

Amy Harvey

From: polno fulghieli <polnodeb@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2021 5:02 PM
To: Amy Harvey; Town Council
Subject: Petition for historical and environmental information

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Dear Mayor Hemminger and members of the Town Council,

It has come to my attention that the Town is exploring the potential for development of town-owned property located at the corner of Mt. Carmel Church and Bennett Roads.

This property was donated to the Town in 2000; Council's resolution accepting the donation "for the enjoyment of present and future Chapel Hill citizens" can be found below.

As you can see, this property was recognized by Council and staff for its contribution to the Town's open space and parkland, and Open Space funds were used for the transfer. Staff added that the Town's Greenways master plan would use the property to anchor the future Wilson Creek Trail.

Subsequently, when an offer to purchase the property was made in 2009 by a local church, then-Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt, in declining the offer, spoke of the property's special characteristics which are unique in Chapel Hill.

It is unclear whether the history of the donation, or its special environmental and physical characteristics, have been considered by Town Council when making new decisions about how this land might be used.

Therefore, I petition that Town staff bring forward historical and environmental information to Council and the public before any further steps – including planning for the site – are taken.

Respectfully,

Deborah Fulghieri

"A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE GIFT OF 8.48 ACRES OF PROPERTY AT THE INTERSECTION OF MT. CARMEL CHURCH ROAD AND BENNETT ROAD (2000-09-25/R-5.1)

WHEREAS, Ernest and Hazel Craige have offered to donate 8.48 acres of property to the Town; and

WHEREAS, the offered property contains significant value as entranceway corridor and open space; and

WHEREAS, the offered property would expand the Town's open space properties; and

WHEREAS, the Town's existing 1996 Open Space bond funds could be used to pay the costs related to transfer of the property upon eventual annexation of the property;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill that the Council hereby accepts the gift of 8.48 acres of property, identified as Chapel Hill Tax Map 7.26.B, Lots 9 and 11 from Ernest and Hazel Craige.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council expresses its gratitude to Ernest and Hazel Craige for their generous donation of important open space and entranceway property for the enjoyment of current and future citizens of Chapel Hill.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Council that the Manager is authorized to pay all closing costs, including year 2000 property taxes owed for the donated property.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Council that the Manager is authorized to use 1996 Open Space bond funds to pay the closing costs of the donation after eventual annexation of the property.

This the 25th day of September, 2000."

The staff report on that date described the tract as having "significant value as an entranceway and conservation area."

"Town staff believes the tract remains a valuable portion of our open space system and is somewhat unique in Chapel Hill because it is a rare example of publicly owned ridge-top property. In addition, it is the only significant open space property along the Mt. Carmel Church Road entranceway into Town. The Town's Greenways Master Plan shows the property to be the north anchor of the future Wilson Creek Trail and would serve as the only major portion of the trail and open space system that would be removed from Wilson Creek."