

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(1)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, March 16, 2004

TITLE: PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION: Purchase of the Adams' Property

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES __ NO _X_
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution specifying follow-up to the public comment session B. Resolution approving the Land and Water Conservation grant application C. Map showing location of Adams' Property D. Excerpt of Minutes from 8/14 and 8/21/2001 meetings of the Board of Aldermen E. Conceptual Plan from the draft report <i>The Adams Tract and Bolin Creek Corridor: Towards a Possible Master Plan.</i>	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Mayor Mike Nelson – 918-7310 Patricia McGuire – 918-7327 Richard White – 918-7314

PURPOSE

In late 2001, the Board of Aldermen initiated several measures to seek public purchase and preservation of the Adams' property. Staff is in the process of preparing an application for Land and Water Conservation grant funds made available from the U.S. Department of the Interior, via the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources. While the possible purchase has been noted in numerous public discussions, this meeting provides the first, formal, public comment session.

INFORMATION

The Adams' property is a 30-acre tract located off Estes Drive (see attached map – *Attachment C*). Public comments received in August 2001 indicated some public support for the preservation of the Adams' property. Minutes of meetings on August 14 and 21, 2001 are attached (*Attachment D*). The Board of Aldermen established a committee in October 2001 to seek ways to purchase the tract and committee appointments were made in December of that year.

The Adams' Tract Preservation Committee provided a report in April 2002, noting its recommendations. The Board of Aldermen directed the staff to work on the committee's recommendations which are noted below. Updates on each item are included in italic text.

- 1) If acquired by the Town, that the Adams Tract be designated as Open/Green Space. *Action pending purchase. In June of 2003, staff of the Orange County Department of Environment and Resource Conservation prepared a report on the Adams' Tract and the Bolin Creek corridor for the Orange County Board of County Commissioners to review when considering the Town's request for funding assistance towards the purchase of the Adams' property. The report includes a concept plan for the Adams' property that was recommended by the Adams' Tract Preservation Committee. A copy of the concept plan is attached (Attachment E). It should be noted that concept plan includes recreational and educational trails on the property.*
- 2) Petition the County Commissioners for \$500,000 from the Lands Legacy program to match an application to the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. *This was done and the Board of County Commissioners provided a written response to the Town indicating their willingness to provide an equal match to other funds the Town was able to obtain up to \$750,000.*
- 3) Direct the staff to prepare a grant proposal to be submitted this June 2002 to the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) for the purchase of this property. *An application was submitted and the Town was awarded a CWMTF grant of \$202,000 towards the purchase of the riparian buffer area within 300 feet of Bolin Creek, subject to obtaining funds to purchase the remainder of the site.*
- 4) Send a letter to Mrs. Adams indicating that we are still interested in the property, but that there are concerns about the cost. In addition, Mrs. Adams should be informed about the seriousness of the current budget crisis. *Town staff were in communication with the Adams' family through the spring of 2003, after which time, staff of the Orange County Lands Legacy program began to pursue purchase of the property on behalf of the Town.*

In February 2004, town staff began working on an application for \$250,000 (the maximum allowed) grant funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Land and Water Conservation program that is administered in North Carolina by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. One requirement of the application is that an applicant demonstrates the extent to which the public has provided input into the uses for which any grant funds are requested. Since the fall of 2001, the Town has sought and received public input. However, to date there has not been a public comment session devoted to the topic of public purchase and preservation of the Adams' property. This session provides such an opportunity. The grant application must also include a resolution approving the application and certifying the availability of a local match and a resolution is provided.

Notices of this public comment session were published in The Chapel Hill Herald on March 7th and 14th, and were posted on the Town's website beginning February 27th.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Board adopt the attached resolutions directing the staff to conduct any specified follow-up actions and approving the Land and Water Conservation grant application (*Attachments A and B*).