

News Briefs

Volunteers sought for boards

The Orange County Board of Commissioners seeks county residents to fill vacant volunteer seats on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Council, the Orange-Person-Chatham Area Program Board and the Equalization and Review Board.

For more information about the volunteer opportunities or an application, contact the office of the clerk to the board at 245-2125 or athompson-rockett@co.orange.nc.us or visit www.co.orange.nc.us and click on "Volunteer Boards."

Whooping cough at Carrboro Elementary

The Orange County Health Department has given an order to 220 students at Carrboro Elementary School to take a course of antibiotics to protect themselves from whooping cough after students at the school were diagnosed with the disease.

Letters were sent home with the students last week notifying parents of their children's exposure to students who were infected with whooping cough. Parents were notified that students would be excluded from school for 21 days, beginning Feb. 16, if they did not obtain the antibiotics.

As of Feb. 16, nine of the 220 students were not in school, but officials contacted the students' families, who all indicated they were in the process of scheduling doctor appointments and obtaining prescriptions with the intent to return to school.

Spay neuter day

The Orange County Board of Commissioners has declared Feb. 24 as "Spay Neuter Day" in Orange County to encourage citizens to spay and neuter pets and to raise awareness about pet overpopulation in the county.

Orange County Animal Services has partnered with AnimalKind's "The \$20 Fix" program to offer low-cost and no-cost spay and neuter surgeries to pets of qualifying households in Orange County.

For more information on Spay Neuter Day or The \$20 Fix, call Sarah Fallin at 967-7383.

Rabies clinic

The Orange County Animal Services Department will offer two low-cost rabies vaccination clinics this month.

Upcoming clinics are Friday, noon to 5 p.m., at the Orange County Animal Shelter on Martin Luther King Boulevard in Chapel Hill, and Saturday, 1 to 2 p.m., at New Hope Fire Station #2 on N.C. 86.

The vaccination fee is \$5, which must be paid in cash. One-year vaccinations will be offered at both clinics, but three-year vaccinations will only be offered at the Saturday clinic. Dogs must be on leashes and cats must be in carriers. Animals that may be nervous or unsettled should be kept in a vehicle for their vaccination. For more information, call 245-2075.

Council gets first look at new developments

CHAPEL HILL — The Chapel Hill Town Council got its first look at three new development projects, including a 300,000-square-foot mixed-use project off Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

At a meeting Monday night at town hall, the council looked over concept plans for the Altemueller Mixed-Use Development, which would be located at 1641 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. between Weaver Dairy Road Extension and New Parkside Drive. The 12.9-acre site is located adjacent to the Northwoods V neighborhood.

The concept plan includes 110 residential units, a hotel, offices and retail spaces with parking for 280 vehicles.

The Altemueller farmhouse, built in the late 19th century, and several white oaks estimated to be more than 200 years old would be preserved under the plan.

Council members were generally pleased with the concept, which follows efforts to increase housing and commercial density along major transit corridors. But several expressed concern about how the large

heritage trees on the site would be protected. Jim Ward said the stand of trees was of similar size to those on Polk Place and McCorkle Place and would need a larger protection zone than the plan anticipates.

"I don't think many [trees] would survive," Ward said.

Also under review Monday were plans by the Episcopal Church of the Advocate to construct a worship center on 16.4 acres off Merin Road near the Billabong neighborhood.

Vicar Lisa Fishbeck said conversations with the neighbors

have been productive, with the major concern being parking along Merin Road during services or events. The first phase of the plan calls for a welcome center, administrative offices and a 75-seat chapel located near a large pond on the site.

The council also got its first look at the Murray Hill Multifamily Development at Meadowmont. The project would include 16 dwelling units with 40,000 square feet of floor space on a 1.17-acre site on Meadowmont Lane.

— Staff Reports

ALDERMEN
FROM PAGE 1

Board members said the amendment, if approved by the General Assembly, and later the board of aldermen, would not apply to condominiums and would not allow residents to put sustainable features in places where they wouldn't otherwise have the right to place something.

The board also voted 7-0 to introduce to the General Assembly a proposed charter amendment that would add sexual orientation, gender identification and gender expression to the list of bases upon which the board may prohibit housing discrimination.

The second proposed amendment drew no public comment.

"I just think it's really interesting and really neat that of these two amendments, the one that brought people out of the woodwork and the one that had the most controversy had to do with clotheslines and not orientation," board member Jackie Gist said. "I think that really says something about how we've evolved as a community over the last 20 years."



PHOTO BY AVA BARLOW
Phillip Duchastel, left, enjoys a chat with Peter (who prefers his last name not be used) in front of Weaver Street Café on Friday. Peter, who is blind, takes E-Z Rider to downtown Carrboro three times a week to get out of his house and meet people. He says he enjoys living in Carrboro because it is an easy place to make friends.

THE CARRBORO
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UNC NEWS SERVICES

UNC creative writing professor and poet Michael McFee has won the 2009 James Still Award for Writing About the Appalachian South.

The Fellowship of Southern Writers gives the prize biennially to recognize a writer with a significant body of work about Appalachia.

McFee, director of the creative writing program in UNC's College of Arts and Sciences, was born and raised in Western North Carolina and has written extensively about the mountains. His first book, *Plain*

Air, was published more than 25 years ago.

McFee has written nine collections of poetry, most recently *The Smallest Talk*. His first collection of essays, *The Napkin Manuscripts: Selected Essays and an Interview*, was published in 2006.

McFee, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees from UNC, began teaching at his alma mater in 1990.

His awards include the Thomas Wolfe Literary Award from the Western North Carolina Historical Association (2006) and the Roanoke-Chowan Award for Poetry from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association (2001).

The late Still, the Kentucky writer often called the dean of Appalachian literature, won the first award from the fellowship for writing about the Appalachian South, in 1997. Other winners include *Cold Mountain* novelist Charles Frazier (1999), Western Carolina University professor and writer Ron Rash (2005) and Pamela Duncan (2007), formerly of UNC's Gillings School of Global Public Health.

The award will be presented April 3 at the Arts and Education Council Conference on Southern Literature in Chattanooga, Tenn.

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**NOTICE OF A COMBINED PUBLIC HEARING
FOR PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS TO SR 1919
(SMITH LEVEL ROAD) FROM SOUTH OF ROCK HAVEN ROAD TO
BRIDGE NO. 88 OVER MORGAN CREEK IN CARRBORO**

TIP Project No. U-2803 Orange County

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will hold a Pre-Hearing Open House and Combined Public Hearing on March 9, 2009 at Carrboro Elementary School, located at 400 Shelton Street, Carrboro, 27510.

NCDOT representatives will be available at a pre-hearing open house in the auditorium lobby between the hours of 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to answer questions and receive comments relative to the location and design of the proposed project. Interested citizens may attend at any time during the above mentioned hours. Handouts and comment sheets will be distributed. The formal public hearing will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium. The hearing will be open to those present for statements, questions and comments. The presentation and comments will be recorded and a written transcript will be prepared.

NCDOT proposes transportation improvements to SR 1919 (Smith Level Road) which include: widening Smith Level Road to three lanes (between Rock Haven Road and Culbreth Road), transition between three to four lanes (between Culbreth Road and BPW Club Road), and widen to a four-lane, median divided roadway between BPW Club Road and Morgan Creek. A roundabout intersection is proposed at the intersection of Smith Level Road and Rock Haven Road. Sidewalks and bicycle accommodations are proposed throughout the project.

A map displaying the location and design of the project and a copy of the environmental document – State Environmental Assessment / Finding of No Significant Impact - are available for public review at the Town of Carrboro, 301 W. Main Street, Carrboro, 27510. The map is also available online at: www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/highway/roadway/hearingmaps_by_county.

Anyone desiring additional information may contact Ed Lewis, Human Environment Unit, at 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1598, by phone (919) 431-6585, by fax (919) 431-2001 or by email at elewis@ncdot.gov.

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled persons who wish to participate in this hearing. Anyone requiring special services should contact Mr. Lewis as early as possible so that arrangements can be made.