

Sealed details might be opened in Carson case

BY SARA GREGORY
CITY EDITOR

Details about the men charged with former Student Body President Eve Carson's death might be released in the coming weeks.

Monday, a judge could order the release of documents the Chapel Hill Police Department has requested sealed.

"I do think on the 28th there will be some information," Jim Woodall, Orange County district attorney and prosecutor in the case, said April 17.

"I'm assuming the judge will want some discussion of what the state alleges to be the facts in this case."

Demario James Atwater, 21, is expected in court May 5 for a Rule 24 hearing. At that hearing Woodall will announce whether he intends to seek a death sentence, and if so, the court will determine if there is evidence of aggravating circumstances that would allow for capital punishment.

The district attorney can argue for 11 different aggravating factors.

"One of the things, probably the first thing in homicide cases, that gets people's attention once something is known about the case is the brutality of the murder. That's the heinous, atrocious and cruel (aggravating factor)," Woodall said.

If an aggravating factor cannot be proven, the most severe

sentence a district attorney can pursue is life in prison without parole.

An Orange County jury has not returned a death sentence since 1970, and that was overturned on appeal.

Lawrence Alvin Lovette, 17, the other man charged with Carson's death, is not old enough to be considered for the death penalty.

Community reaction

Carson's death has led to community discussion of concerns about safety on campus and off.

Residents had a chance April 8 to hear the town's first plans for how to use an \$80,000 gift from student government to add call boxes and street-level lighting downtown.

"We are promoting the western part of Franklin Street, and we're getting a great number of visitors," Police Sgt. Jack Terry told residents.

"We want them to have a way to contact police."

There is some neighborhood opposition though, from residents of the McCauley neighborhood who say the call boxes could be better placed elsewhere.

Town staff are expected to come before the Chapel Hill Town Council in the next month with an updated recommendation.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

ELECTIONS

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Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory.

N.C. State Senate District 23

Competition for this seat, which represents Orange and Person counties, falls between six-term incumbent N.C. Sen. Ellie Kinnaird and six-term Orange County Commissioner Moses Carey.

Visit State & National News at dailytarheel.com for full stories on each of the races.

Board of Commissioners

This year is the first where voters will select county commissioners from districts.

Voters passed a 2006 referendum that will allocate seats between two voting districts and the county at-large. It also added two seats to the board.

The change is designed to diversify the board and ensure the parts of the county outside of Chapel Hill and Carrboro are represented.

Voters can pick one of three Democrats running for the at-large seat: Neloia Barbee Jones, Bernadette Pelissier or Mary Wolff. The winner of that race will face Republican Kevin Wolff in the general election.

There are four candidates running for one District 2 seat representing the rest of Orange County: Tommy McNeill, Steve Yuhasz, Leo Allison and Luther Brooks.

The two District 1 candidates, Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education Chairwoman Pam Hemminger and Commissioner Vice-Chairwoman Valerie Foushee, face no competition for the two seats and aren't on the May 6 ballot. Visit

City News at dailytarheel.com for profiles of the at-large candidates.

School Board

Six candidates have filed to run for three seats on the Orange County Board of Education: Eddie Eubanks, Al Hartkopf, Stephen Halkiotis, Tony McKnight, Jeff Michalski and Stan Morris.

Candidates have identified the achievement gap as a major issue the board will need to address.

Land-transfer tax

Commissioners have placed a land-transfer tax on the ballot after the state gave local governments permission to request an increase in either the land-transfer or sales tax.

If the ballot measure is approved, real estate sales will be taxed at a rate of 0.4 percent.

Commissioners chose against placing a sales tax on the ballot, arguing that it would be regressive and impact the poor unfairly.

The land-transfer tax was voted against in all of the 16 counties in North Carolina where it was placed on the ballot in November.

It faces significant opposition in Orange County, as well.

Citizens for a Better Orange County is opposing the tax, arguing that homeowners already pay the brunt of local taxes.

Orange Citizens for Schools and Parks formed in response to advocate for the transfer tax and say the tax is necessary to fund schools and parks construction.

Other Races

These statewide offices also are up for grabs: state auditor, commissioner of insurance, commissioner of labor, superintendent of public instruction, state treasurer, court of appeals judge and district court judge.

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CHANCELLOR

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istics outlined in the description, the next chancellor will also face several issues already outlined by Moeser and the Board of Trustees. In the next decade, UNC must create a solid plan for faculty retention, increased enrollment and state funding.

Although each university handles its leading vision differently, UNC trustees likely will discuss with the next chancellor how that vision will be laid out in the coming years.

"It is part of the role of the chancellor to articulate that agenda," Moeser said.

Key to leading UNC is understanding the need to cater to students, faculty, alumni, the state legislature — essentially anyone who has a stake in the University.

"One of the things about the job of

chancellor is that you have so many different constituencies and so many different tasks that you have to master," said Roger Perry, chairman of the Board of Trustees and a member of the search committee.

In the past seven months, many have talked about an understanding of the Carolina way. The next chancellor will need to not only interpret what that means but preach it.

"I've read the history, and many of our chancellors have been able to draw the connection between the state and the University," said Kevin FitzGerald, executive associate dean for administration, who served as a special assistant to the chancellor during Moeser's term. "James follows an important tradition, but he does it in his own way."

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SATELLITE

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voiced.

The transit study and the fiscal impact analysis will be released soon for consideration in future planning. The two are expected to guide the development plans for the satellite campus.

On Jan. 23 the town held a public hearing for the Innovation Center and the updated master plan for Carolina North.

The Innovation Center, the first building slated to break ground in 2009, has been approved by the Chapel Hill Town Council for a special-use permit.

"That's on its own schedule independent of any review protocol for overall review of Carolina North," said Jack Evans, executive director of Carolina North.

Sentiments were mixed at the forum, with most criticism aimed at the lack of context of a full master plan to compare with the center.

Other concerns included the lack of parking, transit and housing. And the way to work through

these issues is to resolve them, agree to disagree, Czajkowski said.

"The Innovation Center to me is one of the most exciting opportunities that has come up within Chapel Hill and the University in a long, long time," he said.

"There's just no excuse for slowing that down."

But the Innovation Center is not the only part of Carolina North underway.

The UNC School of Law declared this February that it will move to the campus, but plans are not completed.

And plans are not the only unfinished business for the law school. It still needs to acquire funding before it can even begin to design a new facility.

As for funding for the entire satellite campus, Evans and other officials met with the state legislature Wednesday to discuss moving forward with monetary plans.

"This is going to give us the first round of funding to keep us moving forward," Perry said.

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DROUGHT

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going to lose the investment."

Kisiah said the department is looking into a well system for the fields for future water shortages.

"It didn't take us long to get in this situation," Kisiah said. "Right now the track record is that we might be in it again."

Kisiah said that the department will be better prepared the next time

a drought occurs.

Carrboro Mayor Mark Chilton said he spoke to Chapel Hill Mayor Kevin Foy about drought concerns.

"If the months of April and May are dry months then we could still be in a serious situation," Chilton said.

Chilton said he was curious why OWASA skipped over Stage 2 to go back to Stage 1. But Stage 1 is only in effect for 30 days and Chilton said he wants to revisit the decision in May. He said that even though the

community has grown, Carrboro residents are using less water now than before the 2002 drought.

The drought has forced people to consider water a limited resource, which they will continue to conserve, he said.

"To some extent our water consumption behavior has been changed not just today but permanently."

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