

Town hall may be named historic site

By KIM JASKI
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill's old town hall may soon be a national historic site, if two Chapel Hill residents see their plans succeed.

The town hall, located on the corner of Rosemary and North Columbia streets, was built in the early 1930's. It is being renovated now and will serve as an InterFaith Council (IFC) homeless shelter.

James Webb, a local architect, and Mary Reeb helped start the push for national historic site status for the old town hall. Together, they paid the necessary fees to begin the application process.

Reeb initiated a study of the building, putting together a report called a "national register nomination." The report contains the building's history and reasons for its significance.

The town hall was built when Chapel Hill was nothing more than a group of buildings at the edge of the University campus, Reeb said. Nearly everything in Chapel Hill was owned by the University.

A decision was made to build a town hall. Although the community wanted it placed in a different location than the one finally chosen for the old town hall, the people were ignored and it was too late to make any changes, Reeb said.

"As a result, the town got together and decided ways they could control their own destiny," Reeb said. "It is as if the town of Chapel Hill and the town hall building grew up together."

The decision to put the old town hall at the intersection of Rosemary

and Columbia streets sparked the formation of a town planning department. It was the first lay organization associated with Chapel Hill.

"The old town hall is significant in that Chapel Hill became aware of itself as a municipality," Reeb said.

The historic site nomination first was presented to the Chapel Hill Town Council several years ago and received positive comments. Next, the proposal was placed on the State-wide Historic Preservation Advisory Committee study list, waiting for the building to be deemed eligible.

It was submitted to the national committee in Washington, D.C., in January 1990. The application now awaits final approval. The process usually takes between three and six months, so the town should learn the outcome by the end of the year.

"It is very nice that they initiated this project," said Julie Andresen, a Chapel Hill Town Council member. "It is a great honor and very symbolic for Chapel Hill. It also gives the building a protection because it could one day be ripped down."

There are no restrictions on the use of the old town hall and it is now being completely renovated by GGA/Architects, IFC and the town of Chapel Hill are each providing half of the funding for renovations.

"The old town hall is not only a good example of the Georgian architecture that was being done in the early 1930's, but is also a good example of the reuse of a building since the building is no longer used for its original purpose," Mayor Jonathan Howes said.

N.C. governorship among weakest

By DAVID ETCHISON
Staff Writer

A recent nationwide study rated the N.C. governorship one of the weakest in the country and has stirred the debate about adding an amendment to the state constitution granting the governor the power of veto.

The study was conducted by Thad Beyle, professor of political science at UNC-CH, for the North Carolina Center for Public Policy. Beyle compared the governors' powers in seven categories, including five formal institutional powers: the length of tenure and secession potential; the power to appoint key officials; the power to remove officials from office; preparation and control over the state budget; and veto power.

The two other powers are the extent to which the legislature can alter the budget and whether the governor and the majority of the legislature are of the same party.

By giving each category a rating ranging from very strong to very weak, Beyle determined that North Carolina ranks 48th regarding the nation's governors, better only than Texas and Rhode Island. Maryland was credited with the strongest governor, with Massachusetts and West Virginia tied

for second.

"Veto is where the big difference is," Beyle said. "If the governor was given the veto, then it would push North Carolina up. It puts the legislature in a tremendously strong position. He has to turn the budget over to the legislature, and they can do whatever they want with it."

David Prather, spokesman for the governor, said veto power was necessary for a governor to execute his duties in the best manner possible.

"The governor is the top official elected statewide by the people. He is the leader of the state, and as the leader, he should have a more active role in legislation," Prather said.

But not everyone agrees. State Rep. Anne Barnes, D-Orange, said veto power "puts the executive branch squarely into the legislative business."

"I believe our government is a balanced one, and the result has been good government," she said.

"I think the governor is tremendously powerful and influential," said Abraham Holtzman, professor of political science at North Carolina State University. "I happen to think Beyle is wrong when he says there is something special about the legislature having access to

the governor's budget. There's nothing basically wrong with our system."

N.C. Gov. Jim Martin is the only governor in the country without veto power. Last year Gov. Martin pushed the state legislature for a constitutional amendment that would grant the governor veto power, but the bill failed to pass the House after it was approved by the Senate.

"I voted against that bill," Barnes said. "I did not feel that it provided the right kind of balance."

She said the veto question did not seem to be a partisan issue. "It's been known for a long time that both Democratic and Republican governors have favored this (the veto)."

"We had strong bipartisan support in both houses," Prather said. "It is more of a legislative-administrative conflict. Some legislators are jealous of their power. A veto can always be overridden."

However, Holtzman believes a veto is a very powerful tool.

"Ninety-three percent of all governors' vetoes prevail," he said. "The threat of a veto is also going to be effective. The 'invisible veto' magnifies the governor tremendously."

According to Prather, another at-

tempt will be made to secure the veto in the General Assembly's upcoming session. Tentatively, it will provide for a constitutional amendment that would grant the governor the right of simple veto. But it would not include a line-item veto — one that would allow the governor to veto portions of a bill instead of the entire thing — and could be overturned by 60 percent of the legislature. Gov. Martin would not be able to use the veto if it were approved because it probably would not go into effect until 1993.

"In political reality, this seems to be the strongest veto we could hope for," Prather said.

The amendment would have to be ratified by two-thirds of each house and would then have to be approved by a majority of the state population in a referendum.

"I don't have a strong aversion to veto per se as some members do," Barnes said. "I'm mainly concerned with keeping the balance (of power)."

Holtzman does not believe that having the only governor without a veto is anything to worry about.

"For some reason, most Americans seem to think God made the veto," he said.

Germanies may unite within next 6 months

By ANDRE HAUSER
Staff Writer

East and West Germany must work together to correct more than 40 years of a "communist command economy" in the wake of election victories Sunday by East Germany's Alliance for Germany coalition, a West German official said Wednesday.

Dr. Armin Koessler, press counselor for the West German Embassy in Washington, said the two Germanies could be fully united within the next six months, but as much as a year and a half

could be taken to ensure a smooth integration of the two states.

"The mandate of the election is for rapid unification with as few limitations as possible," said John Cook, deputy director for European Studies at Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies.

A plan to unify the two nations' currencies by July 1 has been proposed by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Cook said. In this plan, bank accounts with East German marks,

which are unusable outside East Germany, would be traded in for West German marks.

The plan is popular with East Germans because the official exchange rate is three East marks to one West mark, Koessler said, and the black-market rate is between 10 and 20 to one. If the current exchange rate were used, many East Germans' life's savings would disappear, and the West German government is trying to protect the more than 170 billion East marks currently held in East German bank accounts, he said.

Cook said the plan is less popular with West Germans and is opposed by some banking officials in West Germany because it would increase inflation and devalue their own currency.

"It will hurt the West Germans because all of a sudden there will be too many marks around," said Jurg Steiner, UNC-CH professor of political science. But common currencies are used in other European nations and it would not seem very strange after a period of adjustment, he said.

Koessler said West Germany was willing to accept the economic damage that would result from the currency conversion because their economy is skyrocketing, while East Germany's economy, only one-eighth the size, is in a shambles.

Freeing the East German economy from central control for the first time in more than 40 years may make prices soar as the country adjusts to a non-subsidized market system, but it should also end the chronic shortages common in communist countries, Cook said.

The two Germanies are already beginning to unify on the economic front, he said, with many East Germans moving to the West and looking for jobs and several Western firms investing in East Germany.

In the last year, more than 350,000 East Germans have moved west, and another 350,000 ethnic Germans from throughout Eastern Europe have also

moved to West Germany. Before the election, as many as 3,000 people entered West Germany each day, Koessler said, but the rate has dropped 35 percent since the elections on Sunday.

"I'm rather optimistic that the rate will remain low," Koessler said, "but some people will continue to come because they want to enjoy the benefits of West Germany immediately."

All that is left now is the formal union of the two governments and discussion with the Big Four powers about external issues of unification, he said.

The most important external issue is the united Germany's relationship to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

"That's the key issue," Cook said, adding that the Soviet Union and the East German Communists want the unified Germany to be a neutral country while West Germany, many East Germans and most western nations want Germany to remain in the NATO alliance.

East Germany is still a member of the Warsaw Pact, and it will probably remain in the alliance to some extent for the next few years, said Peter Janz, first secretary of the press office at the East German Embassy in Washington.

It is not yet clear if East Germany will join NATO, but the Christian Democrats, the main party in the Alliance for Germany, favor joining NATO after unification with West Germany, Janz said. This will become more clear soon because the newly elected officials will be taking office in the next few days.

"Germany will be in NATO, but with a special status, which is not so unusual," Steiner said.

Germany will most likely provide NATO with a reduced military, and no troops will be stationed in East Germany, he said. And while the USSR will try to make the relationship between the united Germany and NATO as loose as possible, they will ultimately accept some relationship.

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