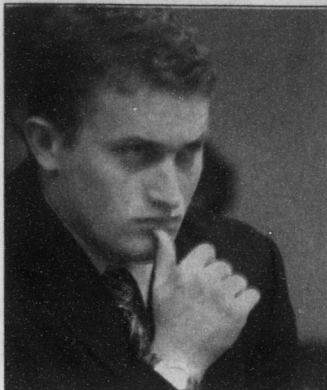


The Daily Tar Heel



ASG President Jonathan Ducote would get a vote on the BOG under an N.C. House bill. DTH FILE PHOTO

House OKs student vote

BY ALEXANDRA DODSON
STAFF WRITER

The 32 votes on the UNC-system Board of Governors might increase in number to 33 thanks to a bill passed overwhelmingly Tuesday in the N.C. House that would add a student vote to the BOG.

The bill, sponsored by Reps. Alma Adams and Earl Jones, both Guilford Democrats, could grant voting rights on the BOG to the president of the UNC-system Association of Student Governments.

After a 96-17 vote, the bill will be turned over to the N.C. Senate for debate, where Adams said she expects it to meet some opposition.

The House has passed a similar bill three times in the past, but each time it failed to come to a vote in the Senate.

The ASG president has had a seat on the governing body for the 16-campus UNC system since 1991. But as of yet, the student leader only has been allowed speaking power with which to represent the student perspective.

"The bill comes on behalf of 175,000 voting constituents: students," Adams said. "It has at its core fair, equal representation."

"Students are, after all, the primary beneficiaries of the BOG. Without them there would be no BOG and no university system."

She added that if college-aged men and women are stationed overseas, fighting with major weapons, operating dangerous machinery and making life-and-death decisions, then their peers are capable of voting with the BOG.

Adams said that without a right to vote on the board, students are not being represented properly. "A place at the table with a voice and no vote isn't really a voice at all."

But Rep. Paul Stam, R-Wake, said he opposes the bill, saying that students deserve a voice and need to be heard but that they are merely consumers of the university system.

Just as average consumers do not vote on the board of directors of a major corporation, Stam said, student consumers should not vote on the BOG.

He also said faculty, students and administrators should work within a separation of powers, all concentrating on their own spheres of responsibility.

Adams said she is pleased with the bill's passage, adding that it moves one step closer to adding a fresh outlook on the BOG.

"I think you can learn from students," she said. "I think that's a constituency point of view we need."

SEE STUDENT VOTE, PAGE 8

Former worker appeals ruling

BY ESHANTHI RANASINGHE
STAFF WRITER

A former UNC employee has continued her three-year discrimination case against the University by filing an appeal to uphold the favorable ruling of an administrative law judge.

Bobbie Sanders accused the University of discriminating against her based on age and gender in June 2000, when she was passed over for a promotion that instead was given to a younger, male applicant.

One year after she filed the claim, the case went to court, and Sammie Chess, the administrative law judge, ruled in favor of Sanders.

Chess also recommended that the University hire Sanders for the position and give her retroactive pay for the time that had passed.

But the decision was reversed by the State Personnel Commission — a ruling that a Chatham County judge later also upheld.

The commission first ruled that the University conducted "pretextual interviews" in which Sanders didn't participate.

Sanders appealed the commission's ruling April 9, asking the court to uphold Chess' ruling instead.

Representatives from UNC and the state commission did not return phone calls Tuesday.

Sanders' appeal claims that the members of the commission acted improperly when they amended their ruling twice and took too long to produce a decision.

The commission issued the two amended decisions more than one month after Sanders filed an appeal of other parts of the decision.

Issuing a decision after the one-month deadline has passed can force the commission to review the case again.

Sanders' appeal states that the late amendments were "belated backdoor efforts" by UNC to change the ruling.

The appeal also cites a letter from UNC to a commission staff member.

The letter states: "Both amendments requested by the University were substantive reversals of fundamental meaning of the Final Decision. To characterize these bold alterations as mere 'clerical errors' would be akin to a judge reversing a jury's finding of 'guilty' to 'not guilty' and justifying it by calling it a clerical error."

In February, Sanders lost her job at UNC, and a month later, she filed another petition with the N.C. Office of Administrative Hearings, stating that the layoff was a reaction to her discrimination case.

Sanders' former supervisor, Peter Schledorn, also was laid off at the same time. Schledorn was a witness in Sanders' case and also has filed a complaint alleging retaliation for being a part of Sanders' case.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

COUNCIL IDENTIFIES BUDGET PRIORITIES

Chapel Hill Town Council members will receive the town manager's 2003-04 budget proposal tonight, kicking off the budgeting season. But all the council members also bring their own top issues to the table.



Flicka Bateman

- No new taxes
- Maintaining commercial trash pickup
- Funding and personnel for public safety



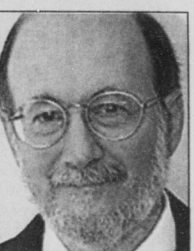
Mayor Pro Tem Pat Evans

- Human services
- Funding to promote downtown business
- Better pay for municipal employees



Mayor Kevin Foy

- No new taxes
- Town employee pay raises
- Fund Capital Improvement Projects



Ed Harrison

- Money for CIP
- Construction of bicycle and pedestrian roadways
- Adequate funding and personnel for CHPD



Mark Kleinschmidt

- Fire and police
- No new property taxes
- Municipal employee pay raise
- Garbage collection



Bill Strom

- A CHFD training officer
- Restore CIP funds
- Maintain level of public service; no cutbacks to existing programs



Dorothy Verkerk

- Rejuvenate CIP funds
- Conduct an emissions audit
- Construct and maintain pedestrian walkways



Jim Ward

- No new taxes in 2003-04 budget
- Rejuvenate Capital Improvement Projects
- Public safety



Edith Wiggins

- Adequate funding and personnel for CHFD
- CHPD funding, personnel
- Preservation of the Northside neighborhood

Town prepares to draw budget

Most council members want better services without a tax increase

BY NICK EBERLEIN
STAFF WRITER

The showdown on local allocations and tax policy in Chapel Hill will commence Monday, five days after Town Manager Cal Horton presents his recommended budget to the mayor and the Chapel Hill Town Council.

Although the final budget will not come to a vote until June 9, the Monday meeting will be the first official fiscal debate among council members this season.

Council members warned that even after the manager's budget is presented, it still might be a long struggle to determine, and eventually vote on, practical agenda items.

"It's too early for any of us to be sitting on a specific line item right now," said council member Bill Strom. "There's lots more conversation that needs to be done."

The council's final public hearing before

it starts finance negotiations will be held today.

Chapel Hill enters this year's proceedings under demanding circumstances. Gov. Mike Easley withheld state funds earmarked for local governments last year because of North Carolina's large deficit, causing an unfavorable tax increase.

Bill Stockard, assistant to the town manager, said Easley's action has put the council in the precarious position of "having to play catch-up with last year's budget" as members compare notes on the coming fiscal year.

Although the town is set to receive its accustomed funds from the state this year, Chapel Hill's coffers still will be unable to cover each council member's comprehensive wish list, which likely will foster a good deal of debate regarding the town's smaller-ticket items.

To overcome last year's financial loss, Chapel Hill was forced to draw money out of the town's Capital Improvements Program. Council member Dorothy Verkerk said that "meant we had to gut our (CIP)."

Mayor Kevin Foy acknowledged that replenishing the CIP is a top priority of the council but said he hopes it can be done without repeating last year's decision to increase property taxes.

A year ago, the tax rate went up an additional 5 cents per \$100.

Foy added that the council would like to see a pay raise given to town employees but that this issue does not have the consensus the proposed moratorium on tax increases does.

"The 3 1/2 percent wage increase for town employees (last year) — I thought that was

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 8

Road debate nears closure

Town, UNC differ on widening plan

BY JOHN FRANK
CITY EDITOR

Chancellor James Moeser said Tuesday that he is working on a compromise that will end more than 14 years of gridlock concerning the widening of South Columbia Street.

The University and UNC Hospitals have argued for a four-lane expansion of South Columbia Street between N.C. 54 Bypass and Manning Drive. Hospital officials are concerned that traffic could delay ambulances and patients accessing the hospital's facilities.

However, the plan already approved by the Chapel Hill Town Council and backed by area residents plans to widen the road only enough to add bicycle lanes, left-hand turn lanes and sidewalks.

Addressing the issue at a community forum Tuesday morning, Moeser said he and Chapel Hill Mayor Kevin Foy have met recently to discuss the issue and see the "opportunity for middle ground."

Moeser said one trade-off under consideration calls for narrowing Columbia Street north of Manning Drive and widening the portion of the road that leads to the hospital.

Town officials and residents have expressed concern that widening the road will make traffic in the area more dangerous.

Despite the plan's approval, the project has been delayed by the N.C. Department of Transportation until the town and the University come together on a solution that suits both parties.

"We have chosen not to move forward because we feel the University and hospital system has a role in the process," said Gene Conti, chief deputy secretary of NCDOT, during the panel discussion at the forum. "We are trying to be the heavy-handed authority of the past."

Moeser and Foy's comments on town-gown relations came during the first hours of an all-day forum

SEE STREET, PAGE 8

Chemical spill closes Hillsborough St.

Apartment complex trash releases gases

BY DAVID ALLEN
STAFF WRITER

Residents of Town House Apartments awakened to the sight of firefighters, police officers and a hazardous material team blocking all Hillsborough Street traffic Tuesday morning.

The entire length of Hillsborough Street — from Airport Road to Rosemary Street — was blocked for nearly three hours as officials treated the area for a hazardous chemical spill.

As garbage collectors were emptying

the Town House Apartments trash bin at 8:27 a.m., a caustic substance contained in a garbage bag spilled and emitted a white cloud of gases, said Deputy Fire Chief Robert Bosworth.

The chemical turned out to be a household acid that reacted when spilled, he said at the scene.

Two garbage collectors showed symptoms of inhalation of the substance and received medical treatment immediately. They were released before 11:30 a.m., he said.

Bosworth said that workers were fortunate there were no injuries and that the incident should serve as a "wake-up call" for the fire department to be on the lookout for future prevention of these hazards.

With all foot and motor vehicle traffic, including the A bus, diverted around the scene, many students had trouble getting to class on time.

A regional HazMat team from the Parkwood Volunteer Fire Department arrived on the scene and donned chemical suits to clean up the mess.

SEE SPILL, PAGE 8



Muriatic acid, a hazardous chemical, spilled out of a trash bag in front of Town House Apartments. DTH/SHILPI PAUL



INSIDE

KEEP OFF THE GRASS

Students might not be allowed onto Kenan Stadium field after Graduation ceremony. PAGE 3



SPORTS

HEARTBREAKER

Tar Heels drop 5-4 thriller to Elon on 12th inning game winning home run. PAGE 12

WEATHER

TODAY Sunny, High 72, Low 37
THURSDAY Partly Cloudy, High 70, Low 48
FRIDAY Rain, High 66, Low 52