

City and State

Transportation Advisory Board chairman resigns

By JESSICA LANNING
Assistant City Editor

The elimination of the Transportation Advisory Board's (TAB) plan for improved traffic circulation in Carrboro was not the only casualty from Tuesday night's public hearing about the plan.

Steve Oglesbee, two-year chairman of the TAB, resigned Thursday, saying that the Carrboro Board of Aldermen's decision to table the plan was the straw that broke the camel's back.

"What threw me over the line was the decision that they (the aldermen)

made," Oglesbee said. "I was extremely disappointed with the Board of Aldermen as a whole."

The plan, which proposed to alleviate the traffic congestion in Carrboro by creating a one-way loop with Weaver and Main streets, widening Merritt Mill Road and adding road extensions to Lloyd, Carr and Parker streets and Brewer Lane, was opposed by about 50 residents and business people who spoke at the hearing.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the aldermen decided to eliminate major

parts of the plan and then tabled the plan.

Oglesbee said he made the same presentation to the aldermen in December 1988 and that the aldermen were receptive and enthusiastic about the plan.

"They gave in to political pressure. I think they politically wimped out. They've done a disservice to the town."

The residents spoke about very specific problems that could have been worked out to preserve the ideas and objectives of the plan, Oglesbee said.

The plan was a long-range set of ideas to implement over the next two decades, presented so residents would not be "shocked" when the ideas became a reality.

The aldermen should have listened to the residents and assured them attention would be given to sensitive areas, but should not have tabled the whole plan, he said. "To scrap an entire plan because of those who spoke about specific aspects is irresponsible for an elected official."

The TAB worked on the plan for two

years, which means weekend and evening sessions, Oglesbee said. "They took two years of my efforts and threw them in the trash can. It's like a kick in the teeth."

Oglesbee, a resident of Carrboro, said he may get involved in town affairs when some of the aldermen change in elections and time allows.

"I still like Carrboro. I still think it's a great place to live."

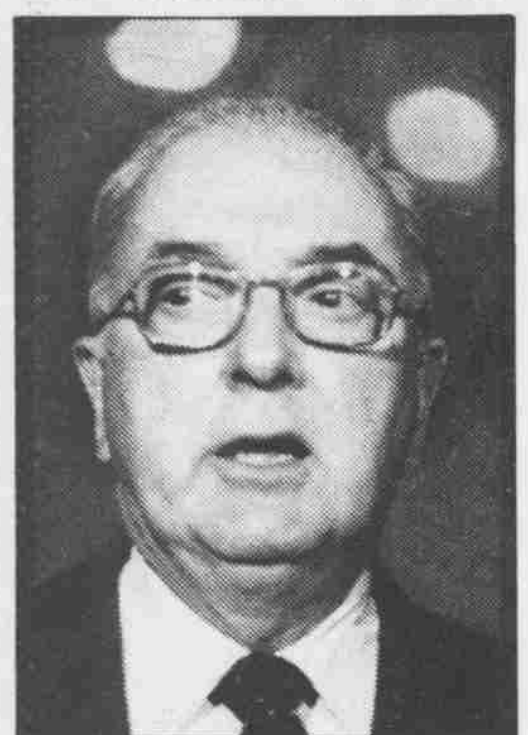
Hilliard Caldwell, alderman and mayor pro tempore, advocated eliminating parts of the plan that would

disrupt the lives and homes of residents. He said he wished Oglesbee had not left the board, but said he did not support the plan.

"They (the residents) convinced me that the problem only happens two times a day at an hour each. We do have a downtown parking problem, but not a circulation problem."

Caldwell feels it was his responsibility to listen to the needs of the people before making decisions, he said. "They are also citizens, it affected them, it didn't affect Steve Oglesbee."

U.S. House blocks vote on bill to halt funds for art



Jesse Helms

By CRYSTAL BERNSTEIN
Staff Writer

A vote on an amendment that would prohibit the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) from funding objectionable art was blocked Wednesday in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The amendment to the Interior Appropriations Bill was proposed July 26 by N.C. Sen. Jesse Helms. It would forbid funding for obscene or indecent material; material that defames objects or beliefs of a religion or non-religion; and material that defames a person or group on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin, said Virginia Falck, NEA public affairs specialist.

The bill, which also provides funding for park service, education and the humanities, provides about \$171 million for the NEA for the 1990 fiscal year.

Arguments for the anti-obscenity amendment have been fueled by several examples of NEA-supported art. The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) in Winston-Salem, which received a \$70,000 grant from the endowment, recently awarded photographer Andres Serrano (along with nine other artists) \$15,000 for his contribution to art. One of the pieces Serrano submitted ("Piss Christ") was a photograph of a crucifix submerged in urine, Falck said.

The amendment's supporters also object to the Gay Sunshine Press, said David Eisner, a press secretary for Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif. The periodical has received \$40,000 from the NEA and contains graphic drawings of bestiality and homosexual orgies and pictures depicting the Statue of Liberty as a transvestite, Eisner said. Rohrabacher is one of the amendment's

strongest supporters in the House.

The amendment, which passed the Senate, is now being discussed in a conference between both houses of Congress. The House voted 264-153 to drop the amendment but also voted 410-3 to have those participating in the conference address the amendment's concerns.

As it is now worded, the amendment is impossible to abide by and enforce, Falck said. "It's ridiculously broad. The sweeping breadth of the amendment's prohibitions raise doubts as to its constitutionality."

The amendment would also force the endowment to act as a "cultural czar" by making its members determine what art is obscene and what isn't, she said.

The NEA has given about 80,000

grants, less than one-fourth of one-tenth of a percent of which have caused protest, Falck said.

If passed, the amendment would permit government funding for neo-classical art since almost all art could be considered objectionable by some group, said Dennis Szakacs, director of communications at SECCA. Neo-classical art is the kind of art found in the average American home. "It would take the bite out of art, and one of the things that has always defined art and art-making is a bite. It would be a tragedy."

Deciding who would be responsible for classifying the art would be difficult, said Mary Regan, executive director of the N.C. Arts Council. "It's almost overwhelming to think about how complicated it would be."

Others say the amendment is needed to set definite limits on what kinds of

art can be funded by tax money. "Artists can do whatever they want as long as it's funded on their own time and their own dime," Eisner said. "All we're saying is they don't have a right to take taxpayers' dollars."

The public should not have to pay for art it doesn't want to see, said Dee Dickelman, legislative liaison for the American Family Association. "Public funding should be used for public art. How can they expect art that is only qualified for private collections to be funded by the government?"

Supporters of the amendment say if it does not pass Congress in its current form, some form of restriction will eventually be placed on government-funded art.

"It's not dead," Dickelman said. "Even if this particular amendment does not go through, the issue is not dead."

Senate passes bill to end smoking on all domestic flights

By GLENN O'NEAL
Staff Writer

An amendment that prohibits smoking on all domestic flights in the United States was approved Thursday by the U.S. Senate despite objections from N.C. senators Jesse Helms and Terry Sanford.

Along with the smoking restrictions, the amendment would mandate a \$1,000 fine for smoking on airline flights and a \$2,000 fine for destroying a smoke detector on an airplane, said Jim Townsend, press spokesman for Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., sponsor of the amendment.

At about 11 a.m. Thursday, the Senate passed 77-21 a motion of cloture, limiting debate on the amendment to 30 hours, Townsend said. Later that afternoon the Senate passed the amendment. The date for a final vote on the entire bill has not been set.

"We definitely have the votes to win final passage," he said.

"(Lautenberg) proposed this legislation because medical evidence has indicated clearly that second-hand passive smoke is very much as dangerous, particularly in confined areas, as direct smoking. The senator feels this comes down to a question of individual rights of passengers."

The senator believes the rights of people who do not smoke must be protected because they do not make a choice to breathe, whereas smokers make the choice to smoke, Townsend said.

Sen. Sanford, D-N.C., is opposed to the amendment for a couple of reasons, said Rafe Greenlee, spokesman for the senator.

N.C. farmers will be directly affected as smoking bans are increased, he said.

Congress commissioned the Department of Transportation for a study on airline smoking which is expected in

March 1990, said Greenlee. The study cost the taxpayers \$750,000, he said. The senator would like to see the study and wait for conclusive evidence before a measure is passed, he said.

The amendment was added in the Senate Appropriations Committee—a procedure Sanford objected to, Greenlee said. The group that usually has jurisdiction over such matters is the Committee of Commerce, Science and Transportation, chaired by Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., who is sympathetic to tobacco interests, he said.

It is a lot easier for Lautenberg to get legislation in the Appropriations Committee than to go through the Committee of Commerce, he said.

Lautenberg is chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee which has jurisdiction over funding for aviation, said Townsend. "Clearly, the issue is germane to transportation. Public outcry has been such that we wanted to move quickly on it."

Helms has always supported the tobacco farmer in North Carolina, said Bob Caudle, staff assistant to Helms in the Raleigh office. He will always support tobacco interests as long as it is a legal product, he said.

The press spokesman for Helms in his Washington office could not be reached for comment.

"(The amendment) seems to be a move on behalf of government to engineer people away from the use of tobacco," said J.T. Bunn of the Leaf Tobacco Exporters Association. "Here again, the government is looking into the lives of people and deciding what is good for them."

The amendment further reduces the places where people can smoke, he said. "There is a definite correlation between the amount of smoking and opportunities to smoke."

Zebulon to get minor-league baseball

By WENDY BOUNDS
Staff Writer

The Raleigh owner of a Class AA minor-league baseball team in Columbus, Ga., said Tuesday he had been given permission to move the team to Zebulon.

Steve Bryant, President of Pro Sports Franchises Inc., has been the owner of the Columbus Mudcats, an affiliate of the Houston Astros, for about a year. He has been attempting to establish a Wake County team for two-and-a-half years.

But a new 35-mile rule adopted by professional baseball officials have brought his efforts to a standstill.

"Our location in Zebulon is 38 miles from the nearest minor league team and is the absolute closest spot available near Raleigh that we can put a new team," Bryant said.

The 35-mile rule prohibits any minor league team to be placed within 35 miles of another. The requirement of a 10-mile distance between teams was recently changed in response to lobbyist efforts led by Durham Bulls owner, Miles Wolff.

The Durham Bulls are a Class A team and will be the closest minor league team to the Wake County team.

Each major-league team has one low A minor team, one high A, one AA and one AAA—the latter being the highest level. There are only 26 AA and AAA minor-league teams in the world.

But Bryant said he didn't think the higher AA status of the Mudcats will draw a significant number of baseball fans from Durham to Zebulon.

"The AA status might have a little to do with it, but basically the Chapel Hill and Durham viewers will still go to see the Durham Bulls. Our target audiences are the baseball fans in Raleigh, Wilson and Rocky Mount."

The stadium will be built near the intersection of U.S. 264 and N.C. 39 and is expected to be completed by April 1991. Financing for the stadium will come from both private and public funds in the counties, he said. He predicts the cost to be around \$6 million.

The 8,000-seat stadium will bring more business and tourism to Zebulon, said Charles Horne, Zebulon town manager.

"Mudcat baseball is wonderful. It

has sent tremors of excitement throughout the town. In restaurants, on the street, in the shops, the topic of baseball always comes up. Many people want to be a part of it when it opens in '91."

Horne said he believed the town of Zebulon would be able to shoulder the burden of increased traffic and visiting fans. Viewers won't have to cut through the actual town because of the stadium's location, he said.

The Mudcats will have a significant impact on the economic development of Zebulon.

"Steve Bryant and I have discussed the ripple effect that baseball involvement in this town will have, especially where commerce is concerned," Horne said. "The economic factors the team will bring will be seen throughout the town—in the housing industry, restaurants, dry cleaning and gas stations, to name a few. We hope to attract enough people to stimulate the need to build a nice restaurant here in Zebulon."

The establishment of the team will provide about 150 jobs in Zebulon during the five summer months of 1991, Bryant said.

"We will also hand-select a 15- to

20-member staff for office positions in Raleigh, Rocky Mount and Wilson. This is unheard of in the minor leagues."

Speculation about whether the Mudcats' name will stick in Wake County is circulating. Future fans seem to like the name and think its symbol of a fighting fish is appropriate for the East Coast state of North Carolina.

The name will be chosen for certain after funding by county and city municipalities is completed, Bryant said.

With plans for a Wake County minor-league baseball team nearing completion, fans will have to control their excitement until 1991.

But Horne insists the end result will be well worth the wait. Zebulon is ready for the Mudcats, he said.

"I wore my Mudcat hat, which is the only one in the community, to the Wake County meeting on Wednesday to welcome them all to Mudcat country. When they're ready, we're ready."

Republicans seek change in Social Security laws

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON—The government would come out ahead if it repealed or relaxed a law that reduces the Social Security benefits of senior citizens who earn more than a limited amount of outside income, a group of House Republicans said Thursday.

GOP critics of Social Security's earnings test released a private study concluding that at least 700,000 retirees would rejoin the labor market if the law were scrapped. The new workers would generate more in income and payroll taxes than the government would pay out in increased Social Security benefits.

"The retirement earnings limit is a cruel penalty imposed on elderly workers," said Aldona Robbins, a former Treasury Department economist who

co-authored the study. "It punishes the elderly but doesn't save the government any money."

The study was sponsored by two conservative-oriented research groups in Dallas, the Institute for Policy Innovation and the National Center for Policy Analysis, and released by a task force of the House Republican Research Committee.

Rep. Dennis Hastert, chairman of the committee's Task Force on the Social Security Earnings Test, said the study bolsters the case for legislation to repeal the limits and deflects arguments that the change would be too costly.

"That's the importance of this study, that we can start to tell the White House, 'Listen, there isn't a revenue cost here,'" said Hastert, whose bill to eliminate the earnings test for those aged 65 and

above has more than 130 co-sponsors. "Eliminating the earnings limit is sound policy. It's basically a win-win situation."

Under current law, workers aged 65 to 69 lose \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$2 they earn above \$8,880. The limit is \$6,480 for workers under age 65; there is no limit for those 70 or older.

Starting in 1990, benefits for those age 65 to 69 will be reduced by \$1 for every \$3 earned above the limit, which rises with growth in average wages.

Almost 1 million Social Security beneficiaries lose some or all of their benefits each year, and an additional 100,000 people in the 65-69 age group do not file for Social Security benefits because of the limit, according to the Social Security Administration.

The researchers said their best estimate was that if the earnings limit were scrapped for those aged 65 and above, there would be a net revenue gain of \$140 million for the government, while expanding the earnings limit just to the optimal level of \$39,360 would cut the deficit by \$3.2 billion a year.

Workers earning more than that amount most likely have not dropped out of the work force so that exempting them from the earnings test would not bring in new tax revenue but would still cost more in Social Security benefits.

"Short of abolishing the earnings test, virtually any increase in the earnings limit would lead to an increase in federal revenue that would more than offset the increase in Social Security benefit payments," the researchers reported.

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