

Center Sets Sights Carrboro Residents to Keep Protest Alive

On Solar Power

By KENTIA ETHERIDGE
Staff Writer

The Hargraves Recreation Center soon will be utilizing a more environmentally friendly power source — the sun. The center, located in Chapel Hill, will be outfitted with energy-creating solar roofs to cut the use of natural resources like fossil fuel. The center will be participating in the Million Solar Roofs Initiative, which will help install a new roof as part of a statewide effort to develop new solar energy systems. Solar roof panels will be used instead of fossil fuel to gather electricity and to heat water. "The sun shines on the panels and energy from the sun transfers and directly heats the water that you're going to use," said Peter Dreyfuss, National Coordinator of the Million Solar Roof Initiative.

The town of Chapel Hill agreed to build one of the solar systems on the Hargraves Recreation Center, which will be funded by a grant. Officials say they expect the project to be finished within a month. Bill Terry, internal services superintendent, said the Hargraves Center was chosen based on three criteria, which recreation officials said the building meets. "The building has to face in the right direction, due south," he said. "The second criteria is that it has to have a slanted roof. A slanted roof is the best angle to collect solar energy."

Third, Terry noted, the roof can be no older than two years old or efficiency decreases. N.C. officials also have agreed to allow solar energy systems to be installed across the state. James E. Rannels from the Director's Office of Solar Energy Technologies said the program has been well received so far.

"We have looked and solicited partners for the program who are committed to doing this goal," Rannels said. "We have 50 partners accounting for more than a million solar systems. We have partners working with us also committed to working for this goal."

State officials are coordinating to create four local partnerships in Orange, Durham, Guilford and Watauga counties. Committees from these four counties will come together to raise public awareness and to focus on policy issues.

"We are trying to get together a steering committee to achieve this goal," said Phil Hervey, long-range planner for Chapel Hill. These committees have yet to be appointed, but efforts are being made to establish them. The N.C. Solar Center at N.C. State University has become involved in the program by working to increase public awareness and training professionals to install the equipment.

"We work with state governments who have a lot of money for solar energy and find ways to make them more effective," Dreyfuss said. Other local efforts have been made to conserve energy. Chapel Hill Town Council member Joyce Brown said the council has played a substantial role in promoting solar energy systems.

"We have, over the past eight years or so, converted most of the lights in the town buildings (to energy efficient lights)," she said. "The new fire station will have to meet new ordinances. Buildings must use energy ordinances."

Community involvement in the Million Solar Roofs Initiative is being stressed by all of the people involved in the program. "We need to look seriously at our energy sources," Brown said. "This is an opportunity to recognize this publicly and to work towards changing our energy sources."

The Carrboro Board of Aldermen might have dismissed further discussion of the Autumn Drive controversy, but residents of the area still refuse to give up the cause.

Despite residents' protests, the board decided Sept. 26 that it would no longer publicly discuss the connection of the 200 feet between Autumn Drive in the Barington Hills subdivision and Autumn Drive in the Wexford neighborhood.

What's more, the board will not change its stance on the decision, Alderman Diana McDuffee said. "We received (the residents') questions and reconsidered, but chose to stick to what we decided originally," she said.

"We reviewed our connector road policy and saw that it was appropriate to this case."

But Alderman Jacquelyn Gist, the only board member who voted against the plan, said she does not believe the

issue will die so easily. "As far as the town's concerned, that's it," she said. "But I don't imagine this is the last we're going to hear from that neighborhood."

Administrative Informational Services consultant Richard Ellington, a resident of Barington Hills, confirmed Gist's prediction. "We're not going to let it die," he said. "We won't roll over and play dead. We want to keep (the issue) in the media."

Stephanie Padilla, another Barington Hills resident, said the residents were throwing around other ideas for action, but the possibility of a recall, which is a vote to determine whether certain aldermen should remain in office, would be a last resort.

For a recall to happen, the residents must gather signatures on a petition calling for a new election. "It's one of the ways we got (the aldermen) to listen to us, but it's a lot of work and would be very disruptive to the town," Padilla said.

Ellington said the residents will continue to hound the aldermen to address

their specific concerns, which they felt were not being taken seriously.

"Even though the aldermen said they wanted to answer our questions, they just put together some rambling essay," he said. "We've not been dealt with forthrightly. We've been patted on the head like little children and told to sit down."

"They've committed to be a tree city, but they're going to come in and whack down our trees."

Gist said lack of discourse is one of the main reasons residents are unhappy. Gist said another concern is that although congestion would decrease in other parts of the town with the new road, the increased traffic will decrease safety in the developments.

"It's going to overburden a small neighborhood," she said. "This is supposed to make the town transportation-friendly, but it makes the area less pedestrian-friendly."

Although the town would pay to build sidewalks on the existing Autumn Drives, Ellington said these safety mea-

asures would not compensate for the connector road.

"I'm going to end up paying for sidewalks I don't want," he said.

"It's abominable to tell me they're going to give me something, then walk behind me to take it out of my pockets."

Gist said paying for the sidewalks and safety measurements would be one to two cents on the tax rate.

Furthermore, a burden would be placed on the developer, which would be required to build the road at its expense.

But Carrboro Planning Director Roy Willford said he does not think the property would be harder to sell than other pieces of land.

"We've had some interest shown but nothing official yet," he said.

Until there is a developer, the residents will continue their efforts to make their voices heard, Padilla said.

"We had to go through so many people to get to the aldermen, and I don't think they even listened to us," she said.

"The most frustrating thing was that it was obvious some of the aldermen had never been out here. They knew about this hearing for six months. It was ridiculous."

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

Campus Calendar

Saturday
9 a.m. - The Department of Public Safety will be hosting a **car seat and seat belt demonstration** and informational seminar. The free event will take place at Victory Village Child Care Center

until 1 p.m.
The public is welcome.

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Matt Dees, Editor, 962-4086
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TURNING GREEN?



G.R. Quinn expresses his desire "to start an anti-environmental movement in Chapel Hill for the 21st century." Quinn shared his views at the corner of Columbia and Franklin streets Monday.

County Census Returns Beat National Average

By PHIL PERRY
Staff Writer

Remember those annoying census forms that came in the mail earlier this year? Apparently many Orange County residents didn't find them such a hassle.

Orange County residents returned their census reports at a rate of 68 percent this year, a number that is four points higher than the state average and one point higher than the national average. The county had a 66 percent return rate in the 1990 census.

Daniel Newman, a former Orange County Board of Commissioners intern, coordinated the efforts of the Orange County Complete Count Committee. He said he credits the increase to the committee's efforts. "I think we had an excellent committee and excellent leadership on the committee," he said.

The committee was composed of a cultural cross section of society, including Hispanic, black and Asian members. Representatives of the University, Orange County school systems, area religious communities, the media, nonprofit organizations, county municipalities and the Census Bureau also comprised the team, Newman said.

The committee displayed banners encouraging people to return them, as well as distributed T-shirts and placed pub-

lic service announcements in local papers. But what this increase means for Orange County is still unclear.

Buck Tredway, information specialist with the commissioners, said the impact on the county would not be known until after the final numbers of the census are turned in by the Census Bureau.

According to the Census Bureau's Web site, the final count will be delivered to the president nine months after census day, on or before Dec. 31, 2000.

Orange County could receive an increase in federal funding as a result of the improved census returns, but that is not assured. Federal funding for states and counties is determined by population, based on census returns. Tredway said what is assured is that the increase reflects well on the county. Financial compensation was not the county's ultimate goal, Tredway said. Instead, just getting people to return the census forms was the focus of the committee.

In addition to crediting the committee for the increased return rate, Newman also praised the residents of Orange County. "Chapel Hill and Carrboro and Orange County tend to be more educated areas, and tend to see the benefit of an accurate count."

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