

MINUTES OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING HELD BY THE
MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL,
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 1989, 7:30 P.M.

Mayor Howes called the meeting to order.

Council Members in attendance were:

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| Julie Andresen | Nancy Preston |
| Joe Herzenberg | Arthur Werner |
| David Pasquini | Roosevelt Wilkerson, Jr. |

Council Members Godschalk and Wallace were absent excused.

Mayor Howes announced that the Town Clerk would provide visitor parking permits to anyone attending the meeting who had parked in one of the Town's fee lots.

Mayor Howes said that Town citizens, staff, Planning Board and Council had a vital role in the formulation of the Comprehensive Plan document. He noted that Planning Board Chairperson Alan Rimer and Planning Director Roger Waldon would make brief introductory remarks prior to comments from citizens.

Alan Rimer, Planning Board Chairperson, noted that over twenty-five hundred persons had attended various meetings within the past one and a half years to discuss the Comprehensive Plan. He noted the critical importance of eliciting public comments on the Town's planning policies. Mr. Rimer noted that the focus should be on development of the community in the long term. Mr. Rimer concluded his remarks by acknowledging the efforts of Chris Berndt, Kimberly Brewer and Brad Torgan, members of the Town staff for their assistance in composing the Comprehensive Plan document.

Roger Waldon, Planning Director, said that the Comprehensive Plan provided a vision of where the community saw itself in the future. He noted the importance of considering interrelationship issues in the Comprehensive Plan process. Mr. Waldon added the importance of recognizing "givens", that is, fixtures of the community which will remain unchanged in the future. Mr. Waldon concluded his remarks by noting that comments from three citizens were before the Council at their respective places.

Gina Cunningham told the Council that she saw no rationale in the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Cunningham said that she and Alice Ingram had assisted in the preparation of the goals and objectives for the 1986 draft of the Comprehensive Plan. She noted that document began with a section on Town Character, with other sections following in logical succession. Ms. Cunningham expressed concern that no priorities or urgency were

attached to goals and objectives in the most recent draft of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Cunningham said that she would prefer the use of leaner, brisk language in the Comprehensive Plan. She added that goals and objectives should be stated on page one of the document. Ms. Cunningham concluded her remarks by stating the importance of including the report of the Task Force on Entranceways in the document.

Ms. Cunningham noted that due to illness, Ms. Ingram was unable to attend this evening's meeting. She noted that Ms. Ingram felt that the Town's traffic congestion problems were attributable to the size and location of the University and Hospital facilities. Council Member Preston inquired about Ms. Ingram's solution to this situation. Ms. Cunningham responded that Ms. Ingram did not have a solution, choosing to leave this matter in the hands of the Council.

Paul Morris extended his congratulations for the compilation of a thorough and professional document. Mr. Morris said that the momentum and zeal for housing for low-middle and middle income families had decreased recently. He stated that the economics of housing were changing rapidly, making it more difficult for people to purchase homes. Mr. Morris noted the importance of Town, hospital and university employees living in the town where they work.

Mr. Morris said that the idea of quantifying the number of affordable housing units to be constructed was a good idea. He said that the Town should acquire vacant land for affordable housing projects. Mr. Morris said that efforts should be intensified to encourage a cooperative endeavor between the University and Town on the housing front.

Berry Credle, Planning Board Member, said that he had served on the Planning Board for almost three years. He stated his desire to present a minority report to the Council on the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Credle said he wished to address three issues:

- (1) The Comprehensive Plan should be for the whole community. Mr. Credle said he was concerned that the Plan concentrated on the Town center. He said that the Plan needed to be all-inclusive.
- (2) Mr. Credle said that the Town should have minimal involvement in housing. He related his personal experience of working thirteen years before purchasing his first home.
- (3) Mr. Credle said that the Town's transportation problems were real and were focused in

the Town center. Mr. Credle proposed the creation of satellite communities on the outskirts of Town to help mitigate these problems.

Mr. Credle concluded his remarks by expressing his great reverence for the past. He said that individuals should respect and use past experiences, but not be shackled by them.

Don Francisco, a resident of Chapel Hill for almost twenty-three years, said that most people are beneficiaries of self-sacrificing parents. Dr. Francisco added that making decisions for future generations is the essence of planning. Dr. Francisco sketched a vision of the future of the Town, which he said would include: more people; lesser quantities of petrochemicals at greater cost; higher costs of available natural resources; and a markedly different environment, with the air being harder to breathe. Dr. Francisco said that due to scarcer resources and higher costs, future generations will use less expensive means of travel, principally mass transportation, bicycles and walking. Dr. Francisco concluded his remarks by saying that the future Town should be compact in form, to meet the needs of future generations.

Margaret Taylor, President of the Alliance of Neighborhoods, speaking as an individual, said she largely agreed with Mr. Credle's earlier remarks. She expressed confidence that Franklin Street, being at the heart of the University, would always have a place in the Town. She urged the Council to begin thinking about developing commercial centers elsewhere. Ms. Taylor stated that what work as good planning principles elsewhere don't necessarily work in Chapel Hill.

Ms. Taylor noted an apparent conflict in the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, wherein one goal emphasizes the protection of neighborhoods, while another stresses the importance of directing roads through neighborhoods. Ms. Taylor said that the citizens of the Town are busy people, largely choosing to attend Council meetings only when a crisis point is reached in their own neighborhood. Ms. Taylor suggested that the Town conduct public opinion polling on a periodic basis to get a reading of community sentiments.

Kani Hurow, President of the League of Women Voters, highlighted five concerns of the League, to summarize:

- (1) Requested that a "Town Government" section, included in the 1977 Comprehensive Plan, be added to the current draft Comprehensive Plan.

- (2) Too much material and too many specific policies are provided for the average citizen to comprehend. The League also expressed concern about providing specific numbers which commit the Town to large expenditures without regard to competing needs or potential tax increases.
- (3) The documents may promise more than the Town can deliver.
- (4) Urged prompt action on implementation of an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.
- (5) Proposed a two-step process for development of the Comprehensive Plan:
 - (a) focus on key, controversial issues with the goal of achieving consensus.
 - (b) following (a), present revised documents for public discussion and Council action.

A copy of Ms. Hurow's letter is available in the Town Clerk's Office.

Betty Landsberger, Chairperson of the Orange County Department of Aging, said that she supported the planning process and many features of the Plan pertaining to senior citizens. She noted three important issues for senior citizens: affordable housing, public transportation, and the need for meeting space for senior citizens. Ms. Landsberger concluded her remarks by stating that retirees have a lot of talent and more time available. She assured the Council that retirees were ready and willing to contribute to the future of the Town.

Sam Brooks, a realtor, said that she had concerns about the Town's housing policy. Ms. Brooks noted that whereas one of the Plan's goals is to have 10% of housing units available to low-middle and middle income residents, only three of seven hundred and fifty-one homes currently available in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro cost less than \$75,000. Ms. Brooks said that the Town should be commended for its housing efforts to date, adding that there was still a lot of work to be done.

Joyce Brown said that the commitment to neighborhood preservation is an attractive facet of living in Chapel Hill. She noted that the automobile had been the primary means of transportation for

the past forty years, noting that the efforts of the next forty years should be moved from automobiles to mass transportation.

Ms. Brown expressed concern that there was no acknowledgement of finite resources in the Comprehensive Plan document. Ms. Brown also noted the impact of University decisions on the Town.

Robert Joesting said that it is important to focus energies on the next twenty, fifty or one-hundred years when formulating the Comprehensive Plan document. He stated that it was important to plan for people, not commuters. Mr. Joesting said that the Comprehensive Plan should have firm numbers as goals, with absolute minimums, maximums and desired averages. Mr. Joesting said that public transportation should be provided all day and night, every day of the year, in heavily populated and peak demand areas. Mr. Joesting said that he was not satisfied with the commitment of the Comprehensive Plan concerning sidewalks, adding that all roads should have convenient pedestrian crossings. Mr. Joesting concluded his remarks by saying he had few exceptions with points of the Comprehensive Plan, although he would like to make the additions he alluded to earlier. He said that the idea of rezoning, proposed in the Comprehensive Plan, bothered him.

Jay Zaragosa said he was in favor of mixed-use development. He suggested that the statement "The Town shall make land available for economically feasible mixed-use developments" be stricken from the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Zaragosa said that developers would be inclined to believe that only their project was feasible on a particular site. Mr. Zaragosa stated that he virtually single-handedly constructed a home in the Town's planning jurisdiction. Mr. Zaragosa said that making lots available for affordable housing, people would be encouraged to construct their own residences. Mr. Zaragosa completed his remarks by suggesting that the term "manufactured housing" be defined in the Comprehensive Plan documents.

Robert Davis, a twenty-nine year resident of the Town, noted that collector roads are supposed to provide relief to neighborhood residents. He noted that the current draft of the Comprehensive Plan did not specify two collector streets in each neighborhood, as specified in the 1977 Plan. Mr. Davis said that Town residents need some input on the placement of collector streets.

Frances Hargraves, a seventy-five resident of the Town, noted that with growth come some problems. She expressed her interest in the Comprehensive Plan and its well-stated goals. She added her concern about implementation of the Plan, noting the need for additional funding and staff. Ms. Hargraves stated that she liked to walk around the Town. She noted the need to install paved sidewalk in some areas along Franklin, Hillsborough and

Rosemary Streets. Ms. Hargraves also requested that special efforts be made to keep the Town clean and attractive.

Mr. Parsons, a twenty-nine year Town resident, said that air pollution should be listed as a main concern of the Town. He said that carbon monoxide posed a major threat. Mr. Parsons noted the difficulties of minimizing carbon monoxide particulates while keeping pace with growth. He noted that the intersection of Franklin and Columbia is currently in violation of one and eight-hour carbon monoxide standards, while the intersection of Franklin and Estes violates eight-hour standards. Mr. Parsons expressed concern about the close proximity of the Hillhaven Convalescent Center to the Franklin and Estes intersection. He expressed similar concern about the location of the Presbyterian Church of the Reconciliation, with its day care center, near the intersection of Franklin and Elliott Road.

Mr. Parsons requested that greater attention be devoted to crime prevention, noting that the crime rate had escalated at a rate six and a half times the population increase in the same period. Mr. Parsons said that taxes per Town resident were \$16 per capita in 1960 dollars, as contrasted with \$100 per capita today (\$500 in 1989 dollars). He noted that a large percentage of monies were from State and Federal funds. He commended the Mayor and Council for pursuing the concept of an impact tax. Noting the attractiveness of the Town to retirees, Mr. Parsons asked the Council to focus its energies on holding down tax rates and providing affordable housing.

Mayor Howes said that he and the Council appreciated the comments of those who had spoken this evening, and all who had participated in the planning process to date.

Noting Ms. Hurow's remarks on behalf of the League of Women Voters, Council Member Herzenberg said that the statement of Town Government included in the 1977 Comprehensive Plan document would be a fine preamble to the current draft document. Council Member Herzenberg suggested that this one page statement be inserted.

Council Member Pasquini noted that Dr. Don Francisco had done double duty, speaking at both the OWASA meeting earlier this afternoon, in addition to this evening's Comprehensive Plan session.

Council Member Werner thanked the citizens for their input this evening. He said it was apparent that people had devoted a great deal of time to reading and reviewing the document. He said that their were significant policy issues requiring the attention of the public and Council alike. He noted that the proposed implementation schedule may be too ambitious. Mayor Howes said that this was a point well-taken. Mayor Howes said that the Council

will hold a worksession on the Comprehensive Plan on Monday, May 1st. Town Manager Taylor added that comments on the Comprehensive Plan would be received until April 25th, for incorporation into the Council's worksession materials.

The meeting stood adjourned at 9:18 P.M.