

The Tar Heel

Rosemary Square: Further Developments

Editorial

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On Thursday, Leonard Van Ness of the Chamber of Commerce, William Kohn, President of the Downtown Merchants' Association, along with Whitfield Morrow and Walter Daniels from the Fraser Group held a news conference to address the recent heightened criticism of the Rosemary Square project. The following are some of the points they made in favor of the development.

1. Rosemary Square is an aesthetically beautiful project

Rosemary Square uses the architectural styles, colors, and textures similar to the old university buildings on campus. The basic design concept was to place cars away from view so that people, not automobiles, dominate the town landscape.

2. Rosemary Square is designed to be a delightful haven for pedestrians.

Rosemary Square will convert what is now a plain parking lot covered with cars into an open pedestrian plaza with plants, rocking chairs, tables, and other outdoor seating. It takes an unsightly and unsafe alley and converts it to an urban park and strollway.

3. Rosemary Square represents a major step in meeting Chapel Hill's critical parking needs.

The Square will provide approximately 397 spaces for use by the public during peak hours.

4. The right location for Rosemary Square is Parking Lot #1

The commercial heart of Chapel Hill for 200 years has been the 100 block of East Franklin Street. That area, by public consent, has been in desperate need on additional parking.

5. The Pearsall Property is not the right site.

First of all, the Pearsall Property cost \$1.4 million which was borrowed by the town. The Rosemary Square site is paid for. Parking revenues will pay for the bonds to build the deck, but not to build the deck and pay for the land too.

Second, the Rosemary Square uses of the inn, small shops and offices are more appropriate to the Henderson Street site than the Pearsall Property.

Third, the plans for the Rosemary Square site would be unusable at the Pearsall Property. They reflect that site's unique characteristics — the alleys, the Post Office facility, the 12 foot elevation differential between Franklin and Rosemary Streets, and the pedestrian orientation.

Fourth, if Rosemary Square were to be moved, would not the town have a strong moral obligation by compensate the Fraser Development Company for their "good faith" pre-construction expenditures for architects, land planning, engineers, lawyers, and current additional funding commitments which have been made by the company to carry out its obligations under the development agreement with the town?

6. Rosemary Square will not create major traffic congestion problems.

The town commissioned a "Traffic and Parking Study of the Town Center Development" by Traffic Systems International Ltd. of Atlanta, who concluded in May of last year that "essentially, the additional traffic generated by (Rosemary Square) can easily be accommodated by the existing street system."

We believe that Rosemary Square would be nothing but a welcome addition to downtown

Chapel Hill. One thing is certain: a living town will never stay the same. Chapel Hill will continue to grow and that growth can be either sporadic and haphazard, or can be planned growth which addresses the problems of the

community. Those who want Chapel Hill to be a better place in which to live than it is today should support well designed sensitive downtown revitalization such as Rosemary Square.



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