

Briefs

Shope appointed interim director

Gary Shope has been appointed interim economic-development director for Orange County.

Shope will be responsible for creating and implementing strategies to enhance and promote the economic well-being of Orange County. In addition, he will oversee the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau.

Shope served as vice president of the Research Triangle Foundation for 16 years, nurturing an international network of corporate and professional alliances that helped advance the global reputation of the Research Triangle Park. He holds a bachelor's degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College and a master's degree in public administration from UNC.

Shope began work as the county's interim director this week.

Over-occupancy enforcement

The Town of Chapel Hill is actively enforcing over-occupancy issues in rental housing.

Homes that are classified, built and zoned as single-family dwelling units that are rented out to or occupied by more than four unrelated persons are in violation of the town's Land Use Management Ordinance. A single-family dwelling unit is defined as "a detached dwelling consisting of a single dwelling unit only."

Violations of the ordinance can result in tenants being displaced, fines and additional approvals and inspections that could require major upgrades to those homes. The town cautions students to be aware of the ordinance before signing leases.

Transportation plan workshop

The Orange County Planning Department, the Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization and the N.C. Department of Transportation will hold a public information workshop on the development of the Orange County Comprehensive Transportation Plan on Monday from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the meeting room of the Orange County Public Library.

The plan is a long-range, multimodal transportation plan that will be used to select future infrastructure improvements funded through federal and state programs. NCDOT staff will give brief presentations at 5, 6 and 7 p.m.

The library is located at 137 W. Margaret Lane in Hillsborough. Public input is encouraged.

Hillsborough police officer honored

Hillsborough police Officer Douglas Hemingway will be honored by Mothers Against Drunk Drivers of North Carolina on Feb. 11.

Hemingway, a member of the Hillsborough Police Department's traffic enforcement unit, will receive MADD's 2010 Eastern North Carolina Police Hero Award. His traffic stops of suspected intoxicated drivers last year resulted in 33 driving-while-impaired arrests.

Hemingway will receive the award at a banquet in Raleigh. The annual awards ceremony recognizes the top officers in each division of law enforcement and the criminal-justice system for going beyond their job descriptions to make roadways safer.

Positive rabies test

On Monday, Orange County Animal Services received a positive rabies result from the N.C. Rabies Laboratory for a raccoon. The raccoon was submitted because of possible exposure with a stray cat in the vicinity of Old Chapel Hill-Hillsborough Road and Lafayette Drive in Hillsborough.

On Jan. 27, two Hillsborough residents noticed a raccoon on

County decides against sales ordinance

BY SUSAN DICKSON
Staff Writer

The Orange County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously on Tuesday not to create an ordinance regulating door-to-door sales and solicitation in residential areas of the county, citing concerns with constitutionality and enforceability.

After county residents requested such an ordinance citing public-safety concerns, commissioners considered requiring a permit for door-to-

door sales or solicitation, with an exemption for sales by members of charitable, religious, civic or fraternal organizations who receive no compensation; and sales by students under 18 for school activities. Sales of agricultural products would also have been exempted.

However, County Attorney John Roberts said an ordinance that exempted some nonprofits and not others could face issues of constitutionality.

"If you're going to regulate one, you've got to regulate them all," he said. Only two

other counties in North Carolina Pasquotank and Catawba have ordinances regulating door-to-door sales.

County Manager Frank Clifton pointed out that including exemptions, such as for agricultural sales, could provide a loophole that other kinds of sellers could exploit.

"It's one thing to pass a law – it's another thing to pass a law that's enforceable," he said.

Clifton encouraged concerned residents to put up "No Soliciting" or "No Trespassing" signs and to call 911 if

they see suspicious individuals going door-to-door.

"People who are up to criminal activity are not going to get a permit for criminal activity," he added.

Commissioners said collaboration between neighbors and law-enforcement officials was a better way to handle neighborhood security.

"I don't really feel like we need to move forward with this item. We have other avenues for handling it," Commissioner Pam Hemminger said.

COUNTY
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The package also presents the county's position on various statewide issues, including:

- support for legislation that would exempt counties, cities, school boards, community colleges and the Orange Water and Sewer Authority from payment of state and local sales taxes on purchases within the state.
- Commissioners Earl McKee and Yuhasz voted against the provision about enacting revenue sources that are available to other local governments, pointing out that voters rejected both the land-transfer tax and sales-tax referendums on recent ballots.
- "I do not think that it is appropriate for the Orange County Board of Commissioners to enact any source of revenue that may have been approved by any county in this state," Yuhasz said. "I am just concerned that Orange County might decide that it needed to impose one of those revenue options that was available to another county that was inappropriate for this county."
- Other commissioners said they felt that the board would act responsibly given the option to enact revenue sources.
- "I have confidence in our boards here in Orange County that if we had options we wouldn't make foolish decisions, that we would tailor it to the needs of the citizens," board Chair Bernadette Pelisier said.

ALDERMEN
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"As a board, we're still fundamentally committed to focus on local business and promote local ownership as a strategy for recycling the most dollars into the community," he said.

Clifton said it's been apparent from the outset that the county and other members of the group looking at a new strategy want to focus on recruiting from outside the county.

COUNCIL
FROM PAGE 1

At press time for *The Citizen* on Wednesday evening, the town was conducting a public-information session on the potential for moving the library to University Mall.

Kleinschmidt said the meeting is another chance to get the mall proposal before the public. He objected to some of the criticism the council has received, especially the claim that it's a backroom deal and that it represents a reversal of the council's commitment to the library.

Kleinschmidt said the town has been very out in the open on the potential deal.

The recent hiring of Gary Shope, a former vice president at the Research Triangle Foundation with international recruiting credentials, as the county's interim economic-development director shows the distinction, Clifton said.

"In talks with our neighbors, it's clear that they would really like for us to join forces and cooperate in pursuing some strategies. But fundamentally it's a group of strategies that run contrary to what we want to do in Carrboro."

"When we got the offer, we put it out there and said, 'Tell us what you think,'" Kleinschmidt said.

The council, he said, has shown its commitment to the library with the approval of a \$16 million expansion at the Pritchard Park site. The town has an obligation to study the mall proposal, he said, because of the potential for significant savings.

"We're just trying to determine if it's a better deal," he said.

Kleinschmidt said he expects that the council will have enough information by its meeting on Feb. 14 to make a decision on whether to move forward with negotiations with University Mall owner Madison-Marquette or reject the offer and move ahead with the already-approved expansion project.

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by Robert P. Huelle

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