

The News of orange county

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The real question: annexation obligation

Pending requests for annexation of three Chapel Hill public school neighborhoods into corporate Chapel Hill bring up a serious question that hasn't been faced yet.

Chapel Hill has for the past decade been proceeding on an orderly long-range plan of mutually-agreed upon annexations, carried out jointly with property owners and municipal officials.

There are several more areas, mainly to the south of town, that are likely in due time to be considered within the scope of this present and past thinking.

In each of these cases—present and past—the areas to be annexed are ones that could net the town as much as tax revenue as they'd cost in additional outlay for regular municipal services. But in the case of the school areas it's obvious that the neighborhoods to be annexed would be the greater gainers in at least two of the three sectors. The Town will realize far less in taxes than it will have to put out for a long time to come.

But rather than decide the merits of these annexations purely on the basis of financial feasibility now the Town of Chapel Hill should ask and answer this question of itself: Does a municipality have any moral responsibility to annex an adjoining area which wouldn't carry its own financial freight?

Tardy taxpayers-

Taxpayers of Orange County ought to be stirred up over the recent revelation that tax delinquencies are growing in Orange County. The statement of the County Accountant is that over 11 per cent—or \$88,500—of the 1958 tax levy is un-collected.

Coincidentally, since one cent on the tax rate yields about \$8,000, we might figuratively suggest that the current tax rate could be 11 cents less if this money was collected as rightfully owed.

It could go to fill the need for \$45,000 in school construction money needed in Chapel Hill or elsewhere in the County. Instead the taxpayer may have to pay an even higher rate in the future to offset interest charges on bonds.

It's also reported that most of this delinquency exists in Chapel Hill Township, where the greatest bulk of taxable property lies in the Town of Chapel Hill.

But the Town of Chapel Hill has collected over 96 per cent of its taxes for the same year from the same taxpayers. Thus the delinquency in County taxes is twice as high as that for the town on the same property.

There's something peculiar about this business. County officials seem to realize it, too. We trust they won't be satisfied or let up in their increased drive for collections until they find out the reason why and remedy this theft of one group of taxpayers from another.

United Nations Week
October 17-24, 1959



—Walt Partymiller, York Gazette & Daily

Newsman's Notepad . . .

Schools funds scarcely top that for roads, liquor, guns

A story in last week's issue of The News brought out that running the County School System was a \$2 million dollar business last year.

Chapel Hill Schools Superintendent Joe Johnston estimates that the operation of the schools in that district would add another million, giving a \$3 million total for the County as a whole.

Of course you can juggle the figures to show many things. We don't have any axe to grind with the school expenditures.

But as big as they are, they don't amount to much more than the outlay for some things we might consider less important.

For instance—a \$2.5 million low bid was submitted last week just for the paving of the second lane of U. S. Highway 70 from Efland to the bypass around Durham. Almost all of these 12-plus miles lie in Orange. You could easily double this figure to get the total cost of this one project alone. (Of course it's financed 90 per cent by the federal highway program.)

—But that's \$5 million in a little over a year for improving one highway in the County, compared to \$3 million for schools.

The County's ABC liquor sales for the current fiscal year may hit \$1 million — a third of the complete budget for schools. (And if the ABC take isn't this much the schools' spending will have to be affected next year!)

Still it sounds better to admit that school expenditures take up 54 per cent of the County budget, when military expenditures soak up 63 per cent of the federal spending in the same period.

If liquor, road paving, and (See NOTEPAD, Page 2)

LETTERS WELCOME

This newspaper welcomes letters from its readers for publication. None unsigned will be considered but a pen name, if requested, will be used in print. Letters should be short, legible, on one side of the paper, and preferably typewritten. The right is reserved to reject all letters not considered suitable for publication. Letters should be addressed to the editor, The News, Chapel Hill.

Don't delay dividends!

The Town of Chapel Hill, with the help of the University recently spent over \$40,000 on a new 100-foot aerial ladder fire truck.

One of the consequences of this purchase will be greater safety for the property and lives of persons in the municipality.

Another one will be a saving of money that could in many individual cases offset the taxpayer's increased pro-rata annual cost for this expensive piece of fire-fighting equipment.

This spending can result in a saving only through an "if." The "if" will be eliminated when the Town moves from a Class Seven fire insurance rating which it now has down to a Class Six rating. This will lower the fire insurance premiums within the municipality.

Purchase of the aerial ladder fire truck was one of the last two requirements to comply with the Class Six rating. The other requirement is the adoption of a municipal fire prevention code.

There are standard patterns for this code on record and adopted by cities and towns across the country.

The public has made a big financial investment in the new fire truck. It can realize a dividend on this investment by a saving in fire insurance premiums.

So delay in adopting the fire prevention code is nothing more than a delay in declaring a public dividend on this municipal investment.

Simple ABC logic

The County ABC Board has in good time decided to carry out its required mission of enforcing liquor control laws by hiring two officers for this purpose several months hence.

The Board is required to spend up to five per cent and as much as 10 per cent of its profits for this purpose. If the men hired for these jobs are effective in their posts they'll more than pay their salaries in additional revenue that they'll force away from bootleggers and into ABC coffers.

Speaking in medical terms this is a kind of curative action. It's remedying a bad situation, and quite properly so.

At the same time the ABC commissioners will do well to consider the preventive medicine recommended recently by one of their number, D. D. Carroll of Chapel Hill:

State law permits them to spend another five per cent of their profits for alcoholism rehabilitation, and, more importantly, alcoholism education.

It will make good sense for the Board to proceed along this collectively preventive front at the same time as they seek to cure the problems of liquor law violations.

Orange blossoms..

—To the Hillsboro Wildcats football team, gridiron champions of Orange County, in walloping Chapel Hill.

—To Mrs. Marvin Allen's Policy Committee of the Chapel Hill School Board for a very thorough job of fact and opinion finding in making the recommendations which the Board adopted last week regarding commencement baccalaureates.

—And to Col. Holland Robb and his co-workers in their efforts to make the public conscious and appreciative of the United Nations in the forthcoming week set aside for observance of the UN anniversary.

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"... A university is established by act of Assembly in Orange County ... What can more loudly call for the prayers of all good people that God's blessing may reside on our principal seat of learning — from which fountain are flow these streams that must poison, or purify and nourish our country." —Henry Pattillo, 1795

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