

City

'Just folks'

Alliance of Neighborhoods strives to keep citizens up to date on local issues

By **BETH BUFFINGTON**
Staff Writer

The Alliance of Neighborhoods is nothing new to Chapel Hill residents interested in town growth and policy issues, said Margaret Taylor, the organization's newly-elected president.

But the watchdog organization may be unfamiliar to newcomers or to residents who aren't interested in

local issues, she said.

"We're (a group of individuals) concerned about neighborhoods and what goes on in them.

"Growth is a continuing concern. But we're also concerned about a number of things — water resource policy, waste management, air pollution, noise, animal control — whatever growth affects Chapel Hill," Taylor said.

The alliance was formed in 1981 in response to a new development ordinance which gave developers more freedom for infill, or high-density housing developments, Taylor said.

"There was a big crunch for off-campus housing, and there were indications that the town was going to rapidly grow," she added.

"It used to be that if there was a

little patch of grass you (a developer) could build apartments — rabbit apartments almost — on it," Taylor said.

Since then, the alliance has maintained a careful watch on Chapel Hill's growth and has drawn more support from its citizens, she said.

But the alliance's actual membership is hard to count, because there are about 300 dues-paying members plus a larger number of non-paying members who come out and rally support on certain, individual issues, Taylor said.

Although the group meets twice a year for scheduled meetings and as often as needed for unscheduled ones, the alliance's candidate forums are the best-attended, Taylor said.

In the candidate forums, the alliance has endorsed four of the nine elected town council members in the past two years, including former Mayor James Wallace, Taylor said.

"We don't control them (those endorsed) but we certainly hope that they support us," she said.

"I think that (the endorsement) is a mixed blessing," Mayor Jonathan Howes said.

Although the Alliance of Neighborhoods endorsed Councilwoman Julie Andresen for mayor in the election last fall, Howes was able to

overcome the lack of the endorsement and win the election, Howes said.

As mayor, Howes said that he looks to and expects to hear from the alliance concerning certain issues.

"(Alliance members) make their interest known to me like any other interest group, and I take their views — and everyone else's — into consideration," Howes said.

Andresen, founding charter member of the alliance, said Chapel Hill needed an organization like the alliance.

"In government, the neighborhoods never get together as a group," Andresen said.

"The alliance allows the special interest groups to band together (as one group)," she added.

Although the town council sees the alliance as a positive interest group, others do not, Taylor said.

"Of course, we're not the developers' favorite people," she said.

According to Taylor, disgruntled developers have often misunderstood the alliance's intentions and have accused it of being an elitist or an exclusionary group.

"We are not activist," Taylor said. "We're not knights on white horses out to do battle."

"We're just ordinary Chapel Hillians; we're just folks."

Construction nearly complete for luxury facility next to Duke

By **SCOTT COOPER**
Staff Writer

DURHAM — A \$16 million luxury hotel adjacent to the Duke University campus should be completed by October.

The Washington Duke Hotel, a multilevel hotel and convention complex, is under construction at the intersection of Highway 751 and

Science Drive. Work on the hotel began in September 1987.

"The hotel's function will primarily be to serve the needs of the university and the golf course," said Carolyn Brown, spokeswoman for the Durham Chamber of Commerce.

Funding for the project was provided jointly by Duke and Equitable Real Estate Investment Management

Inc., according to Len Pardue of the Duke University Public Relations Department.

Tishman-Speyer Properties, a developer from Atlanta, is in charge of the construction, Brown said. The hotel, a five-story, 171-room structure employing more than 100 people, will be managed by the Continental Company.

PTL faces end as donations dwindle

From Associated Press reports

COLUMBIA, S.C. — PTL will have to go off the air and close its theme park as early as next month if contributions to the television ministry continue to dwindle, the new trustee told a U.S. Bankruptcy Court judge who said he supported the concept of PTL's liquidation plan.

After the hearing, PTL contributors made tearful pleas to trustee M.C. "Red" Benton to allow banished PTL founder Jim Bakker's appearance on the cable TV network to solicit donations they said would save the ministry and keep it intact.

"Everybody else has tried and failed — why not Bakker?" said Paul Wood, a spokesman for a group of PTL's Lifetime Partners, the major contributors to the ministry.

Bakker resigned in March 1987 as the story of his tryst with Jessica Hahn and her hush money payments

was about to break. His successor, Jerry Falwell, resigned in October.

Wood said contributors he represents had pledged \$81 million that would be turned over to the ministry once Bakker was allowed on the PTL network "to ask for forgiveness."

Benton told the contributors, several of them weeping as they pleaded with him in the courtroom, that his objective was to "save" PTL.

"My primary duty is to get the creditors paid," he added. Benton said after the hearing he wouldn't rule out the proposal allowing Bakker's return once he saw it in writing, "if it's the best and logical next step for

the ministry."

PTL attorney Bradford Leggett said if the contributors had as much financial backing as they claim, the logical thing to do would be to put their money together and present a proposal to buy PTL and pay its debts.

Wood acknowledged later that they couldn't raise the money without getting Bakker on the network.

In the hearing before Judge Rufus Reynolds, Benton said, "We're considerably short of money now, and we're going to have to have some money soon to operate. Contributions have about dried up."

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