

A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE REPORT ON THE FRIENDS OF BOLIN
CREEK REQUEST FOR A POLICY ON THE DEDICATION OF OPEN SPACE
Resolution No. 163/2005-06

WHEREAS, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen seeks to ensure that its existing and proposed policies and regulations are appropriate and beneficial, and;

WHEREAS, the Friends of Bolin Creek have provided a report on a possible policy change regarding the dedication of open space areas.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Carrboro Board of Aldermen that the Aldermen accepts the report and refers the request to staff for analysis.

Memorandum

To: Carrboro Board of Aldermen

From: Friends of Bolin Creek

Subj: Dedication of Open Space

Date: June 20, 2006

Central goal. The central goal of Friends of Bolin Creek (FoBC) is to protect a substantial amount of land along Bolin Creek for future generations to enjoy and steward. Our goal is for local governments, UNC and the environmental community to embrace the concept of a preserve which goes beyond the present regulatory requirements for stream protection. We want Carrboro to continue to actively lead the effort to preserve for the future enjoyment of our citizens habitat for plants and animals along northern Bolin Creek.

We consider Carrboro's 2004 acquisition of the Adams Tract and the adoption of a Conservation Map in October 2005 as essential building blocks toward achieving a preserve for Northern Bolin Creek and its tributaries.

We envision that in the Conservation Map you adopted, the Town will take special steps toward protecting a natural area that is larger than the flood plain and buffers along the creek. Not only would the preserve connect the Creek's headwaters downstream to Little Creek, but it provides core natural areas of substantial acreage of both bottomland and upland habitats. When realized, it will provide the recreational, wildlife, and educational amenities, as well as a managed riparian ecosystem to protect water quality from upland runoff. This preserve can allow an individual to experience a woodland stream with habitat - a special experience rarely found near populated places.

Our petition. Carrboro's newly annexed areas in the urban services area have brought sewer lines to land previous thought undevelopable. Just as public interest in protecting Bolin Creek has increased, a number of proposed projects are lining up for permits. As recent developments have come before the Town, we have seen that the model most often used is for the developer to deed the open space along the Creek to the Homeowner's Association, reserving public access only for the width of a trail. Example: Claremont I.

Carrboro's greenway plans are underway, and we suggest that Town ownership of the land along Bolin Creek will facilitate planning, trail maintenance and amenities, such as special places along the stream where a bench could be placed. The recent collaboration between the Town of Chapel Hill and the North Carolina Botanical Gardens in the restoration of the Battle Creek Trail is a good example of what coordinated planning can accomplish.

We foresee that FOBC may be able to assist in maintenance activities in the future. It would be cumbersome and inefficient for Town staff or Friends of Bolin Creek members to approach each Homeowners' Association separately to plan for maintenance and amenities.

Tonight we ask you to adopt a policy to routinely request developers to dedicate open space from development to the Town. We believe this is the simplest way to ensure coordinated public access to these areas. The second step of the policy would be for the Town to accept all offers of dedicated open space from the developer. We have met several times with your staff to vet this proposal with them. The Planning Director and the Town attorney felt comfortable with us bringing forward this policy change.

Therefore, Friends of Bolin Creek requests that the Carrboro Board of Aldermen adopt as policy the following:

We recommend that Carrboro request a dedication for each new subdivision and development of low-lying areas along Bolin creek and its tributaries to cover all low-lying areas. We also request that Carrboro accept all offers of dedicated land along Bolin Creek. We envision that this policy would be integrated into the Town's Carrboro Vision 2020, the Facilitated Small Area Plan for Carrboro's Northern Study Area, and implemented through a change in the Land Use Ordinance which references the Conservation Map.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Friends of Bolin Creek is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.