

The Daily Tar Heel

Leaders OK downtown condos

Student residents don't seem upset

BY DAN SCHWIND
SENIOR WRITER

Despite concerns about affordable housing and pedestrian safety, the Chapel Hill Town Council gave the go-ahead Monday to construct a new downtown condominium complex.

Though the majority of the 35-unit apartment complex's residents are students, most said they were ready

to move out anyway.

The council voted 6-2 in favor of a special-use permit to allow developers to convert 213 E. Franklin St., now a 35-unit apartment complex, into eight condominiums.

The council also agreed to remove a stipulation from the resolution that would have required developers to build a raised brick walkway on Robertson Street next to the complex.

Town Manager Cal Horton said the town's staff included the stipulation to protect pedestrians. "We think it will cause drivers to travel more cautiously,"

But the developers successfully argued that the sidewalk would be more of an impediment than a help, citing how narrow the road already is.

"A sidewalk there could push cars into the wall or could lead to cars driving on the road," said developer Joe Patterson.

After the meeting, Patterson's partner, David Morris, added, "You're building a sidewalk in the middle of the road. Have you ever seen that before? Neither have I."

Council member Cam Hill shared the opinion of the two developers.

"I think that sidewalks for the sake

of sidewalks is overkill," he said.

Patterson also asked the council to reconsider the amount of money he would have to pay in lieu of constructing affordable housing at the complex — the issue that delayed the permit approval for the last few months.

He said he discussed methods of providing affordable housing with Robert Dowling, executive director of the Orange Community Housing and Land Trust, and agreed that \$65,000 would be sufficient to subsidize affordable

SEE CONDOS, PAGE 4

Council critiques spending proposal

BY CHRIS CARMICHAEL
STAFF WRITER

After a stint in citizens' hands, responsibility for the town budget is now squarely back under the purview of the Chapel Hill Town Council.

The recommendations of the citizens' budget review advisory subcommittee were received Monday by appreciative yet critical council members, who were quick to defend two community values: public art and nonprofit services.

Along with town consultant Maximus Inc., the committee was convened in January to help the town explore options for reducing the impact of what, at the time, was projected as a 10-cent property tax increase.

Council member Bill Strom was the first to compliment the group for "a very comprehensive and remarkably useful document."

But he was critical of the committee's recommendation to cut the Human Services Advisory Board's funding, which would limit the amount of town contributions to nonprofit groups.

"Having worked with nonprofits in Chapel Hill, we are often a lifeline to a very important service that makes this a much better community for people to live in," Strom said.

The recommendation came late in the committee's last session when member Jill Ridky-Blackburn expressed concern over the town's contribution of \$206,000 to a host of nonprofit groups.

"Most of us were not aware that the town was supporting nonprof-

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 4

HAMMERING OUT A BUDGET

With a projected shortfall of thousands, the Chapel Hill Town Council is scrambling to find areas it can cut.

January 10, 2005: Town Council hires budget consultant Maximus Inc. to assist in budget development

January 13, 2005: Town Manager Cal Horton projects a budget shortfall of \$5.1 million and a 10-cent property tax increase

January 24, 2005: Town Council appoints a budget review advisory committee, the first of its kind in about 20 years

March 23, 2005: Horton says cutting certain priorities and options could make the shortfall only \$282,500

April 4, 2005: Maximus report recommends that town eliminate commercial garbage services

April 9, 2005: Committee finalizes its recommendations, which include equalizing garbage fees and freezing raises at 1.5 percent.

STORIES OF SURVIVAL



DTH/WHITNEY SHEPTE

Barbara Rodbell, a survivor of the Holocaust, speaks to UNC students about her experiences as a Jew living in Holland during a Monday dinner in the Carmichael Ballroom. Rodbell survived by taking advantage of help from the Holland underground and by using fake identifications. She recalled the

experiences of her neighbors and family and challenged the 22 students in attendance to prevent genocide and persecution from occurring in the future. The dinner helped kick off events for Holocaust Remembrance Week, which is being sponsored by N.C. Hillel, the Carolina Union Activities Board and the Campus Y.

Local stores tied to UNC

BY RYAN C. TUCK
CITY EDITOR

Given the diversity of college-town shoppers, it would be easy for prospective businesses to try to pit consumers against one another.

ON THE TOWN

A look into college-town politics

TODAY

Town-gown in the downtown business sector

WEDNESDAY

Student interaction in town affairs

THURSDAY

How combative the town and gown are

FRIDAY

How the town and gown interact with development

mutual interests as a member of Chapel Hill's Downtown Economic Development Corporation — an

SEE BUSINESS, PAGE 4

BOWLES BECOMES HOT ITEM

Dems, GOP want him for UNC job

BY STEPHEN MOORE
STAFF WRITER

As Molly Broad makes the final sprint of her tenure as president of the UNC system, many already are speculating about what will come next.

But some say the race for her job might become a one-man show.

State legislators from both parties have thrown their support behind Erskine Bowles, a two-time U.S. Senate candidate for the Democrats and President Clinton's former chief of staff.

And while they don't have direct control over the process — the system's Board of Governors will pick the next president — their

support could speak volumes.

Bowles, who now serves as deputy special envoy for tsunami recovery for the United Nations, said Monday that he's not ready to comment about taking the post.

"I will respond when I am more informed," he said, adding that he's been out of the country working on tsunami relief.

State Sen. Robert Pittenger, R-Mecklenburg, said he would support Bowles if he applies for the presidency.

Even before Broad announced last week that she will retire within the next year, the Republican caucus sent a letter to system officials and Gov. Mike Easley throw-

ing its support behind Bowles.

"He is a man of enormous confidence that could really bring much to our university that could help us at a critical budgeting time," Pittenger said.

"It takes someone with real budget and management skill. He is a very talented man in terms of budget and management."

Some have suggested that the GOP's support of Bowles could be politically influenced. That might be the case, Pittenger said, but he added that the position is inherently a political one.

Pittenger said that he and Bowles are friends, that the UNC-system presidency must transcend party lines and that his friend — a former politician — can do the job.

"We need someone that has

the ability to work in the political process as well as the academic process."

Senate Minority Whip Jerry Tillman, R-Randolph, also said that Bowles would bring many strong characteristics to the job.

"He is a good businessman, an entrepreneur, has great ability to raise funds, an intellect," Tillman said. "I could see him being able to tell the folks where he is getting the money and tell the legislature."

Some lawmakers were less committed.

Sen. Tony Rand, D-Cumberland, said that though he has a great deal of respect for Bowles, he doesn't think that Bowles is the only person up to the task.

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"He ... could really bring much to our university that could help us at a critical budgeting time."

ROBERT PITTENGER, GOP SENATOR

Franklin Street could see \$530K in changes

BY JAKE POTTER
STAFF WRITER

Three streetscape upgrades up for consideration before the Town Council later this month could help town officials quiet longtime concerns with safety and lighting at several key downtown locations.

Council members were scheduled to decide Monday whether to take action on three proposed improvements totaling up to \$530,000, but time constraints forced them to defer the items to their April 25 meeting.

Changes to the corner of Franklin and Columbia streets, the portion of Franklin Street adjacent to University Square, and West Franklin Street's 500 and 600 blocks would become a reality this summer if the council approves the projects.

The Public Works Department hopes to add four mast-arm traffic signals, similar to some already in place on campus and in Carrboro, to the intersection of Franklin and Columbia streets, with two additional signals to be added next to Porthole Alley.

The town also would install new crosswalks with brightly colored designs at both locations.

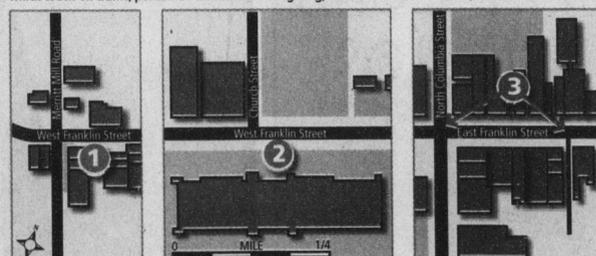
Charles House, owner of University Florist, which sits in the thick of the proposed upgrades, said he was happy to see the town replacing the old, unsightly traffic signals and making crosswalks safer for foot traffic.

"I think it's highly needed," he said. "Pedestrian safety is very, very important."

The department would also repair and upgrade a sidewalk

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS ON FRANKLIN STREET

The Chapel Hill Town Council is slated to vote on three potential changes to the streetscape of downtown. The total cost of the three projects, which touch on traffic, pedestrian movement and lighting, was estimated to be \$530,000 in funds allocated to improvement in previous years.



SOURCE: CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL

next to University Square and add lighting to the section of West Franklin Street between Roberson Street and Merritt Mill Road.

The council can choose

not to opt in for each project. Implementing all three proposals would deplete the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan's \$530,000 fund, town Streetscape

1. Install custom lighting on the south side of West Franklin Street from Roberson Street to Merritt Mill Road.
2. Improve the streetscape along the south side of the sidewalk adjacent to University Square.
3. Install mast arm traffic signal poles and upgrade the crosswalks where Columbia Street and Porthole Alley intersect Franklin Street.

DTH/FEILDING CAGE

Director Curtis Brooks said. But Brooks said he thinks the project represents town objec-

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INSIDE

CLEARING THE AIR

County health department, asthma group take a stand and promote smoke-free restaurants PAGE 3

INSIDE

SITTING PRETTY

UNC's fashion magazine hosts series of events for Fashion Week to celebrate its fourth issue PAGE 2

WEATHER

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THURSDAY Partly cloudy, H 56, L 41

