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Construction Confusion

The Greenleaf is still closed

NEWS

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The Greenleaf Coffee Co-Op, Guilford's student run coffee shop, closed at the end of fall semester for winter break.

It never reopened.

"It's really unfortunate that we can't have our space now because of things completely out of our control," said sophomore and Greenleaf member Colin Nollet.

Members of the Greenleaf learned that the College was not fully transparent about the renovation. Codes dictating how the space should be set up were not followed, procedures for approval did not occur, and now the Greenleaf has to bear the consequences. The question is, how did this happen?

"I think part of the reason the city found out about the new space location is that we started advertising on Yelp," said Nollet.

Despite speculation amongst Greenleaf members, in actuality the college itself went to the city about the Greenleaf during fall semester.

Other staff members guessed that the door leading from the Greenleaf to the rest of Milner needed to swing in the opposite direction, or that the windows in the

Greenleaf needed to be larger for ventilation purposes. The necessary alterations were very different.

"It's a fire safety thing," said sophomore and Greenleaf member Nellie Vinograd. "So, as it is right now, it's a dangerous place if there were to be a fire."

It remains unclear how much of a danger the space posed before the city inspected it for safety standards. Although a fire department inspector did visit the new Greenleaf space eventually, controversy continues over the school's earlier handling of permits and inspections from the City of Greensboro.

Now, Greenleaf members and members of the community are left wondering what really happened and when they can finally reopen the shop.

An experiment in alternative business

Founded over 10 years ago, the Greenleaf differs from your average college coffee shop.

"The Greenleaf is an experiment in an alternative business model as part of our vision for a better world," says the Greenleaf's mission statement. "We hold ourselves to be a non-hierarchical, member-run coffee cooperative."

Originally housed in the space now occupied by the Grill in downstairs Founders Hall, the Greenleaf relocated once before to the basement of Mary Hobbs Hall. Due to major renovations this year in Hobbs, it

now occupies the basement space on the north side of Milner Hall, which until this summer contained dorm rooms.

As a student organization, the Greenleaf receives funds from the school and enjoys the benefits of maintenance and construction work provided by Guilford.

"When I saw the space for the first time, I knew the school had done a good job," said junior and Greenleaf member Addy Allred. "I think this was unexpected."

Codes: building the legal way

The City of Greensboro's Engineering and Inspections Department issues building permits for construction work on buildings such as Milner. Before construction starts, owners or contractors submit permit applications to Engineering and Inspections describing the nature of the work and cost. They also pay a building permit fee based on the construction type and cost.

Depending on the work, the Planning Department reviews the construction plans for compliance with building codes. Then, an inspector will review the construction in person. Finally, the city issues a

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