

Assembly divided on water

Looking to tap Jordan Lake sources

BY MAX ROSE
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

The water futures of Orange and Chatham counties are pictures of contrast.

Chatham, with a rapidly growing base, is struggling now to provide necessary services.

Orange, despite the current drought, expects to have sufficient water for more than 20 years to come.

And both made it clear Monday night that they have a stake in the future of Jordan Lake's water.

Chatham Board of Commissioners Chairman George Lucier told the assembly of Orange County governments that his board needs to hear a decision on the lake's future by this summer. Chatham County has approved 12,000 homes that have not yet been built but will quickly need water.

"We're not thinking 30 years down the road, we're thinking now," Lucier said.

The Orange Water and Sewer Authority, which supplies water to Chapel Hill and Carrboro, is

unlikely to need the lake for daily purposes.

OWASA has established a long-term plan that focuses on local resources and taking over a quarry after Martin Marietta Materials, of Raleigh, abandons it, which should keep the region safe.

But while OWASA's daily water needs are met, it still has a 5 million gallon-per-day emergency allocation of water from Jordan Lake that could be lost.

"It's ironic and it's disturbing that us being good conservers ... puts us at risk of losing sort of our insurance policy," said Chapel Hill Town Council member Bill Strom.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which manages Jordan Lake, has said that water can only be drawn from one more point on the lake. If Chatham or Durham counties establish an intake point, it likely would eliminate OWASA's emergency water source.

OWASA Executive Director Ed Kerwin said that the state allocation process is based on legitimate needs and that OWASA does not need the water source.

"I think it would be really foolish for us to be charging into sticking a straw into Jordan Lake."

MARK CHILTON, CARRBORO MAYOR

"Based on what we know today, we don't believe that we need Jordan Lake for a daily demand scenario," he said.

Monday's agenda called for discussion of a potential regional partnership between several local counties which would plan for joint use of the water in Jordan Lake.

But they debated much wider principles and Orange County concerns that surrounding areas may drain the region of resources.

"We are again going to be penalized potentially for being good land stewards," Orange County Board of Commissioners Chairman Barry Jacobs said.

And it is unclear whether the long-term regional solutions can rely on increasing supply.

Carrboro Mayor Mark Chilton spoke at length about the need to establish long-term solutions and said that Jordan Lake is not such a solution.

Any policy on expanding water resources should be accompanied by conservation measures, he said.

"From my perspective, we don't have a water supply problem, we have a water consumption problem," he said.

Durham may need to use the lake for daily supplies by about the year 2030, Durham Deputy City Manager Ted Voorhees said as Durham Mayor Bill Bell stood behind him.

But the use of Jordan Lake, Chilton said, could lead to the need for more reservoirs that would take many years to construct.

"I think it would be really foolish for us to be charging into sticking a straw into Jordan Lake," he said.

"What will we do when we run out of places to build additional reservoirs?"

Contact the City/Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Neighborhood looks to curb development

Glen Lennox seeks conservation status

BY DAVID CROW
STAFF WRITER

Residents of the Glen Lennox subdivision finalized a committee Monday that will represent their interests in curbing area development plans.

The Glen Lennox Neighbors group wants to gain a conservation district status from the Chapel Hill Town Council. With this status, the community will be able to continue the development of low-cost housing and maintain height limits for buildings.

The need to acquire such a status arose when Grubb Properties, owners of about 440 apartment units and a shopping center in Glen Lennox, proposed more commercial retail and possibly a nine-story hotel.

"The high-rise buildings are going to be higher or as high as anything in Chapel Hill," said John Paul, professor at the UNC School of Public Health and a Glen Lennox resident for 27 years.

"It a radical change to an existing neighborhood."

Neighbors were also concerned with the environmental impact the heavy construction could have. Paul said the large removal of green space could hurt the area, especially during flooding or heavy water runoff.

But members of the Glen Lennox Neighbors were quick to clarify that they were not entirely against development.

"We're not against redeveloping," resident Mary Dexter said. "Development is going to happen."

"But they went over the top. The initial concept plan as it's presented is totally unacceptable."

Gustavo Montana is a representative from the Greenwood neighborhood, which succeeded in getting conservation district status from the council in June

"The high-rise buildings are going to be higher or as high as anything in Chapel Hill."

JOHN PAUL, GLEN LENNOX RESIDENT

2006. Montana said that Greenwood and Glen Lennox are connected communities and that he wants to support the neighborhood in its efforts.

"I think that both sides will succeed," Montana said. "I believe Grubb will build something here, but this association will find something positive that you can see."

Montana and Paul are members of the newly formed steering committee, created by the group to be representatives for the community on the issue.

Each neighborhood in the subdivision will have three members in the committee to represent their interests. The about 30 residents at the meeting voted unanimously for the steering committee to handle all discussions with Grubb Properties.

The committee also discussed the option of hiring an attorney. Montana said he thinks they will use a lawyer to guide the community on the right course but not to lobby their cause. No decisions were made on the issue.

The steering committee will begin meeting weekly, and the whole group will meet monthly.

On April 28, town staff are expected to make suggestions to the council on the issue of zoning the area and the prospect of Glen Lennox becoming a conservation district.

Contact the City/Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Soon-to-be graduates weigh options

Increasing numbers take time off

BY ALICE MILLER
STAFF WRITER

When the stressful schedule of college classes comes to an end, many students don't want to dive right into a career or more schooling.

Teaching English abroad, enrolling in an outdoor adventure program, working for a temporary employment agency and sleeping in your parents' basement were all options discussed Monday at a University Career Services workshop.

The workshop showcased many options for taking time off after graduating from college, but only some were supported by Jacquie Gist, assistant director of nonprofits and social services at UCS.

"There is a difference between taking a year off and delaying the inevitable," she said. "You've got to have a plan."

UCS has put on this workshop for the last few years, but student interest in taking a gap year between graduating from college and making concrete future plans has become an increasing trend, Gist said.

"A lot of students as they are finishing up college have been so consumed by school they feel a need for lots of different reasons to kind

of take a breather before that next step," she said. "My goal is to make sure that breather is productive."

According to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, about a third of the class of 2006 did not have definitive plans after graduation. Only about 17 percent had a job lined up, compared with about 25 percent of the class of 2000.

Courtney Cheek, a senior psychology and sociology major, was one of about 60 people who attended the information session. Like many attendees, Cheek knows she wants to take time off but does not know exactly what she wants to do.

"I came to see what sparks any interest," she said.

Her list of possible ideas includes attending graduate school, getting a job or moving to Australia.

Gist mentioned many factors to consider before deciding to take time off: the length of time off, the location, the cost and how taking time off fits into larger plan.

While gap years can help clarify career goals, build resumes and teach new skills, Gist said some future employers might look down on taking time off.

"A lot of students ... have been so consumed by school they feel a need ... to ... take a breather."

JACQUIE GIST, CAREER SERVICES

"If (students) spend some time thinking about what they want to accomplish during a year off then it can be a very, very productive time," she said. "But if they don't and they are just trying to put off any decisions and just try to bump around, then that is not a good thing."

Some people who take time off want to get experiences unrelated to future career goals, but others take the time to explore aspects of their future plans.

Rachel Harper, a junior biology major, plans to take time off before applying to medical school. Her plans include medical-related experience she might not have received.

"I would like to get clinical experience," she said. "I am interested in health systems around the world."

As it becomes a more and more popular option, the number of activities one can do in a gap year after graduation continues to increase.

"Taking time off doesn't mean hibernation," Gist said. "It can mean a whole lot of growth."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Options for taking time off:

- ▶ Work for a temporary employment agency
- ▶ Receive further training by taking additional classes
- ▶ Do humanitarian work — locally or abroad
- ▶ Teach English abroad
- ▶ Work or volunteer outside of planned career path
- ▶ Enroll in an outdoor adventure program
- ▶ Work as a tour guide for travel groups

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