

# Proposed Franklin St. Hotel Popular at Public Hearing

By ANGIE NEWSOME  
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill residents and business leaders showed overwhelming support for a proposed West Franklin Street hotel during a public hearing Wednesday night.

Robert and Richard Capps, both of Greenville, submitted a request to the Chapel Hill Town Council for a special-use permit to begin construction on The Franklin, a 5-story, 66-room hotel with a parking lot and a meeting room.

Council member Pat Evans said the proposed building, to be located at the site of the abandoned Trailways Bus Station, will be brick and reconstituted stone with wooden windows.

Council member Jim Ward said the majority of comments made at the hearing were in favor of the plan and that well-known Chapel Hill business organizations, including the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce, endorsed the hotel.

"I was surprised and pleased that the

hotel had support from a variety of constituencies that regularly disagree," Ward said. "It had overwhelming support of the Downtown Commission and the Chamber of Commerce."

Ward said residents of the Northside District and the historic district south of West Franklin Street also spoke in favor of the hotel.

Evans said the residents said the hotel could increase the downtown area's safety and services. "They basically thought that with more action with people and housing, the more likely we could get a grocery store downtown," she said.

Aaron Nelson, president of the Chamber of Commerce, said the hotel gained advocates because it will not have a restaurant. He predicts that hotel guests will use area restaurants and businesses.

"It will be a big boom for West Franklin Street and bridging the gap between East and West Franklin," Nelson said.

Ward said that even though he will not make his decision on the proposal until Nov. 12 at the council's regular

business meeting, the land-use proposal seemed appropriate for the area.

"It does seem to be a type of land use that will give downtown a life around the clock, not just 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or at football games," he said.

But Ward also said the scale of the five-story building was a concern for some. "People are concerned that it is too big."

But he said that because of the architecture of the building and the topography of the building site, pedestrians will only "feel" the first two stories of the building.

Evans said the hotel could be competition for hotels like the Carolina Inn and The Siena Hotel, but she said she does not consider it to be a big concern.

If the council approves the special-use permit on Nov. 12, Ron Horvath, the civil engineer for the hotel, said it could take up to five months to complete the permitting process. "Construction could take a year to 18-months, at a minimum."

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

## Three of the four proposed locations for the new public high school are located off of Smith Level Road.

By MAGGIE KAO  
Staff Writer

School officials discussed potential sites for a new high school Tuesday to ease overcrowding in the area's public schools.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education proposed four potential locations in the southern part of town, with three located off Smith Level Road and the fourth near U.S. 15-501.

Orange County Commissioner Margaret Brown said the board is considering the possibility of a site in the northern area of Chapel Hill. "It is on a 200-acre plot of land that the commission purchased three months ago. It's located on the corner of Old N.C. 86 and Eubanks Road," Brown said.

She said the northern site would fit well with the county's co-location of parks and schools policy.

"This means that there would be lots

of athletic and playing fields for public as well as school use, saving construction and utility funds," Brown said.

Superintendent Neil Pedersen said that when selecting sites, the school board must consider certain specifications to meet county requirements.

"It has to be a certain size, probably a minimum of 50 acres, and there are other considerations such as how easy it would be to build on it, access to water, sewer and other utilities," Pedersen said. "Of course, there is always the concern of geographic location and equal school distribution, which is why we are looking at the southern sites. The slate that the commission was referring to is even further north than Chapel Hill and East Chapel Hill high schools."

He also said the school board is looking to solve the issue of overcrowding within the next 10 years.

"Roughly, we would like to have a

new high school somewhere between 2005 and 2007," Pedersen said.

But funding for a new high school is not included in the \$75 million bond referendum, which voters will consider Nov. 6. "Funds would not come for another four years or so, when there is another bond referendum," he said. "By that time, we would be about 800 students over capacity in our two high schools, so to make do, we've proposed temporary facilities and small, permanent units until the money is available."

Brown said in response to financial concerns, the commissioners have provided the school board with \$2 million to fund site acquisition and planning. "It's planning money that would probably be directed at all the preliminary work to be done for a school to be built on a site."

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NEIL PEDERSEN  
Superintendent

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

# Congress Confrontation Centers on Appointments

By ELIZABETH MICHALKA  
Staff Writer

Tuesday's Student Congress meeting involved the usual appropriation of funds to student groups along with a little attitude.

The meeting began with an abrupt speech from Finance Committee Chairman Tony Larson. He said his anger was a result of what he called negligence on the executive branch's part in filling several vacant external appointments to committees.

Student Body Vice President Rudy Kleysteuber, who is responsible for filling the appointments, said the confusion occurred because Larson expected the appointments to be brought before Congress as they were filled, but Kleysteuber expected to bring them all

to Congress at once.

"It surprised me when (Larson) went in front of Congress and voiced his anxiety," Kleysteuber said. "If they wanted the appointments sooner, we would have tried to accommodate them."

Throughout the remainder of the meeting, Congress members expressed concern over the tone of Larson's remarks. "There's too much personal animosity between the Congress and executive branch," Student Body Treasurer Kativa Parker said.

Student Body President Justin Young apologized for the negligence of the executive branch after Larson's speech and said he hopes the situation can be resolved peacefully.

"We all have a job to do, and hopefully we can do it on amicable terms," Young said.

Congress also faced attendance issues at the meeting. Ethics Chairman Dave Ruddell announced the names of six Congress members who have been absent two or more times - grounds for being removed from Congress. "Some of the people have already resigned," Ruddell said. "It will leave some open seats."

Young said special elections will be held to fill empty Congress seats Nov. 7, the same day as Homecoming elections. There will be a mandatory candidates' meeting Oct. 23 in the Student Union.

Parker said Congress had a balance of

about \$27,000 to appropriate to student groups at the beginning of Tuesday's meeting and passed bills for appropriations to seven student groups.

Students United for a Responsible Global Environment received \$4,358 in appropriations for conducting a conference on campus. The Young Democrats received \$2,797, and Lighter Shade of Blue received a total of \$2,290 to produce its show Nov. 4.

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

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