

Town to join homelessness fight

BY EREN TATARAGASI
STAFF WRITER

The issue of eliminating homelessness was brought to the attention of local residents in November during a roundtable discussion, and it has now been made one of the Chapel Hill Town Council's highest priorities for 2005.

At Thursday's council planning retreat, Mayor Aide Emily Dickens presented council members with a recommendation on how to end and prevent homelessness.

The plan was constructed after the Orange County Roundtable Discussion on Homelessness, held Nov. 18. At that meeting, council members and about 150 residents discussed the need for more funding of programs for the homeless, as well as more shelter space and the need

to take on the problem head-on.

"We started to accomplish what needs to happen in town," said council member Sally Greene. "I think this is a great thing we are doing, and I am really excited about it."

The recommendation suggests that on Jan. 24 the council adopt a resolution that includes a process for further developing a 10-year plan to address homelessness.

If the resolution is accepted, Chapel Hill will officially join a "Partnership to End Homelessness in Orange County."

Dickens said the goal is then to partner with Orange County, Carrboro and Hillsborough to further develop the plan.

Hillsborough and Carrboro will be asked to offer services and representatives to serve on a commit-

tee along with representatives of Chapel Hill and the University.

The new committee would then meet with representatives at the state level and possibly the federal level, Dickens said.

"I think the community sees that this really is an issue and that we can't do it alone," Dickens said.

The resolution also recommends that the area hold another public session similar to the November roundtable.

But this time it will be held in the evening for those who couldn't attend the fall meeting, which took place during the morning.

The Carrboro Board of Aldermen declined an invitation to the roundtable because of scheduling concerns. The aldermen commented that officials should not schedule such meet-

ings on weekday mornings.

One of the resolution's primary suggestions is to involve the community by focusing on different topics and types of homelessness.

The plan is to find reasons for chronic homelessness, which will save the town money in the long run by having a way to handle these needs, Dickens said.

"There are more homeless families now than previously," she said. "We want to put systems into place that would prevent that."

The plan will be implemented with the help of the Triangle United Way, local police departments and hospitals, which will help look at the problem in more detail.

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HUB

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"Clearly, there is interest, and I believe a very important interest, in African-American participation increasing," he said. "We're not satisfied that we're there yet."

Overall, nonminority women-owned businesses accounted for 7.1 percent of the system's 14.7 percent in HUB contracts.

Bowden took particular issue with the finding that UNC-Greensboro fell far short of the 10 percent goal, awarding just 6.2 percent of its construction funding in HUB contracts.

UNC-G Chancellor Patricia Sullivan explained that two of the school's largest contracts already were up for bid before the 10 percent recommendation was put in effect by the N.C. General Assembly. "That forever skewed our numbers," she said. "I'm not happy with those numbers."

Of the other four schools that failed to meet the recommended HUB minimum, three are in the western part of the state.

Committee members agreed that Western Carolina University, UNC-Asheville and Appalachian State University probably faced greater difficulty in finding minority contractors to submit bids.

UNC-Chapel Hill exceeded the goal, awarding 13.5 percent of its construction funding to HUB contractors.

"We work very hard at that," said Bruce Runberg, the University's associate vice chancellor for facilities planning and construction. "We don't have the largest percentage in the system, but we have the largest dollar value going into the HUB program."

Jim Phillips, chairman of the BOG's Budget and Finance Committee, said the group will act soon if it finds there truly is a problem.

"I don't want any more meetings where we complain about this," he said. "We need to decide if we're unhappy and do something about it if we are."

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READING

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supports the selection of "Blood Done Sign My Name" but also said discussion questions are key in achieving success with the book.

"When talking about race, (discussion leaders) must be prepared for the pitfalls," Newsom said.

Virginia Gray, Winston Distinguished Professor of Political Science, also expressed concern

about a possible generation gap in interpretation of the novel.

"We knew this South," she said to members of the committee who experienced the issues described in the novel. "Most of the faculty are quite a bit younger. I kind of wonder how they would discuss it ... or react to it."

In light of the hesitation, Judy Deshotels, coordinator of the summer reading program and director of new student programs, encouraged committee members to make

a choice based on the kind of discussion they aim to spark.

Reginald Hildebrand, associate professor of Afro-American studies and history, advocated "Blood Done Sign My Name" during the meeting.

"This is the kind of thing we ought to be talking about," he said. "I think this is certainly worth the risk."

Members teetered between "Blood" and "Mountains," but all expressed satisfaction with the

final two choices.

"I would be proud to pick either of those books," said Holden Thorp, chairman of the committee.

This year, Thorp said the selection process has gone smoothly, though he isn't sure how the public will receive whatever choice the committee makes.

"I don't know," he said. "But I'm fascinated to find out."

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GREEKS

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Another change in the rush process this year includes not requiring rushees to visit a specified number of houses.

Some fraternity members said they applauded the change after hearing complaints from past rushees about the old requirements.

"In the past, the school has not done all it can to increase the Greek scene, but any positive change ... is always helpful," said Brendan Byrnes, president of Kappa Sigma.

Merrihew said shortening the rush process during the spring semester alleviates part of the time burden on the members and rushees, helping to ease academic pressure during the busy rush season.

Last semester, the IFC responded to concerns expressed by the UNC Board of Trustees regarding personal servitude and hazing practices during the pledge season.

The IFC implemented a new code of conduct that specifically forbids these practices, and fraternity members remain optimistic about monitoring the upcoming pledge season.

Many fraternity members said they found upon the bad image such practices create for the Greek community.

"Being in a fraternity can be a great thing, and it's a shame that, at UNC, there's a history of bad experiences with pledging," said Rob Menendez, president of Zeta Psi.

Menendez said it is important for pledges "to feel safe and know they won't be brutalized or tormented" and added that fraternities have a tough image to escape.

But Menendez said he is confident that pledges in Zeta Psi will not look back dauntingly on their pledging experience.

Unity among the pledge class and a sense of brotherhood among the pledges and members alike are also important aspects of the process, Menendez said.

Merrihew said he anticipates a smooth rushing and pledging season this semester with the new code of conduct still in place.

"We've cooperated a lot with (the BOT)," Merrihew said. "We've also made an effort to have consistency across the system. ... Everyone is on the same page."

Merrihew credits last year's IFC officers for tending to many of the board's concerns.

"They did a great job of tackling those issues and finding resolution for them," Merrihew said. "And that will help the IFC system in the years to come."

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DEAN

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make a great program better.

Philip Meyer, a professor in the journalism school, also expressed his disapproval. He said he had hoped for a candidate with work experience in the news industry as well as in academia.

Others in the school said they had not met the candidates and could not comment.

Both Meyer and Stone said a woman would be a good fit for the job. "A majority of our students in the journalism school are women," Stone said. "A woman dean would be a better representation of the student body."

Only one of the three named candidates — Hynes — is a woman.

James said the University community will have the opportunity to express its multiple viewpoints throughout the selection process. "Those voices which do not

agree should be heard in our decision," he said.

Hynes and Baldasty both said that working for the school would be an honor.

The school ranks among the top journalism schools in the country.

The 2003 accreditation report stated that the school "is recognized by academics and media professionals as perhaps the best program in the nation."

"It is an exciting program with wonderful ties to the industry," Baldasty said.

Cole will resign the post in June. He has agreed to a one-year extension on his contract to oversee several fund-raising projects for the school and hire new faculty members.

Cole also has mentioned plans to travel. He said he has been invited to visit universities in Mexico City and China.

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