

Downtown partnership ponders street vendors

BY DANIEL PRICE
STAFF WRITER

On-the-run students and residents soon could be able to grab a hot-dog from a cart on Franklin Street.

The Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership met at the Franklin Hotel on Tuesday to discuss street vendors and downtown planters.

Chapel Hill officials did away with street vendors in 1971 because some vendors were selling drug paraphernalia, said Amber Levofsky, local affairs coordinator for the University's Graduate and Professional Student Federation.

She attended the meeting to give input on the possibility of vendors returning downtown. The partnership gave the idea mixed reviews.

"I am really skeptical that this is a good idea," said Executive Associate Provost Steve Allred, vice chairman

of the partnership. "Let me go further. I think this is a bad idea."

But partnership member Lex Alexander supported the idea and said he thought street vendors could have a positive effect on downtown.

A key topic of discussion was where the vendors would be allowed to set up shop.

Linda Convisor, director of local relations at the University, suggested putting them near bus stops on Columbia Street. Other options include the area near the post office and the parking deck between Franklin and Rosemary streets.

In addition to street vendors, the partnership discussed the small, planted lots on Franklin Street dubbed downtown planters.

The planters have been maintained by volunteer adopters since they arrived on Franklin Street.

Alexander was approached by Jim Mackroell, leader of Boy Scouts of America Troop 39 in Chapel Hill, who offered his troop's services, saying the volunteer service would be a good experience for the troop.

Alexander agreed, saying, "I think it's a win-win. It's a great opportunity for the scouts. It's a great opportunity for the town."

Partnership members said they want to make sure Scouts do not simply replace the current volunteers, but work with them to maintain the planters.

Convisor suggested organizing a meeting between the two groups. Until the volunteers are told about the troop's offer, the partnership will not make a formal proposal.

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HOMELESSNESS

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highlight the "big ticket item" — 40 housing units planned to be built.

The partnership's work group reported on the prospect of hiring an executive director to oversee the project. The group compared descriptions of similar positions in the local government and suggested a salary of \$60,000.

The partnership decided to revise the proposal and meet again Feb. 28 before proceeding to hire a director.

Tara Fikes, the housing and community development director for the county, represented the plan's work group and reported on opportunities for government funding.

Last week the partnership was awarded \$3,000 from the N.C. Interagency Council for Coordinating Homeless Programs on the condition that the community record and report homelessness data.

Members approved an application for the council to facilitate technical assistance for 10-year programs. Orange County is one of 10 state communities eligible for the award, expected to be about \$3,200 each.

Partnership to End Homelessness

What is it? The partnership was formed to create a 10-year plan to end homelessness in Orange County. The group will focus on chronic homelessness.

Goals?

► Educate the community by dispelling myths and putting a face on the homeless.

► Develop a long-term plan to end homelessness in Orange County.

► Push personal responsibility by inviting the community to address the issue individually.

Progress?

► March 2005: The partnership is formed.

► March 2006: Ten homeless people attend a meeting of the partnership's steering committee to talk about their needs.

► Summer 2006: Committees including employment, housing, prevention/discharge planning, services and basic needs/transportation met twice.

► August 2006: A presentation made by Stan Holt, homeless specialist for Triangle United Way, combines the basic ideas of each committee.

Members approved a plan to partner with the council in 2008 for a one-day program called Project Homeless Connect. The event will aim to get homeless people in the right place to get the services they need, such as food stamps or Medicaid.

The council also will put on the SOAR Initiative — a program that trains people to help the homeless

apply for supplemental security income and social security disability insurance.

But the partnership's basic goal stays the same, Zimmerman said.

"We're going to help the situation by actually putting people in homes. It's going to turn heads."

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GALLERY

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He also incorporates metallic paint, such as gold, in all of his paintings which are predominantly showcased on canvas.

"When I start my paintings, I have no preconceptions," he said.

"I follow the shapes, and I follow the different colors and instincts and emotions, and I go on and on."

Lapetina said that the middle phase of his paintings is always a struggle but that he continues painting until something is produced.

"I use many, many layers," he said. "The texture is as important to me as anything else."

Because Lapetina uses so many layers in his paintings, they take several weeks to finish. He works on more than one painting at one time and lets his surroundings dictate where his palette knife will take him.

One example of Lapetina using his environment as inspiration is his use of red paint after hearing about events in Iraq.

The name for the exhibit comes from one of the paintings of the same name in the collection, which he said represents what floating nothingness means to him in a philosophical way.

"When the painting is finished, they talk to me, and they tell me things, and then I come up with my titles," he said.

"They tell me what they mean."

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SEARCH

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ies departments.

Matson also hit on a more bottom-up approach to generating ideas, especially in terms of using technology in the classrooms.

Matson is the third candidate to go through the process, which includes a two-day campus visit and a forum where candidates present their ideas about heading the college.

The three other candidates who are seeking the deanship are:

■ Holden Thorp, chairman of UNC's department of Chemistry;

■ David Zaret, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University; and

■ Virginia Sapiro, professor of political science and women's studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The position opened in July when Bernadette Gray-Little moved on to become the UNC provost. Since then, Madeline Levine has been the interim dean since.

The dean selection committee plans to recommend a candidate by the end of January, and a public announcement should be made by the end of February.

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HEARING

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disqualification hearing if the allegations are considered by the board to be harmful to the elections process.

Kite, who is running against juniors Eve Carson, Nick Neptune and Caroline Spencer, said he thinks the laws are too complex and discourage students from getting involved.

"I feel many individuals like Josh feel so alienated from the campaign process," he said.

After almost an hour of deliberations, Brewer and the elections board reached their verdict.

"Any decision is difficult to make," Brewer said.

Senior writer Mac Mollison
contributed to this report.
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