

# Forum Highlights Various Wishes for Parking Lot

By ADRIENNE CLARK  
Staff Writer

The Orange-Chatham Sierra Club and UNC's Student Environmental Action Coalition sponsored a forum to gauge public opinion about uses for parking lot No. 5.

The reformation of the 75,000 square foot lot, located on West Franklin Street, is a result of the Chapel Hill Downtown Small Area Plan, adopted in March 2000, to encourage residential and office development in the area.

UNC students, Chapel Hill residents

and Town Council members were invited to the forum to hear opinions from four panelists and voice their opinions afterward.

The meeting was opened by Sierra Club Chairman Robert Porter, who said Chapel Hill should use the space to keep the town unique.

"We need to be a special place, not just another place," Porter said. "Good public places bring people together."

Local business officials also attended the forum.

Chiropractor Chas Gaertner, who works near the area in question, said

there are too many buildings surrounding the area to make an open space work.

"There's a major flaw in the plans," Gaertner said.

James Morgan, founder of Art on Weaver, spoke on the benefits of putting a public work of art in the space.

"Public art has the ability to make a space special and memorable," Morgan said.

UNC Professor Greg Gangi, former chairman of the Sierra Club, said creating a town plaza would help residents get to know other residents.

"(Open space) would help (residents) meet new people and learn new things," Gangi said. "Public space provides a sense of wonder. People would experience diversity."

The forum comes on the heels of an Oct. 10 council meeting where several SEAC representatives shared their ideas for the parking lot with town officials.

At that meeting, the council chose to wait on the measure and passed two resolutions — one stating members' goals for the downtown area and the other approving the process of putting together the workshop.

No official action has been taken at this point to determine the parking lot's future.

Gangi also said public space would increase the interaction between Chapel Hill residents and UNC students.

"Public space has the opportunity to fuse town and gown together," Gangi said. "Public spaces encourage public conversation."

Council member Pat Evans said one of the problems of making a town plaza is that local residents live far from the downtown area.

"Most people don't live within walk-

ing distance," Evans said.

Robert Humphreys, executive director of the Chapel Hill Downtown Commission, said downtown Chapel Hill already is a place for people to meet each other.

Humphreys said he thinks the town should hold forum to come up with an alternate use of the space.

"This is a community-wide effort," he said. "We need to figure out what will draw people there."

The City Editor can be reached at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

## Officials Gather Feedback on Construction

The department of housing held forums with a series of presentations on the new residence hall communities.

By JENNY MCLENDON  
Staff Writer

It wasn't just Chinese food and subs that brought students to talk to housing department officials Tuesday night.

South Campus residents attended forums Tuesday in Ehringhaus and Craige residence halls to exchange questions and ideas about housing construction. The Department of Housing and Residential Education presented brief descriptions of the new facilities and gathered student feedback.

Housing department Director Christopher Payne said Tuesday's meetings were the first in a six-part series of forums. "Open forums are scheduled

throughout campus to involve all students who might be interested in attending," Payne said. "It's an opportunity to share information and listen to comments and questions from students that we can include in our plan to move forward."

During the forums, Payne and Lisa Wells, assistant housing department director, outlined the amenities of the four buildings being built adjacent to Ehringhaus, Morrison, Craige and Hinton James residence halls. Construction of the residence halls, which began last fall, is scheduled to be completed by fall 2002, and the halls' openings will create 900 new bed spaces.

Wells said the halls will increase the intellectual climate on campus. "These are not just places to live — they are places for faculty offices and seminar spaces to create an academic bridge from the southern region to the heart of campus," she said.

Wells also addressed the names of the new buildings, an issue which has not yet been officially resolved. "Because of

the long nature of the naming process, the housing department is recommending that the University give interim names of Morrison-South, Ehringhaus-South, Hinton James-North and Craige-North to the buildings," she said.

Wells said the halls will have air-conditioned suites with every two rooms joined by a private bathroom. Each floor will offer study lounges and common areas.

A campuswide rate increase for residents in air-conditioned rooms will absorb the costs of air-conditioning the new buildings. Current rates are \$1,400 per semester for a non-air-conditioned room and \$1,585 for an air-conditioned room, but the new halls will widen the differential between the two.

The University plans to give current South Campus residents priority for the new halls during the housing assignment process. "We asked students in a survey what their thoughts were on the assignment process," Wells said. "Our recommendation at this point is that assignments

should be made based on academic class, with students who lived through the construction for two years getting priority."

Some students said they want to live in the new halls but aren't sure of their chances. "I'm interested in living in the dorms, but I can't control the fact that I came here this year," said Justin Pentz, a freshman living in Ehringhaus. "But I've had to suffer through the construction as well." Jennifer Stone, a freshman from Cary, expressed concern about the proposed rate increases. "I think people living in the dorms should have to foot a little bit more of the bill because they are getting to live somewhere nicer than the other students — it's almost like Granville," she said.

But freshman Roba Ghanayem said she was hopeful about the prospect of living in a new hall. "If I have a chance, I'd really like to live there next year," she said. "They're really nice dorms."

The University Editor can be reached at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

## Freshman Seizes Seat In Congress Election

By JOHN FRANK  
Staff Writer

A week after technical problems forced the postponement of the District 17 special election, freshman Anthony Stokes was elected Tuesday to Student Congress.

Stokes received 52.5 percent of the vote over freshman Natalie Russell, who garnered 40 percent. There were also 16 write-in votes, said Emily Margolis, Board of Elections chairwoman.

"It feels great to win," said Stokes, a journalism major. "I really wanted to be involved in student government."

Margolis said District 17, which includes Craige and Ehringhaus residence halls and Odum Village, was the only election pushed back because of a computer "fluke." The other five districts up for election were decided last Wednesday.

Despite Student Congress officials' concern about the possibility of low voter turnout, a total of 160 people voted on Tuesday — the largest voter turnout for any districts involved in last week's special election. "We had very active candidates, so I figured we would have (a good turnout)," Margolis said.

Speaker of Student Congress Mark Townsend was not as optimistic about the level of participation before the election. "There is usually low voter turnout because a lot of people don't know about us and what we do," he said.

Stokes said the election's delay probably hurt his campaign, even though it

gave him more time to hand out fliers at Ehringhaus Residence Hall, where he lives, to inform students about the new election date.

"It was a lot more work having to go back and redo what we had already done," Stokes said.

Margolis said problems in one of the three Student Central servers caused errors for students logging on to vote between 7 a.m. and noon in all races last Wednesday. Margolis posted a notice on Student Central announcing the postponement of the District 17 special election at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday.

She said the early notice of the postponement helped make Tuesday's turnout strong.

Although the election filled six empty congressional districts, five seats remain open because of students' lack of interest in running for the positions.

These districts are for graduate students, and Congress officials said they usually remain unrepresented.

Despite congressional by-laws that require a special election every month to fill the vacant seats, Townsend said there will not be any more elections until February.

Both Stokes and Russell said the campaign was exciting, and the competition helped to bring out more participation from students. Russell said, "I wish we could both be on Congress because we both wanted it so bad."

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### CONGRESS

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the N.C. General Assembly.

Many members, including Speaker Mark Townsend, said they believe a referendum supporting an idea or sending a message, as opposed to one enacting a tangible, on-campus change, would set a "dangerous precedent."

Townsend said congressional resolutions, not referendums, should be the preferred means of expressing student sentiment.

"This is why we were elected," said Townsend, in regard to Congress' power to pass resolutions as a show of student support for an issue.

Townsend said he specifically fears that a referendum supporting an idea "opens the door for anyone on campus" to do the same.

But Gregory Wahl, Student Affairs Committee chairman, said he favors placing the referendum on the ballot, emphasizing students' right to do so as expressed in the Student Code.

"Can you imagine we're setting a dangerous precedent by letting students exercise their right?" he said.

Earlier in the meeting, Congress swore in its six newest members, who were elected in Tuesday's campus elections.

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### POSITIONS

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tions. "We still have a large number of vacated positions, and a number of positions open up each year," Charest said. "There are a number of spots open for people looking for them."

Charest said each department of UNC-CH employees had its budget reduced but that not every department was able to accommodate this cut without eliminating certain staff positions. "Every department had their budget targeted," she said. "They each had to make hard decisions about how to deal with that cut."

Heuer said the employee forum will try to prevent the elimination of more staff positions by looking into the possibility of reducing work hours to 32 hours a week. He also said the forum will continue to explore the viability of using forfeited faculty salary increases to fund employee salaries.

"Our role is to look into every possible avenue to protect our staff, and we have to find out whether it would be permissible to accept voluntary faculty pay cuts," Heuer said. "We may not have the legislative authority to do this now, but this is something we should look at for the future."

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### HIDDEN ART

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Farrow is the featured artist in the Center, and her work reflects a recent spiritual journey to India, said Tessa Dean, who guided the center's part of the tour.

The guides at each location were eager to inform the group of future exhibits and gallery visiting hours, expressing the lack of attention paid to campus art.

"We get 12,000 visitors a year, but most of them are school groups or retired people," said Laura Baxley, assistant keeper of the North Carolina Collection Gallery.

Baxley met the tour in Wilson Library. Perusing through the new exhibit of naturalist studies, the tour group got a privileged look at several pieces not usually available for public viewing, including a watercolor by Zelda Fitzgerald, wife of writer F. Scott Fitzgerald.

As many of the tour's artwork was "found," so were several of the University's galleries.

"I've never been up to Wilson Library," junior Kinsey Christiansen said. "I just never knew how much they had."

Wrapping up the tour, the attendees gathered in the Union Art Gallery for refreshments and a look at the latest student exhibition, an off-beat collection of collage works by David Townsend. Townsend, now an artist displayed on campus himself, expressed many of the feelings that prompted the tour.

"I check out the art here (in the Union Art Gallery) and at Hanes Art Center, but other than that, I don't know where to look for the art on campus," he said.

To that statement a tour participant replied, "See, you should have gone on the tour."

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

### ADVISING

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Program advising being separate from regular advising.

Some students asked what they could do if they were interested in more than one major. Officials said students can meet with advisers on different teams, especially during slower times of the year.

Although only about 30 students and advisers attended, Sexton and Cannon said they were pleased with the event. Cannon said a great deal of information and a variety of topics were discussed.

"We are available for them — we encourage students to come see us," Cannon said. "Students are our business."

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