

City

Hearings to focus on development

By **BLAKE DICKINSON**
Staff Writer

The Chapel Hill Town Council will hold public hearings Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the municipal building to allow residents to present their opinions on several issues under consideration.

The topics of the hearings include a request for modifying a special use permit for a proposed Franklin Street store, a subdivision application and a proposed amendment to the town's development ordinance that would allow car washes to be independent of service stations.

An application proposing building additions and site renovations at 304 W. Franklin St. would allow for a store selling outdoor equipment and apparel at the location of the former Burnette Service Station between Fowler's Food Store and Ham's Restaurant.

Major points of the application

involve Chapel Hill requirements for parking in the town center and a history of flooding problems for the area.

The town requires that one parking space be allotted per 400 square feet of floor area and that parking be located in a lot with at least 20 spaces. The store has provided plans for an 18-space parking lot.

The developer of the site has proposed to replace undersized storm sewer pipes, which the town's planning staff believes will effectively double the capacity of the storm water drainage pipes. The property, adjacent properties and West Franklin Street flood during heavy rain.

The planning board, transportation board, appearance commission and town manager have all approved modifying the special use permit.

The council will also hold a hearing on the proposed subdivision of 23.49 acres of land into 58 residential lots

just east of the intersection of Culbreth and Smith Level roads.

According to a planning staff report, Cazwell Development Inc. is unwilling to include recommendations for paved sidewalks on two streets in the Southridge subdivision. The developer is also requested to provide street access to property owned by George Tate Jr. and Estelle Atwater.

The planning board and the transportation board recommended that the town council approve the subdivision application with the condition of providing sidewalks, but not require street access to the Tate/Atwater property.

Town Manager David Taylor recommended the council require Cazwell Development Inc. provide the two sidewalks and street access to the Tate/Atwater property.

The town council will also hear a proposal to amend Chapel Hill's

development ordinance to allow a car wash as a special use in community commercial and neighborhood commercial zoning districts.

This hearing stems from a Jan. 25 letter to the town manager from attorney Grainger Barrett, representing BOC Packaging Corp. on Airport Road, owned by James Glover and Ann Petersen.

The planning board and town manager have presented differing recommendations involving the zoning districts appropriate for a car wash, certification on the water supply from Orange Water and Sewer Authority, staffing hours, driveway specifications and screening requirements.

In other business, the council has scheduled a public hearing Wednesday for residents' comments on the town's comprehensive plan. The planning board began revising the plan in 1987.

Town Meetings

Monday, April 17

Chapel Hill Town Council

7:30 p.m. Municipal Building 306 N. Columbia St.
Included on the agenda: Public hearing on a special use permit for a Franklin Street retail store

Chapel Hill-Carrboro School Board

7:30 p.m. Lincoln Center 734 Merritt Mill Road
Included on the agenda: Revisions to the transfer policy

Tuesday, April 18

Carrboro Board of Aldermen

7:30 p.m. Town Hall 301 W. Main St.
Included on the agenda: Resolution requesting a Farmers' Market grant

Chapel Hill Planning Board

7:30 p.m. Municipal Building 306 N. Columbia St.

Wednesday, April 19

Chapel Hill Town Council

7:30 p.m. Municipal Building 306 N. Columbia St.
Included on the agenda: Public hearing on Comprehensive Plan

DTH Graphic

Residents see need for affordable housing

By **JESSICA LANNING**
Assistant City Editor

Many Chapel Hill residents voiced their concerns on the town's position on low-income housing during a public hearing last week on the 1989 Comprehensive Plan.

Local resident Paul Morris said the town needs to play a larger role in developing affordable housing in the town.

"A major concern in today's economy is to help find housing for low-income people."

The Tandler Homeownership Program, a government-sponsored affordable housing project, calls for the town's use of vacant land and federal government funds to improve housing.

The town negotiates the mortgage on a home and offers a second mortgage with a payback to the town on a long-term plan based on the salaries of the residents.

Plans like this one make the down payment and financing on a house more affordable and make living in Chapel Hill a better possibility for low- to middle-income families, Morris said. The cost of living here is so high, even \$30,000 income families have a difficult time qualifying for a mortgage.

Morris said he is concerned the community is unbalanced with wealthy people living in big houses on big lots. "I don't want to live in community that is stratified," he said. "We should have a good mix."

About 75 percent of hospital employees and two-thirds of Chapel Hill employees don't live in this area, Morris said. Many people may not want to live in Chapel Hill, but others simply can't because of the expense.

"It's healthy to have people living where they work," he said.

It would also help these people avoid long commutes from out of town. "So many people coming in and out of town places a terrific strain on highway congestion," he said. "We have a good bus system, and if people lived in town, they could use that system."

"If the people of this community have some concern for letting people who teach our children, protect us and care for us to live and work with us, then we need to have more housing," he said.

Most of the people who are against government aid for affordable housing base their argument on two things, Morris said. The first is the belief that housing is a private responsibility and not a public

responsibility.

They believe that since they did not have government help when they were looking for a house, we should not help others in their efforts, he said. "But the economics of housing have changed entirely."

The second concern the opposition has is that the program will increase their real estate tax, Morris said. They do not believe this money used on these programs is recoverable.

Government financial assistance programs are not giveaways, Morris said. The money involved would be returned to the town, but the payback would occur over longer periods of time.

Margaret Taylor, president of the Alliance of Neighborhoods, said she feels the affordable housing plans are premature.

Adequate information has not been made available to the public about what the town plans to do, what the University's plans are or what the public thinks, Taylor said. The town has not clarified issues such as the price of their program, the terms for eligibility of its participants or how they will guarantee that affordable housing will remain affordable.

Taylor said she was not against

affordable housing, but she believes more information on the issue should be analyzed and opened up to community consensus.

Chapel Hill attracts people with high incomes because it is advertised as a desirable place to live, and anyone who comes here goes out and spreads the word, she said.

"People pay a premium price to live here. Certainly that's not fair to moderate-income people."

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