

-----Original Message-----

From: Sally Smith [mailto:sarasmith109@icloud.com]

Sent: Wednesday, December 31, 2014 3:50 PM

To: Catherine Wilson

Subject: Response to the public hearing of the Carrboro board of alderman Tuesday, January 28, 2015

I am 72 years old and own a 1150 square-foot house that I pay taxes on each year. I would really like my Taxes to go down due to the new buildings already built or being built in Carrboro. I see no parking around that parking lot they want to build this building on, which I often use at the art walk. Where will I park when they're building goes up?? I support both of these organizations but I don't think Carrboro should be responsible for a third of the bill for that building. Plus, I Think we should be able to adjust to these other new buildings Already built in Carrboro before we try to build more in our small town.

Sara Smith

109 pine hill dr

Carrboro

Sent from my iPhone using voice dictation, please forgive typos and punctuation.

From: Jill Akiyama [mailto:jakiyama@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, January 02, 2015 1:39 PM
To: Catherine Wilson
Subject: Proposed Building from ArtsCenter and Kidzu

To Whom it May Concern:

I received the notice of public hearing on the building proposed by two nonprofits, ArtsCenter and Kidzu. While I have benefited from one of them, and love their presence in the town of Carrboro, I wanted to advocate against their proposed building. The location specified is in a tough spot: it's right against a railroad and is at a heavily-used intersection by car traffic. Furthermore, this would remove a much-needed parking lot. Much of the regulations of the town heavily restrict the amount of public parking available, especially to those with a Chapel Hill address and out-of-town visitors, in an attempt to reduce car traffic and encourage walking or cycling. Further reduction of parking could limit the amount of visitors (and Carrboro residents) into downtown, and any income associated with them. Traffic is already horrendous enough, and removing the parking from that corner could limit access to the Armadillo Grill, 2nd Wind, and other establishments on Main Street. While I do not know what Kidzu and ArtsCenter plan to do with the proposed building, but moving it further onto Jones Ferry Road or Greensboro Street and away from the center of town could rearrange the traffic flow the new building could bring.

Many locals are still getting used to the new hotel nearby, which has clearly changed the skyline of the town, showing how much it has changed from even ten years ago. New buildings reflect investment into infrastructure, but please be more prudent on their potential locations. Take into consideration the traffic troubles many Carrboro and Chapel Hill residents have to endure to go to their favorite bars, grocery stores, and restaurants in this part of town.

Thank you.

--

Jill K. Akiyama
Candidate for Master of Science in Public Health, 2016

Department of Health Policy and Management

UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

jakiyama@live.unc.edu

Cell: 919-357-0586

605 Jones Ferry Road
Apt. #VV13

I am writing to comment on the proposal by the Arts Center and the Kidz Children's Museum to build, in part at the Town's expense, a \$12 million building on a parking lot located on Roberson Street.

These unique organizations do contribute to the quality of life in Carrboro. They are important to many Carrboro residents and to people in nearby communities. I think they should be encouraged.

However, I believe that an informed opinion of the proposed building project would need answers to these questions.

1. How does the size of the proposed building compare to the amount of space presently used by these organizations? If there is a projected increase in space, is it justified on the basis of the activities the organizations are presently engaged in and on projections of expanded activities that would be made possible if more space were available? Adequate answers to these questions would need to include detailed documentation of the organizations' activities, with data that show growth in activities that need the space. If the size of the staff of these organizations is expected to increase, data to support these projections should also be presented. I noted that the website of the Kidz Children's Museum is not working. What does this mean for the viability of this organization?
2. Do the activities of these organizations result in increases in commerce in the surrounding area, such as the use of nearby restaurants or increased traffic in local retail shops? Are there any hard numbers to show this direct benefit and any projections to show how the proposed building can enhance that benefit? This would be an extremely important reason to support the proposed building. Without hard numbers to support this effect, the project would not, in my opinion, be approvable.
3. Are there satisfactory less costly alternatives, such as renovation of space presently occupied? Have other locations been considered?
4. Can some of the space in the proposed building be rented for retail shops and/or offices, so that the rental income can help defray the cost of the construction loan and maintenance?
5. If, at the end of a comprehensive financial analysis, it appears that the proposed project will pose an unavoidable increase in the tax burden, for the foreseeable future (25 years is a long time), The Board of Aldermen should weigh this option against other pressing needs in the Town for which such a tax increase could be used.

The "prepared food and beverage tax" is not a good idea. The tax is regressive and would have a negative impact on local businesses. I am strenuously opposed to it. Since approval from the General Assembly Authority for this tax is not a certainty, no projections should assume that revenues from it will be forthcoming.

I believe the Board of Alderman should engage in a thorough and impartial assessment of this proposal, with the help of outside consultants where appropriate. They deserve kudos for the excellent plan that gave us the Hampton Inn. A similar deliberative process should be undertaken to figure out what is the most appropriate use of the building site on Roberson, which is a valuable asset for the Town. For example, are there other uses for the site that would serve the Town better? We should take our time to figure that out. If it's not too late to change the site of the new library, should that be considered?

Such an assessment should carefully weigh the consequences for Carrboro real estate taxes which I believe continue to be the highest in Orange County. I suppose that the Hampton Inn and other recently completed construction, may be making a much needed contribution to the Town's tax base and may

relieve the burden on Carrboro homeowners. Planning of additional construction should include as a high priority the effect on the Town's tax base.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Frank Stallone

405 Berryhill Drive

Carrboro

Dear C. Wilson,

I received the letter regarding this matter. I will not be able to come to the hearing. But nothing in the letter justifies why this expense should be borne by the town. Our property taxes are already extremely high. We were annexed to the town some years ago and our taxes increase by about 270%. You definitely do not need a new expense on the books. You should be looking for ways to cut expenses. I think the Artscenter is a good organization and I attend some of their shows but I do not see why the town should pay any of the costs of building this building.

Yours,

Stephanie London
8511 Balmoral Place
Chapel Hill NC 27516

To the Carrboro Board of Alderpersons:

Three major projects are coming before the Carrboro Board: a performance venue that could make Carrboro the entertainment center of Orange County, a library that residents have been waiting on for almost 30 years and most seriously, a deficit in the bus budget that could lead to charging bus riders. Yet the budget has not changed to adequately fund any of the three.

An opportunity to fund these game-changers is before the Board, but as usual those who are short-sighted are urging the Board to reject it. An attractive, thoughtfully planned development for the Lloyd property is proposed. An early estimate is that the project could bring in \$100 million in sales and property taxes over 10 years. It is important to approve it quickly to bring to fruition the library, the arts venue and continued fare-free bus service.

85% of Carrboro's tax base falls on homeowners. That's fine if you live in a comfortable, leafy neighborhood where your income can afford that high tax. (And that is in addition to the Orange County and school supplement taxes.) But if you are a third or fourth generation African American who lives in a house built by their grandfather, you cannot afford ever higher taxes. We are driving these long-time citizens out of our town. If you are a low income renter (remember those people whose services you use), you can't afford the rent when the landlord raises it to pay their taxes.

Where do all the comfortable people in Carrboro shop? At Durham's Southpoint, South Square and three other shopping centers on our border, Alamance's Tanger Outlet right across the border (and that provided 800 jobs), and Chatham's Wal-Mart. (You can stick up your nose all you want about Wal-Mart, but if you are a poor person without transportation, there is no place to shop in Carrboro or Chapel Hill, and getting to the Hillsborough or Chatham Wal-Marts is difficult. Maybe some of those who object to the Lloyd development will offer to drive those folks to shop outside of town.) Where are your shopping dollars and sales and property taxes going? Yup, Durham, Chatham and Alamance Counties..

Another aspect that most people don't realize is that, much as we love our unique local businesses, they can't pay health insurance to their employees (some not even to themselves.) You may not like big box stores, but ask their employees, which I do, and you'll find they do provide health insurance. If the poor have to start paying bus fare, we're hurting them one more time. And denying them jobs to boot.

Are these anti-commercial people selfish? I'll give them the benefit of the doubt - they really don't know there are poor people living in their town who need jobs, an affordable place to live and shop. One writer says it's "All about money." You betcha it's about money. Money for schools, police, parks, libraries and yes, bus service for poor people and jobs and flourishing

town services. A family needs adequate revenue (known as income) to cover personal and household expenses. So does a town.

This is an opportunity for Carrboro to realize the vision to provide jobs and services for all its residents - not just those who love keeping their town the way it has always been. (Actually it hasn't always been like this: Carrboro was first the Weaver Plantation, the railroad tie capital of the world, a mill town, a blue collar town, source of low-cost housing for blue collar folks and students. Places grow and change.) Now we have the vibrant Hampton Inn and shops and the Fleet Feet building.

Finally, Carrboro has committed to reduce its carbon foot print. The Lloyd development provides an opportunity to stay here and shop - no need to drive out of the county.

I urge the Board to approve the Lloyd plan without further delay to make our town the vibrant destination that it can be for all in Carrboro.

Ellie Kinnaird

I have also sent this letter to the Chapel Hill News as an Open Letter to the Board of Alderpersons

As a Carrboro resident, commercial property owner and local business owner I am not in favor of the town investing \$4.5m in this project.

Our taxes in Carrboro are already extremely high so increasing them to support a project such as this does not make sense to me. In public/private partnerships I have seen in other cities locally and in other areas of the country there is generally a win-win mindset and a monetary benefit component to the project that does not appear to be present in this proposal. For instance, a town might invest in a large development project by providing tax dollars to build a parking deck to support the parking needs of the development. In return the town is given a portion/all revenue generated by that parking deck. How will this project pay the town back for this investment? Will it generate enough additional tax dollars for the town that justify this level of investment?

Why is this building needed? What un-met demand or void is this project meeting? Is the ArtsCenter bursting at its seams and unable to provide classes to everyone who wants to attend them? Do they need a larger theater for the shows they are attracting? The ArtsCenter has a reputation of poor financial management and often operating in a deficit, do they have a proposed business plan in place that shows how they will support the expense of operating in this new building and paying back any debt it will take on to complete this building?

If the town wants to form a public-private partnership that will provide space for an unmet demand why not talk to Frank Heath about building a new space for the nationally acclaimed Cats Cradle? This is a proven business that attracts tourists from all over the state and beyond to attend it's shows. These tourist dollars support the new hotel, local bars, restaurants and shops directly benefiting the people paying the taxes to support the needed investment. If Cats Cradle moved to a new space that would free up a large amount of space that could be occupied by Kidzu and the ArtsCenter.

This building would take away a current parking lot and potentially create a greater demand for parking potentially adversely affecting the local businesses being asked to support it. I am sure the town would require a parking element to the development but would it be just like the parking deck at 300 East Main where in the long term that parking is all dedicated to the project itself and not creating any additional parking for the town?

The town does not own the land on the site for the proposed project, which is .54acres, but does currently own the lot at the corner of Greensboro st. and Roberson St., which is .88acres. If the town invests \$4.5m in the project will it won the land? If so, at what portion of the cost of the project? If the town is going to consider a public-private investment for a project such as this why not do it on land it already owns? This property could probably support underground parking as well as above ground and has already been approved in the past for a multi-story project. One large issue facing the businesses in downtown Carrboro is not demand, it is the availability of public parking. This is also a potential source of revenue for the town to assist in justifying the taxpayer investment.

I love the ArtsCenter and Kidzu but there are a lot of unanswered questions about this project. I am having a hard time seeing how this investment on the part of the town and taxpayers can be justified. I completely understand that not all return on investment in our community can be measured in monetary terms, but this investment does not appear to fill a huge unmet cultural demand, fulfill a current demand for additional parking in the downtown area or create additional revenue sources for the town.

Thank you ,

--

Tyler Huntington

Owner/Operator

Tyler's Taproom

www.tylerstaproom.com

I've been receiving emails about the new Artscenter that Carrboro is building and am really mystified. I'm wondering where Carrboro is going to get the \$4.5 million dollars that is going to be contributed to this project. As small business owners in Carrboro, those of us in the arts could surely use grants and other monies to help us advertise and increase our sales. I have asked endlessly for signs on Main Street and received no reply and no help. It's really amazing that suddenly Carrboro can come up with this huge amount to build a new Artscenter (which doesn't add much to the economy of Carrboro) while small art-related businesses in Carrboro get nothing. The money could be far better spent advertising present small arts-businesses than building a huge new building for one non-profit that has never been able to support itself. Amazing! I cannot attend the meeting, but would like my voice heard.

Barbara Higgins
The Clay Centre
402 Lloyd Street
Carrboro
919-967-0314

If you are proposing to raise taxes I am totally in the disagreement of Carrboro participating in constructing the Arts Center my taxes already high enough Carrboro taxes are some of the highest in the state and I total disagree with any other additions to my tax bill. And if some of the businesses are willing to participate it should be be done on an individual basis not for the entire business district.

Stepney Edwards
Midway Barber Shop
707 W Rosemary St
Carrboro, NC 27510

Hello Neighbor. I recently heard of the proposition which asks bars to pay a new tax on alcoholic beverages in order to support the construction of the Arts Center. I am writing to express my strong opinion that this is unfair. Our small business barely survives as it is. I would like to point out that three bars/ restaurants are currently for sale in Carrboro due to poor sales and challenging business conditions, which includes an over saturation of bars. It seems unfair to place the burden of funding yet another large and expensive building project on its modest community of local business owners. Pretty soon only larger corporate chains will be able to pay the bills. That's not what Carrboro is supposed to look like. It just feels like too much too fast.

Sincerely,
John Bowman
Bowbarr
795 W Rosemary St
Carrboro NC 27510

Art lives in all of us!

Comments on CAIC

This project tells Carrboro to go build a hotel on the site we are on, in the middle of the 300 West Main project, and these groups will somehow raise the money to build and operate the creative center of their dreams. Well, Kidzu and the ArtsCenter, that is. Carolina Performing Arts is listed as a partner, but without any documented participation.

The lists of partners are listed too, but they haven't signed on to this. What do they think? Did they even know that the partners would use their names as a sort of community collateral?

The hotel is collateral in a way. The only thing known is the projected cost and the site. Where do they get the numbers? Durham has had multiple troubles with its hotel and convention center, does Carrboro really wish to enter the lodging business? Do they have a guaranteed partner that will design, construct, and run the hotel in the middle of the 300 W. Main project? Can the CAIC guarantee a set amount of business that they will give the hotel? Can they guarantee anything at all about this? Building a hotel on speculation demands a lot of trust on the business partners.

Speaking of which, who are the partners. Carolina Performing Arts is not substantially involved, the Arts Center is trying to get out of its current building, and Kidzu doesn't have one. What about other cultural institutions? What is the agreement, proposed agreement, framework for how this building will be used. If there are other parts of the vibrant Carrboro community that want to get involved, will they be junior partners at the sufferance of others.

This flat out isn't worth it. If Carrboro needs another hotel, let's do that. If Carrboro wants to put up a cultural center, let's do that. There is no real reason to mash the two together, and there is no real reason to believe this project is viable, let alone preferable, to what the Carrboro community can produce.

Stephen Haebig - Thanks to one and all for helping me work through this.

I live on the other side of the 'border'. I hope that's okay.

Stephen Haebig

125 E. Longview St. Apt. E

Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Hello Bethany,

I read your letter about the building proposal for The Arts Center and Kidzoo. My husband and I have lived in Carrboro for over 20 years, we raised our children here and now are retired. Our taxes are high but I have always said that I felt we get good value for our taxes- so we are content to keep paying thousands more than we would if we moved elsewhere. However, this new idea of the town getting into the business of building to suit two nonprofits is just not sitting well with me as a long time resident and taxpayer. I don't see that our little downtown can handle thousands more cars that will be coming in for Art Center events and for Kidzoo- IN ADDITION to another hotel. Our roads are stressed as it is and you know there is such a thing as too much. I agree that we need to increase our tax base- I would welcome additional tax revenues so that my taxes might not continue to rise- however I also appreciate quality of life and I think that this proposal as I read it would seriously diminish the RESIDENTS of Carrboro's quality of life as we wouldn't be able to move freely around downtown with all the folks coming in for events and such.

We are fairly dense in the town core right now so I seriously question making our downtown significantly more dense. I also question the wisdom of taking MY TAX dollars to build to suit two nonprofits. If our town needs more art, kid, and music space, then I suggest that the TOWN build to suit TOWN needs and increase the Parks and Rec Department to host such needs. I would much rather increase our own Parks and Rec Department than build to suit two entities that the Town doesn't have control over. Should the two nonprofits go belly up or desire to leave, then the town would be stuck with a very expensive building in our core. WE TAXPAYERS would be holding a building that wasn't built for our needs and we would have to maintain the building and look for other renters. Bad business looking into the future. Build for the Town needs, by all means, and the taxpayers will support that effort; build to suit other interests and you are going beyond the scope of what taxpayers such as myself and my husband can support.

Thank you for your time in reading this note.

I hope to attend the public meeting next week to learn more about this proposal.

Christine and Tom Ellestad

gogirl@nc.rr.com

Hello Catherine & Carrboro Board of Aldermen,

Jumping right in - it's hard to escape that the proposed numbers are large in relation to the size of the town's resources. Now, "big scary numbers" are by no means an argument by themselves, but as you well know, \$4.5 million would represent about 22% of the total annual operating budget for the town of Carrboro. It's true the project might be spread across a couple years, and could be paid off over a long period. But it does give me a sense of scale.

My main input boils down to a few questions - If the town were willing to commit \$4.5 million to the arts, is this the way we'd want to do so? What other arts businesses, groups, or events might merit a fraction of that commitment? And would this project hamstring the town in supporting them? The fact that Carrboro has made the arts a priority has paid huge benefits over the years. But there are many people carrying that banner.

The comparison that gives me the most pause is the Cat's Cradle. I admit to ignorance on two important fronts here: (1) The inner workings of the Cradle (2) Specific plans for the next phases of the 300 East Main development. My ignorance aside, I doubt the Cat's Cradle is making money hand over fist. Yet they do as much to keep the arts alive and bring in outside visitors as any non-profit, gov't department, or other business. It's an incredible amenity for a town our size. The Local 506 is similarly excellent, punching well above its weight. A bit further afield, you have The Cave, providing space for local acts to cut their teeth. On a bad night, or week, or month, I know some of those thin-margin businesses would consider themselves "non-profits", if you get my meaning. If anything caused the Cradle to close or move, it would leave a huge hole in town.

It may be that the Cradle is being assisted in some way as the 300 East Main project moves forward...but I haven't heard anything about that in a while. And I am aware that Durham's (very welcome) renaissance is putting pressure on venues of a certain size.

The fundamental question, again, is the one you already know you're considering - How do we best support the arts, and how do we do so within our means? I don't know the answer, but our town is bursting with artistic people, working for profit and not. And if we're going to hand out millions of dollars to just 2 organizations, we better have a plan for similar support (grants, buildings, rent assistance, whatever) when needs & opportunities arise.

All that said, I should add that I love the ArtsCenter, and if we had Kidzu just up the street from my house, my family would absolutely use it. I'd just like to be sure it was funded by the right sources, at the right scale. If I can have my cake and eat it too, well, kudos to the Board of Aldermen.

I appreciate the work everyone is putting into this proposal, and into this wonderful town.

Thanks & best regards,

Donald McMillan 105 A Todd St. Carrboro, NC 27510

Jan 2, 2015

Before this Public Hearing
on Tuesday, Jan 20th, Will
the Carrboro Board of Aldermen,
Please take a ride down
West Poplar Avenue, and
notice the hideous, horrible,
unattractive ^{fence} (right after you
pass Windwood) on your left,
that has recently been erected
to spoil the beauty of
this neighborhood.

How did our Town, with
our beautiful churches, schools,
new Hotel, etc, ever give
permission for this big mistake?

Friends and Neighbors