

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 13, 2021 10:01 AM  
**To:** Berlin, Charles S  
**Cc:** Colleen Willger; Sarah Vinas; Adam Searing; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Andrew Creech; Camille Berry; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jeffrey Hoagland; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Paris Miller-Foushee; Robert Beasley; Tai Huynh; Vimala Rajendran; Zachary Boyce; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Laura Selmer; Loryn Clark; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: the proposed development at 5500 Old Chapel Hill Road

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



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**From:** Berlin, Charles S [mailto:cberlin@pitt.edu]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 12, 2021 5:33 PM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** the proposed development at 5500 Old Chapel Hill Road

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Honorable Mayor and Council Members,

I'm writing about the 5500 Old Chapel Hill Rd. proposal which is on your agenda for preliminary discussion on 10/13/21.

As a Chapel Hill citizen who lives very close to this proposed development, I'd like to share several concerns about this proposal:

1) As you are well aware, the recently released Ross Stevens report which was commissioned by the town indicated in strong terms that by having allowed relatively unbridled development in recent years which has been largely new high-rent apartment buildings, the city appears to be now plunging towards de facto urban failure. He highly recommended that the city rein this in and instead foster what is genuinely needed for this town to be successful in the future, which is affordable and/or “middle” housing that would allow home ownership by the folks who would like to live AND work here, and raise their families here, and are necessary to allow this city to succeed in the future.

Nonetheless here we are with yet another proposal for a 4-5 story 90 unit apartment building, which would continue the trend of hurtling down the negative development cycle that Stevens so aptly delineates.

Please do not buy into this, via allowing short-sighted piecemeal development that ignores the larger negative consequences going forward, rather than making decisions with the bigger picture in mind.

2) In addition, this section of Chapel Hill, as you’ve heard from your own traffic experts, is facing the probability of traffic gridlock in the foreseeable future on 15/501, which this project can only add to. Please consider the bigger picture of all the traffic that existing major development, plus the additional massive buildings coming online soon in Blue Hill, plus the ever escalating commuter traffic, will have, and not add to it with projects like this until more realistic solutions to this dilemma can be better addressed. In addition, this will of course add to traffic on Old Durham/Old Chapel Hill, a two lane road (the current NCDot project will not change this), which has had to absorb the Wegmans traffic. The traffic from the massive development now rising out of the ground on Mt. Moriah between Home Depot and Old Chapel Hill Rd. (in Durham’s jurisdiction) will additionally burden the vulnerable traffic flow on Old Chapel Hill Rd. shortly.

3) The land bounded by SECU, 15/501, I 40, and Old Durham/Old Chapel Hill is currently almost entirely wooded. Allowing this project will mean clear-cutting some of this acreage, leaving only a portion of this plot which is currently protected (note that the developer asks to keep open the option of undertaking additional future development on this property). Should we be continuing to allow the pillaging of the few remaining larger woodland spots of Chapel Hill, which this project will be opening a door for in this currently ecologically beneficial area, which we so desperately need?

4) This building – 4-5 stories sitting up close to Old Chapel Hill Road, with ugly surface parking in front - is clearly out of scale for the many contiguous neighborhoods which consist of 1 and 2 story residential buildings on the south side of Old Chapel Hill/Old Durham. A much more appropriate development for this location would be a two story structure or structures that do not so dramatically alter the community and family friendly character of this small section of Chapel Hill, one of the places where middle income residents can still feel there is a good quality of life.

5) As you’ve heard in many forums at this point, there are strong reasons to understand that this city is now over saturated with apartments, both current and with more forthcoming, and is lacking in the kind of housing that will allow this town to thrive in the future. You are the pilots that hold in your hands the power to succeed or fail at turning the current course of the planning/development ocean liner that will otherwise because of inertia or short term focal thinking or because of for-profit motives primarily driving this go down the wrong future path for all of us who live in and love this town. Please don’t just acquiesce to the for-profit underpinnings of this developer by letting another project like this just slide through, and instead be clear about what the genuine needs of this town are, and demand this for all of us.

Respectfully,

Charles Berlin

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Chapel Hill  
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