

MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION ON THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING EXPANSION
HELD BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL,
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1987, 9:00 P.M.

Mayor Pro-tem Bill Thorpe called the meeting to order. Council Members present were:

Julie Andresen
David Godschalk
Jonathan Howes
David Pasquini
Nancy Preston
R. D. Smith

Mayor Wallace and Council Member Werner were absent, excused. Also present were Town Manager David R. Taylor, Assistant Town Managers Sonna Loewenthal and Ron Secrist, and Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos.

Council Member Preston said the purpose of the work session was to discuss the important elements in the programming and design of the Municipal Building expansion project and the design process and schedule. She introduced the architects: Dan Huffman, Tim Simmons and Mike Dudley representing the firm of Hager Smith and Huffman. Ms. Preston said Council Member Thorpe and she had been working along with the other members of the Municipal Building Expansion Committee, Larry Touchstone, Milton Van Hoy, Pat Evans, and Judy White on the design process and schedule.

Assistant Town Manager Sonna Loewenthal stated that the architects had been working on the project for some time and had had initial discussions with the Departments and staff on their needs. She said the discussions this evening were to get an idea of the Council's needs for meeting space and work space and to learn more general ideas of Council Members.

Mr. Huffman said the architects hoped to get some direction from the Council on how the Council's Chamber should be designed, how many people the meeting room should hold, etc.

Council Member Smith commented that there needed to be decent display areas for maps, etc. so that everyone, Council and citizens could adequately view. He also felt the audience seating should be on an incline for better viewing. He urged the Council to get as good a building as possible for the funding provided.

Council Member Andresen questioned whether or not the Council Chamber would be used for events other than Council Meetings and Board/Commission meetings, like for small concerts, etc. She said there should be a coatroom off the Chamber.

Council Member Howes commented that he felt the primary use of the Council Chamber would be for Council meetings and that this should be the way the room should be designed. He said that he had seen one Council Chamber where the coatroom provided a separate access to the Chamber for the Council and he wondered if this was what the Council wanted. He also said he had seen a Council Chamber in Hickory where the Council table was depressed so that the audience looked down upon the Council and that he liked the idea.

Larry Touchstone said the Committee had discussed the image it felt should be projected by the Council and its new Chamber. He said the Committee felt there needed to be something to bring the Council and public together and that a separate entrance would not fall into that category.

Council Member Pasquini said Mr. Werner had suggested a coatroom, he thought, primarily as a place for him to smoke, rather than being in the hallway. He said he liked the idea of windows to allow overflow crowds to be able to see the meeting and know when they should come before the Council to make a presentation. Mr. Pasquini said he also felt there should be access from the Chamber to the public areas of the building without having to traverse the Council Chamber and disrupt the Council meetings.

Mr. Huffman stated the Council Chamber in Fort Worth, Texas had concentric circles with the seats within the circle. He said the Council sat within one of the circles.

Joe Herzenberg, Council Member-elect, said that a large room with everyone on the same level made it hard for all to be able to see the proceedings. He also said the the television cameras needed to be inobtrusive and not intrude in the room. Mr. Herzenberg said the Council Chamber should deal with the dignity of Town government. He said he liked the use of light and natural lighting.

Council Member Howes asked where the expansion was proposed to be located. Mr. Huffman responded that the architects were looking at a number of options all the way around the site. He said the architects would present all of them to the Council with pros and cons. He said the Council would have to decide what was most important to them.

Council Member Andresen asked what was the proposed seating capacity of the new chamber. Mr. Huffman responded that they were looking at a minimum public seating capacity of around 125.

Council Member Preston asked the Council how they wanted the seating arrangement of the Council and staff, ie. semi-circle, straight line.

Council Member Howes said he liked the semi-circle or some kind of broken line arrangement. He said there should be flexibility built into the seating arrangement so that changes could occur with each successive Council as they deemed necessary.

Council Member Smith said there had to be accessibility to the Chamber and offices for the handicapped.

Council Member Andresen asked if the backdrop for the walls behind the Council needed to be plain or could it be decorated. Mr. Simmons replied that the television production usually preferred a plain background.

Council Member Pasquini said he would like the Council and public to be as close as possible. He stated there needed to be adequate space at the Council tables for all the paraphernalia necessary for the meetings. He said he liked the semi-circle seating arrangement. Mr. Pasquini commented that there needed to be state of the art audio-visual aids and possibly monitors for the audience. He questioned whether the cameras would be in fixed locations or disguised camera locations.

Council Member Preston said she liked the semi-circle seating arrangement. She said she liked looking at the staff eye-to-eye. She said it was important to consider how the speakers were to address the Council and audience and the level of the podium, etc. She said people often felt intimidated to speak before the Council and that the place and level from which they addressed the Council was important.

Council Member Howes said offsetting the podium so that the speaker was visible to the audience and Council, similar to the current situation was good. He said the Council Chamber in Hickory was a good example.

The press commented that they needed access to public telephones without disrupting the meetings and also access to the audio and video outputs.

Mr. Touchstone stated that the number of students who visit the meetings also needed to be taken into consideration. He said he preferred the seating arrangement where the Manager, staff and Council were visible to all attendees.

Manager Taylor said that the quality of the cable signal that was currently being sent needed to be maintained without being intrusive to those citizens who were attending the meeting and that it produce the image that Chapel Hill has an open government.

Mr. Huffman said there had been a statement regarding the desire for glass to the exterior and he asked if the Council also wanted glass walls inside, ie. next to the lobby, where people could wait and watch.

Council Member Howes said a lobby was essential and that he liked the idea of a glass wall or viewing area.

Council Member Godschalk left the meeting at this point, 9:38 p.m.

Judy White said she felt some distance was created with back entrances to the Chamber. She said she preferred common entrances to the Chamber for all. She also said the Chamber should be fitted for the hearing impaired.

Council Member Preston asked for comments on the support facilities for the Council, ie. separate offices for each Council Member, where located, etc.

Council Member Andresen said she did not think it mattered so much where the offices were located as much as having the actual space for the Council to be able to sit down and talk with 3 - 8 people. She said the current space was a good example of what she did not want. She suggested possibly several rooms not necessarily designated as a specific Council Member's office.

Council Member Preston asked if Council Member Andresen felt the need for a desk, a place to leave things, etc. Council Member Andresen said it would nice to have the use of a telephone and privacy.

Council Member Howes said that consideration should be given to offices for Council Members, if not one for everyone, then at least a suite of offices that would have a door that would close and a small desk, file cabinet and telephone and where one could hold meetings with two or three people. He also said they needed larger rooms for meetings with five to eight people.

Mike Dudley asked if the Council wanted a common room or separate offices.

Council Member Howes said that it seemed to him that what was wanted was somewhere to be able to make a telephone call in privacy. He also said he thought there should be some formalized way of receiving visitors. He said that visitors should have a designated area where they would be received and be allowed to wait.

Mr. Huffman said it appeared to him that it would convenient to put the Council's offices near the administrative suite and use one of the secretaries for that function.

Council Member Howes said that it was more important to have the Council's offices or suite in close proximity to the Manager and staff where there would be people all the time rather than near the Council Chamber. He said the Council Chamber could be almost a free standing place.

Council Member Andresen said she would prefer to balance the space for Council offices with other space like conference rooms. She said she was not sure the Council Members would use a separate office for each member.

Council Member Preston suggested having four offices shared by two Council Members with two desks and file cabinets, and also a lounge area in front of the offices for joint use.

Council Member Andresen commented that she liked the idea of two Council Members per office space.

Council Member Howes suggested a survey of other municipalities with separate office space to see how and if the offices were used.

Council Member Pasquini said he used the Municipal Building primarily during the week-ends and giving directions as to where to meet was often hard. He suggested a separate entrance designated for Council use or just proper signage on the entrance doors to direct visitors.

Mayor Pro-tem Thorpe said that with two Council Members sharing an office there might be times when each wanted privacy, but that eventually they would schedule their time at the Municipal Building to ensure privacy.

Council Member Pasquini asked about the kitchenette suggested in the proposal. Council Member Preston said she thought this was a coffee area.

Mr. Van Hoy asked if the lounge area would be a place primarily for the Council to meet among themselves or with constituents. He said a private place separate from the public for the Council might tend to reinforce the idea of separation between the Council and the public. Council Member Preston said she thought it would be open.

Council Member Pasquini said that he often came early to the meetings and that it would be nice to have a place to relax and wait for the meeting.

Manager Taylor said that there would be somewhere in the building where there would be a coffee area rather than having it in the working area.

Council Member Preston asked the Council their feelings on furniture for the Chamber and for offices.

Council Member Howes said that for the Mayor's office he did not think it needed a conference table, but would prefer a more comfortable arrangement with a couple of easy chairs, sofa, lamps and end tables. He felt conferences should be held in conference rooms.

Mr. Huffman said that the reason for the architects wanted information on the furniture was because often the furniture could dictate the size of the room.

Council Member Howes said that he would prefer the Council Chamber chairs to have backs that did not go above the head of the Council Member.

Mr. Huffman asked what kinds of conference space was needed. He said the administration space needed a conference space. He asked if the Council wanted a separate conference space.

Council Member Preston said that she felt conference space would be interchangeable.

Council Member Howes said the conference space he missed was that area where the Manager's office was now situated, where the Council could have work sessions with a dozen or more people. He said the Council sat around a table and faced each other. He said it was a pleasant room.

The architects asked if this conference space should be dedicated to the Council Members or shared with the administration staff. They also asked if it were the same space where the Council would want to hold executive session, and how large should the room be.

Council Member Howes said it needed to hold a table with 12 to 15 people around it and chairs around the room where another 12 to 15 people could sit.

Council Member Pasquini said it also needed to be equipped for audio for taping.

Mr. Huffman asked if this area would be where advisory boards and committees would meet. The Council said yes.

Council Member Smith suggested a conference room on each floor.

Manager Taylor said that it appeared that there needed to be one special conference room with audiovisuals, etc. that could be used for boards and commission meetings, and then have other conference rooms for administrative use.

Council Member Howes said that the conference room should not be so big that it destroyed the sense of intimacy of the conference room that used to be in the Manager's office space.

Council Member Preston said she wondered whether or not the Council wanted to include a library, ie. a place to put Council memorabilia. She said it could be in the lounge area in front of the Council offices. She said ex-Council Member Winston Broadfoot had left a lot of papers, etc. to the Town which she thought would be appropriate for this kind of space.

Assistant Town Manager Loewenthal referred to the proposed process and schedule for design. The original objective of getting the construction contract approved by the Council by next July was impossible. She said therefore the objective was to get to contract approved in time to start construction before next winter, with the knowledge that the building would not be dried in before the winter weather. She pointed out the proposed schedule in the memorandum and stated that those stages in bold were the times for Chapel Hill review and that these times were the only ones with flexibility. She said the staff had tried to minimize the time and yet give enough time for the Council and public and committee and staff to review the design at each of the stages. She said the conceptual design and what was planned for the site was probably the most important part of the design process.

Council Member Howes said he wished the schedule could be compressed.

Council Member Smith asked if six weeks were needed for site plan review. Ms. Loewenthal said six weeks was the minimum time from the receipt of the plans to Planning Board approval. She said the staff was assuming there would be no major changes and that this time would include the time when the Council would review and approve the design as owner.

Mayor Pro-tem Thorpe also wished the schedule could be compressed.

Council Member Preston said it was an interesting point that the Council was probably feeling some of the frustrations that developers feel when they present a project for approval.

Council Member Smith said this project would be a good opportunity to see if the site plan approval process should be changed. He said he hoped there would not be too many delays so that the Town did not get the best possible financing.

Mr. Van Hoy said he would like to hear from the Council on the feeling it would like the expansion to evoke.

Council Member Howes said he thought it should be geared toward the human scale with an integration with nature.

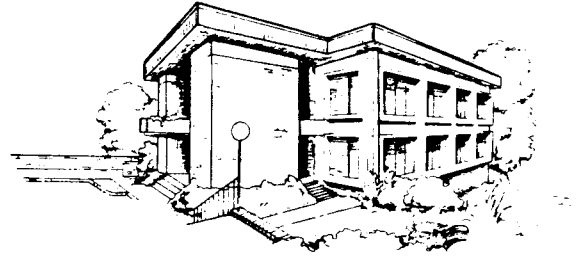
A MOTION WAS DULY MADE AND SECONDED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, (7-0).

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 p.m.

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TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

306 NORTH COLUMBIA ST.
CHAPEL HILL, N.C., 27514
(919) 929-1111



NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CHAPEL HILL TOWN COUNCIL

- TO:
- Council Member Julie Andresen
 - Council Member David Godschalk
 - Council Member Jonathan Howes
 - Council Member David Pasquini
 - Council Member Nancy Preston
 - Council Member R. D. Smith
 - Council Member Bill Thorpe
 - Council Member Arthur Werner

You, and each of you, are hereby notified that the Town Council has called a Special Meeting, to be held in the Municipal Bldg Meeting Room at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 18, 19 87, to hold an executive session to discuss personnel matters.

James C. Wallace

Mayor

ACCEPTANCE OF NOTICE

We, the undersigned, members of the Chapel Hill Town Council, hereby accept notice of a Special Meeting of the Council, called by Honorable James C. Wallace, Mayor, to be held in the Municipal Building Meeting Room, 306 N. Columbia St.

James C. Wallace

Mayor

Bill Thorpe

Julie M. Andresen

R. D. Smith

Nancy Preston

Jonathan B. Howes

David Pasquini

David Godschalk

Arthur Werner

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