

SUMMARY OF A WORKSESSION ON THE PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
HELD BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL,  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 1989, 7:30 P.M.

Mayor Howes called the meeting to order.

Council Members in attendance were:

Julie Andresen  
David Godschalk  
Joe Herzenberg

David Pasquini  
Nancy Preston  
Arthur Werner  
Roosevelt Wilkerson, Jr.

Council Member Wallace was absent.

Chris Berndt, Long-Range Planning Coordinator, stated the Comprehensive Plan was composed of five technical information reports, supplemented by a Strategic Report, suggesting programs that the Town might implement. She cited six major problems of the Town, including increased traffic congestion, lack of affordable housing for those in low and middle income brackets, and vanishing open space.

Ms. Berndt outlined the need to balance policy tradeoffs related to the Comprehensive Plan. She said that the next key steps in the Comprehensive Plan process were the development of a detailed implementation plan complemented by revisions to the Town's land use plan.

Council Member Andresen stated that the Town staff had done a good job of laying out the Comprehensive Plan document. She noted that the document was readable and clear. Council Member Andresen inquired about the genesis of recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Rimer said that three groups were involved in the process: Town citizens, the Planning Board and Town staff. Mr. Rimer stated that staff prepared a series of policy issue responses based on summations of public comments to the proposed Comprehensive Plan. Following this process, Planning Board met with Town staff to review drafts of the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Member Preston asked whether the Goals and Objectives in the document were the same as those adopted by the Council in 1986. Kimberly Brewer, Planner, responded by noting that some minor additions and modifications had been made to the 1986 Goals and Objectives statements. Council Member Preston stated that the goals and objectives should be examined carefully as a starting point in consider the Comprehensive Plan document. She expressed concern about specifying numerical objectives within the

goals and objectives. Council Member Andresen noted the importance of the Town delivering on its promises, if specific numerical objectives are adopted. Mayor Howes stated that the approach of including specific numerical goals in the report should be further discussed, due to potential long-range ramifications.

Council Member Werner proposed that the Council discuss goals and objectives first, in an effort to identify the level of controversy associated with various proposals.

Council Member Godschalk noted that substantiation for numbers in the goals and objectives might assist the Council in further evaluating these proposals. He noted the difficulties of debating issues in the abstract.

Alan Rimer, Chairperson, Planning Board, noted that there were one hundred and twenty-seven policy elements contained in summary tables in the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that eighty-one of these would require changes in policies. Mr. Rimer added that the Planning Board needed guidance in some of these areas.

Mr. Rimer noted that the Comprehensive Plan provided a basis for the Strategic Report. Mayor Howes noted the importance of a public dialogue focusing on goals and objectives and related policies. Council Member Godschalk requested that Town staff identify "old" (1986) and "new" (1989) goals and objectives in the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Member Preston inquired about the University's responsibility relative to Town Zoning regulations. Mr. Waldon responded that the University must obtain Zoning Compliance Permits (ZCPs) when erecting new structures on the campus. Council Member Andresen asked whether the University always came to the Town to obtain ZCPs. Mr. Waldon said yes, noting that ZCPs are not required for parking lots. Council Member Andresen asked whether any prescribed setbacks or other requirements were relative to ZCPs. Mr. Waldon said that zoning compliance permits had broad criteria including setback requirements from the edge of campus and no height limitations.

Mr. Waldon said that the draft Comprehensive Plan provided a statement of what is important to the Town.

Council Member Andresen noted that some developers may argue that some improvements suggested in the Comprehensive Plan may add to the cost of housing in Town. Mr. Waldon said that the policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan were not binding, but were intended to provide direction.

Council Member Andresen noted that newer neighborhoods in Town were developed using an internal loop street system. She stated

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her preference for this type of planning. Mr. Rimer added that the most consistent way to handle neighborhood traffic was to provide one or two principal access points. He noted that traffic patterns presented hard choices such as the creation of cut-through streets. Mayor Howes noted that the importance of completing a collector roads plan for some neighborhoods.

Council Member Pasquini noted the staff's proposal to employ small area plans as a mechanism for orderly development. Council Member Godschalk said this approach would be a good tool for dealing with problems in growth areas.

Council Member Preston expressed hesitancy at building roads in previously undeveloped areas. Council Member Godschalk stated that it was less expensive to build collectors on undeveloped land. He noted that impact tax proceeds could be used, if enabling legislation were passed by the Legislature. Council Member Godschalk noted that the Town had been reactive to growth in the past. He suggested that the Council could be proactive in the future.

Council Member Werner said that the biggest problem facing the Council was development's impact on existing infrastructure, rather than road systems in new developments.

Council Member Godschalk suggested using current resources for a Town traffic control system. He added the importance of providing infrastructure to pace development. Mayor Howes noted the potential dilemmas posed by adopting an Adequate Public Facilities (APF) Ordinance. Council Member Werner noted the possibility that the APF could slow the pace of development until adequate facilities were in place. Council Member Godschalk inquired whether most undeveloped land would be downzoned. He noted that this would have a significant impact on slowing development.

Town Manager Taylor stated that monies from the proposed impact tax could be used to fund traffic control projects.

Mayor Howes noted the need to identify deficiencies relating to growth and development policies. Town Manager Taylor said that a plan of action would be laid out to address this situation.

Council Member Wilkerson noted the importance of structured planning in currently undeveloped areas of Town.

Mr. Rimer requested that Council provide continued direction to the Planning Board concerning the Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Howes concluded the meeting by remarking that the Comprehensive Plan would be best approached and adopted in phases.

Town Manager Taylor noted that staff would present a proposed timetable and work plan to the Council on April 10th.