four strong-willed and persevering ladies had succeeded in establishing a branch library in Carrboro. She emphasized the importance of Orange County buying into the recommendations of the Library Needs Assessment Task Force. Mr. Black said that during 1998-99, the Library would be wrapping up its patrons need survey and building on Internet service issues. Mayor Waldorf thanked the Library Board for all of its efforts.

Transportation Board

Transportation Board Chair Steve Manton said several Board members would be making presentations this evening. Rachel Gurlitz, a student representative on the Board, requested the Council's assistance in providing bus service to Chapel Hill High School as a convenience for students and parents alike.

Transportation Board Member Buck Branson said that staff had concluded that the Town could possibly generate revenues of \$20,000 to \$50,000 per year by permitting advertising on the outside of Chapel Hill Transit buses. Mr. Branson said that Town staff could give the Council a report regarding the ramifications and revenue potential for bus advertising.

Board Member Ken Robinson noted that a trial traffic calming project for Pinehurst Drive had been proposed and postponed. Council Member Andresen noted that this matter had been delayed, pending notification for a new hearing on the matter. Mr. Robinson suggested the

possibility of putting parking lot bumpers and some small trees in the middle of an area street, along with a notice of the forthcoming hearing regarding traffic calming methods. He also said it was important for the Town to incorporate traffic calming techniques into the Town's street design standards.

Board Member Michelle Minstrell suggested that the Council authorize funding for the installation of bicycle racks on Chapel Hill Transit buses, similar to the racks on Triangle Transit Authority buses. Noting that she had used other systems with bicycle racks on buses, Ms. Minstrell stated that the use of the racks did not add to bus travel time. Ms. Minstrell also said she believed that the cost of the bicycle racks would be offset by the promotion of interconnectivity between bus and bicycle use.

Transportation Board Member Loren Hintz thanked the Council for his recent appointment to the Transportation Board. Mr. Hintz noted that the Council had recently received a number of petitions from citizens regarding various traffic safety concerns. Mr. Hintz said that the Transportation Board would attempt to identify such problems in the future, before they had to come to the Council. He also stated that the Board advocated changing the timing of walk signs for pedestrians to cross area streets and putting better street markings on area roadways.

Transportation Board Member Ann Hampton also thanked the Council for her recent appointment to the Transportation Board. Ms. Hampton expressed concern that the Town's Shared Ride service ended at 10:00 p.m. and did not operate on Saturdays. Noting that the transit system had many riders who were not students at the University, Ms. Hampton requested that the Town review its reduced service policy during University breaks. Stating that she would soon be starting a part-time job at the YMCA, Ms. Hampton said it would cost her about \$40 per week just to get to her job, because there was no bus service available to her job at 6:00 a.m. Ms. Hampton also urged the Council to have more accessible locations for bus tickets, possibly including 24-hour grocery stores. She also requested that the Council consider putting shelters, benches and lighting at as many bus stops as possible. Finally, Ms. Hampton requested that the Council consider providing regular bus service to the following destinations: Chapel Hill High School, Seawell Elementary School, the Southern Orange County Human Services Building and Project Homestart and the Town's public library on Library Drive.

Mr. Manton said that the bus system had performed very well over the past year, despite a shortage of bus drivers. Mr. Manton also said if the Council could get the buses on the road, the Transportation Board and staff would get riders on the buses. He also requested that the Council designate a Transportation Board liaison to provide feedback about the Board's proposals.

Council Member Evans said she thought that exterior bus advertising was a great way to communicate about community events. She also suggested the possibility of permitting limited traditional advertising on buses.

Council Member Foy asked whether any Chapel Hill Transit buses currently had bicycle racks. Ms. Minstrell said that there were currently no buses with bike racks at present. Council Member Foy inquired how the Council might proceed on this matter. Mr. Godding said that

about eighteen months ago the staff agreed to monitor the progress of the Durham Transit System and Triangle Transit Authority's use of bike racks on their buses. Mr. Godding noted that the Durham System had started its program in late December, 1997, while the Triangle Transit Authority had started its program only three weeks ago. Council Member Capowski inquired about the possibility of trying bicycle racks on one or two heavily traveled bus routes. Mr. Godding said that this would be possible.

Council Member Wiggins inquired how the Council should proceed with the Board's proposals. Mayor Waldorf said that the Council could provide feedback to the Board about their proposals. Mr. Manton said that when the Board had requested additional bus service, staff had said this was not possible given the department's current year budget. Mr. Godding said only minimal service changes could be made within existing budget constraints. Council Member Wiggins noted that a letter had been received from a citizen regarding bus service to Chapel Hill High School. Mr. Horton said that staff could provide a cost estimate for any additional bus service which interested the Council. Noting that none of the Board members wanted to raise fares or pass prices, Mr. Branson said that the Board could come back to the Council with a formal proposal regarding exterior bus advertising.

Mr. Robinson said that there had been a major increase in the number of non-students interested in using Chapel Hill Transit system buses. Mayor Waldorf suggested the possibility of the Board addressing a reasonable priority list. Council Member Andresen inquired about the feasibility of staff estimating costs for the proposals outlined this evening. Mr. Horton said that this would be a tremendous undertaking. Mr. Godding said that staff had estimated that it would cost an additional \$3.6 million per year, on top of existing annual operating costs of \$5 million. Council Member Capowski said it was not feasible to provide all requested bus service. Mr. Robinson said that it was very difficult to provide bus service to buildings sited like the Town's library on Library Drive and the Orange County Human Services Center on Homestead Road. Mayor Waldorf said she was interested in knowing the cost of providing bus service to Chapel Hill High School.

Planning Board

Planning Board Chair John Hawkins said that the Board had attempted to involve as many people as possible in the development of the forthcoming Downtown Small Area Plan. He noted that the services of a consultant were needed to translate abstract concepts into an energized and understandable product. Mr. Hawkins also noted that the Planning Board had reviewed the proposed Greenways master plan on two or three occasions.

Planning Board Member Gay Eddy noted that the last time the Town had reviewed its Comprehensive Plan, there were no women on the applicable advisory boards. Ms. Eddy said that the Comprehensive Plan was in desperate need of revisions in a comprehensive, rather than a piecemeal, manner.

Planning Board Member Scott Radway said that the Town's Comprehensive Plan needed to be revisited, given the difficulty of applying various goals and objectives to individual projects. Mr. Radway also said that it was important to move ahead with streetscape and sidewalk projects such as Piney Mountain Road as soon as possible.

Planning Board Member Julie Coleman said that the Planning Board had had a number of very strong discussions about the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Coleman said she believed that the Town's Ordinances needed to be changed first. She suggested that public service announcements for activities such as the Downtown Small Area Plan Work Group could appear on the outside of Chapel Transit buses. Ms. Coleman also suggested that advisory boards needed to have more power in order to get things done more in an expeditious manner.

Planning Board Member Coleman Day said that the Town was at a juncture, with no large tracts of land available for development. He also said that the Town's Master Plan needed to be examined in a compacted fashion of two to three years. Stating that the downtown was a very vital area, Mr. Day also said he concurred with Mr. Radway that funds for downtown streetscape needed to be released and expended.

Council Member Andresen inquired whether the Planning Board felt that the Town's Design Guidelines needed to be reexamined and whether the Town's site plan review ordinances needed to be retooled. Mr. Hawkins said that the existing design guidelines needed work as part of a much broader planning initiative, combining some old guidelines with some new and more specific guidelines, such as a special appearance district for the downtown area. Mr. Hawkins said that special care needed to be taken with the retooling of the site plan review process. Mr. Day said his basic philosophy was that the safety, health and welfare of neighborhoods needed to come first.

Mayor Waldorf suggested that the Council schedule an annual informal joint meeting with the Planning Board in July or August to discuss items of mutual interest. Mr. Hawkins said that the Planning Board would be pleased to hold such a joint meeting with the Council.

Human Services Advisory Board

Human Services Advisory Board Chair Sarah Kogut introduced Board Members Dick Palmer, Harriet Crisp, John Birkholz and Michael Owen. Ms. Kogut said that although the Board could work with an allocation system having an overall budget cap, the Board also felt that the Town should have a longer-term goal in terms of addressing human services needs. Ms. Kogut stated that during her broad tenure the overall funding allocation for human services agencies had increased markedly on one occasion. She noted that one possibility would be to have a percentage of Town revenues or budget allotted for human services programs. Ms. Kogut also stated that the Board could consider giving larger funding amounts to a smaller number of agencies.

Noting that he very much appreciated the Board's work, Mayor pro tem Capowski said that the dilemma facing the Council was that the Council did not have the time or expertise to evaluate all of the ad hoc funding requests received by the Council throughout the year.

Council Member Bateman inquired when the change in human services funding levels cited by Ms. Kogut had occurred. Ms. Kogut said she believed that the change had taken place three or four years ago. Mayor Waldorf noted that line item allocations had been made in the Town's annual budgets for agencies such as JOCCA, the Senior Center and the Arts Center. Mr. Owen said that the Board shared the Council's frustration about a limited amount of available funding being spread across a number of worthy organizations. Mr. Owens also noted that the Peoples Channel had recently approached the Board about producing and airing a local program about human services in Orange County. Mr. Owens said that the Board concurred that this was an excellent idea.

Council Member Evans noted that funding one agency as a higher level for one year would necessitate funding other agencies at lower levels. Mr. Owen noted that the Town's human services funding did not represent a supremely vital portion of any agency's budget. He also noted that the Middle School After Schools Program was now heavily dependent on the Town's human services funding contribution. Mr. Owen said that the Human Services Board felt that it was a very good idea for this partnership to exist between the Town and the School District.

Mayor pro tem Capowski said he thought that the Human Services Board was a much better decision maker regarding human services funding requests than the Council. Council Member Foy said he thought that it was a good idea for the Council to have a dialogue with the Board about a potential funding cap and about who should review funding requests. Council Member Pavao noted that human services needs and programs were generally handled by county agencies in North Carolina.

Mayor Waldorf said that the Council would be glad to review the Board's proposals for handling the allocations process. Mayor Waldorf also said that she was very proud of the Human Services Board's vital role in coordinating various resources in the Town's Police and Housing Departments. Ms. Kogut said that the Board was very impressed with the Crisis Services Unit of the Police Department. Council Member Foy noted that the Town donated about \$26,000 for the Interfaith Council shelter. Mr. Owen said that human services programs were a very under-promoted element of the Town's operations.

Council Member Wiggins noted that Council Member Bateman had recently been appointed as the Council's liaison to the Human Services Board. Ms. Kogut said that the Board looked forward to working with Council Member Bateman and the entire Council. She added that the Board could be thinking about alternatives for agency funding requests. Mayor Waldorf suggested that the Board could have a no increase allocation process as a target. Mr. Horton said he recommended referring JOCCA's agency funding request to the Human Services Board this year. Ms. Kogut said it was a somewhat disparate situation to have Senior Center funding as a line item, while JOCCA had to make a formal application for funding to the Human Services

Board. Council Member Bateman inquired about the viability of the Board preparing a report on funding options by the Council's second meeting in October, 1998. Mayor Waldorf said that this sounded like a good idea. Ms. Kogut requested authorization for the Board to purchase food for later afternoon joint meetings with the Carrboro Human Services Board. Mr. Horton said that this could be accommodated. There was Council concurrence to proceed in this manner.

The meeting concluded at 10:17 p.m.