

Rezoning Leaves Council With Questions

The Town Council's latest attempt to provide more affordable housing was met with a variety of concerns.

By MATT MANSFIELD
Staff Writer

The Chapel Hill Town Council discussed ways to create more affordable housing Monday, but members raised more questions than answers.

With the median price of a home in Chapel Hill approaching \$250,000, town officials have taken measures to provide homes for lower-income families.

The Town Council has attempted to rezone undeveloped properties of three acres or more, requiring that if any of these areas are built on, 15 percent of the project will provide affordable housing.

"With a project size under three acres, the 15 percent (quota) would be impractical," said Planning Director Roger Waldon.

If areas are less than three acres, the

town cannot put in more than seven houses, the minimum number to satisfy the quota the town set for itself.

Officials have identified 30 properties, mostly on the southern and northern edges of town, that could be rezoned. The current zonings range from commercial to residential.

But at Monday's meeting, council members expressed concern that zoning ordinances in some areas would adversely affect the town's residents.

"The concern I have is putting (affordable housing) around residential zones," said council member Pat Evans. "When we do try the rezoning, we'll get considerable opposition."

Waldon admitted that many properties were residential, raising doubts among some members that rezoning would gain support in neighborhoods.

Some council members worry that residents in areas that could be rezoned for lower-income housing might attach a negative connotation to the project.

Last week, a groundbreaking ceremony took place at Legion Road

Townhomes, a complex that would include 14 affordable houses.

The new houses drew similar concerns during the development stage, but most neighbors said they eventually accepted the project.

Council members claimed that other alternatives might be worth considering before committing to rezoning initiatives that raised doubts. "I think we're causing a lot of concern in the neighborhood without much benefit," Evans said. "We need to look at another way of dealing with these problems."

Another concern raised was the number of units that could be built on the prospective properties.

The council agreed to defer rezoning until it knew more details about which zones did not infringe on residential areas. "I think we run the risk of unduly irritating residents," said council member Jim Ward. "I would ask we filter out the properties favorable to rezoning."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

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PAT EVANS
Chapel Hill Town Council Member

U.S., Russia Continue Work on Space Station

The Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Spacewalkers sped through six hours of work outside the international space station Monday, hooking up cables, installing a navigation tool and dislodging a jammed piece of equipment.

The astronauts and cosmonauts next turned their attention to the inside of the space station.

"Basically, it's a cabin we have that we're trying to get some furniture into and get it ready to move into," said mission operations director Milt Heflin.

The crew of space shuttle Atlantis planned to enter the space station late Monday.

It was expected to take a few hours for the seven men to make their way through the 140-foot-long complex and all 12 hatches.

The space station is almost double the size it was the last time astronauts

visited in May.

Zvezda, the Russia-made control module, was added in late July.

With only four days inside the station, before Atlantis undocks this weekend, the astronauts and cosmonauts had to work fast.

One of their first chores was to unload 1,300 pounds of gear from a Russian cargo ship that arrived in August.

Atlantis contains an additional 4,800 pounds of supplies for the three men who will move in at the beginning of November for a four-month stay.

NASA was cheered by the success of Monday morning's spacewalk by Edward Lu and Yuri Malenchenko.

About 20 spacewalks are planned outside the station over the next year, and a half alone.

By contrast, Monday's outing was only the 50th in almost 20 years of space shuttle flight.

Nuclear Scientist's Release Postponed Pending Hearing

The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — The expected release of Wen Ho Lee was delayed Monday as prosecutors and Lee's defense team haggled over a plea deal that would release the jailed Los Alamos nuclear scientist.

U.S. District Judge James Parker gave no reason for putting off a scheduled court hearing until Wednesday.

"I must regretfully say that we cannot proceed with the hearing this afternoon," the judge said.

Lee's daughter, Alberta, left the packed courtroom in tears and her mother, Sylvia, appeared dazed.

Parker had said a few hours earlier that both sides were discussing possible

amendments to the plea agreement, which would end what has proven to be an embarrassing case to the government. The lawyers were not immediately available to comment.

According to government sources, Lee had agreed to plead guilty to only one of 59 counts accusing him of violating national security. His sentence was to be the nine months he has already served in solitary confinement.

In exchange for his freedom, Lee was expected to explain what he knows about seven computer tapes he was accused of downloading. Lee — whose defense contended he was targeted only because he is ethnic Chinese — has insisted the tapes were destroyed at the lab.

SPORTS SHORTS

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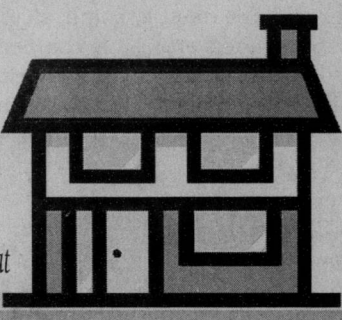
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CAROLINA CAREER FAIR

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