

news

Town Council hears debate on lake, buses

By Jon Pope

The Chapel Hill Town Council heard reactions to their decisions affecting the bus service and Clearwater Lake at a public hearing Monday night.

Many of the more than 100 people who filled the Municipal Building meeting room voiced concern over the higher bus pass prices and a proposed cutback in bus service authorized by the council.

"Student government recognizes your need to raise prices, said Bob Saunders, UNC student body president. "But we urge you to reconsider your resolution of last week which raised prices 62 percent."

Saunders said the sharp price increase was too sudden and asked for the council's support in getting the largest possible discount on passes for University students. "Students need to have the lowest prices possible or they will re-evaluate whether to use the buses."

Other arguments against bus service included proposals to discontinue routes with low ridership. Users of the threatened A and N routes offered ridership data and petitions to the council, supporting the routes. They also asked for improved and extended service.

The council heard reactions to the proposed purchase of Clearwater Lake from the Chapel Hill-Carrboro YMCA as a town recreation facility.

Acquisition of the lake, located south of Chapel Hill, was supported by citizens such as Lisa Slatt, who said she was concerned about maintaining public access to recreational facilities.



Bob Saunders

"Lake Clearwater presents a good opportunity for the town of Chapel Hill to provide nearby, cheap recreation to residents," Slatt said.

Don Bailey, a resident living near the lake, said he opposed purchasing the site after observing "traffic, trash and trespassing, which have increased since the lake has become popular."

Bailey said the additional cost caused by these problems must be considered along with the need for acquiring public access to the lake.

The public hearings brought comments on other topics such as funding for local human service agencies, the North Carolina Botanical Gardens, and the Animal Protection Society. The council also heard resident proposals for extending the Airport Road bike path past Estes Drive and keeping regular Sunday hours at the town library.

CGC battles Town Council over bus pass price hike

By Galareh Asayesh

Chapel Hill Town Manager Gene Shipman has recommended that the University not offer a discount price for the town transportation system's bus passes to students.

But the town Transportation Board, in a Tuesday night meeting, recommended to the Chapel Hill Town Council that a discount be allowed.

This comes after the Campus Governing Council's resolution disapproving of the 62.5 percent increase in bus pass prices.

If the price increase is not changed, the CGC will concern itself with assuring that a student discount will be obtained by UNC. In past years the discount, negotiated between UNC and the town, usually has been 10 percent.

"Everyone concerned is going to have to make clear the advantages of a bus pass vs. a parking permit," Student Body President Bob Saunders said. "It's Student Government's responsibility, the town's responsibility and the University's responsibility."

The CGC is at present registering its concern publicly, Saunders said. "We want to get them (the town) to reconsider... and we're trying to keep the issue visible. The Transportation Board's approach is much more cautious—and in our opinion much more sensible."

Thursday's (CGC) resolution said that student body president had not been informed that the bus pass issue—a last minute addition to the Town Council's agenda—was to be discussed at the council's May 26 meeting.

The CGC asked the town to reconsider the increase, which sets the cost of a 9-month bus pass at \$65-\$111 higher than an on-campus

parking permit.

Bob Saunders called the price raise "a risky venture," saying that bus passes had never before cost more than parking permits valid for the same period of time.

Saunders predicted a decrease in the number of bus passes sold, due to the sharp price increase, and asked that the price increase be eased in over a period of two years.

"Even though these price increases are necessary, we need to let them (students) react to it in an orderly fashion. (A more gradual increase) will give the students more time to adjust," Saunders said.

Before the Town Council meeting May 26, at which the 62.5 percent increase was passed, the CGC had declared itself in favor of a price increase recommendation made by the Transportation Board. That recommendation suggested a 39.5 percent price increase in the cost of the nine month passes. The Town Council passed the larger increase, which had been recommended by the town manager.

Increasing personnel and fuel costs must be taken into account, said Bill Callahan, administrative assistant to the transportation department.

"The cost of diesel fuel rose about 100 percent last year and there has been another increase this year," he said. "Everywhere we look there are increases."

Callahan said that if the necessary price increase was not made this year it would have to be compensated for the following year. "The people in the transportation department here are very thorough in investigating the options open to them."

Police cars collide on way to call

Police officers Kenny Rogers of Hillsborough Road and Lorenzo J. Glenn of University Garden Apartments received minor injuries when their police cars collided Tuesday.

The vehicles crashed at the intersection of Church and Rosemary Streets at 4:45 p.m. Both officers were responding to a fight reported on Pritchard Avenue.

Both policemen were treated and released at N.C. Memorial Hospital following the accident.

Police Department Captain Charlie Edmonds said the two cars approached the intersection from different directions and

collided there.

Edmonds said that both vehicles' lights and sirens were on, and one of the drivers ran a red light at the intersection. Neither driver has been charged, and the investigation of the accident is continuing.

Both cars, one of which was about one month old, were heavily damaged.

The accident backed up rush hour traffic on Rosemary Street to Henderson Street. Two ambulances, four police cars, and a rescue squad unit went to the scene to assist.

—Alison Lynch

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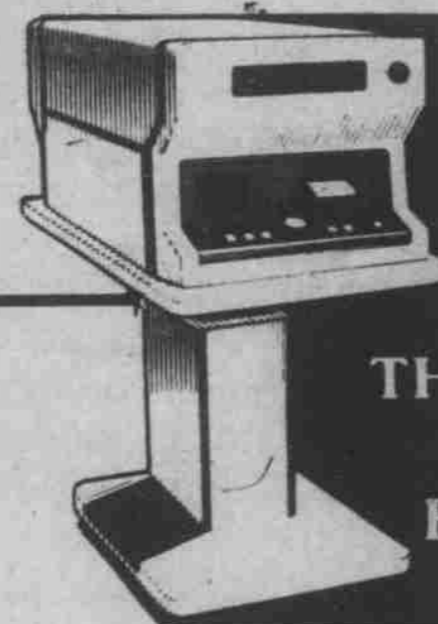


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