

Thank you for reaching out and for supporting our local business community.

We do want Purple Bowl and its neighboring small businesses to stay on Franklin Street and are working - on many fronts - to support our local business community and to make sure that downtown is welcoming, vibrant, inclusive and economically resilient.

We don't feel this way.

Town leadership is bending over backwards to help Longfellow with a project that would destroy our space. No support has been provided to Purple Bowl. Town leadership is prioritizing large corporates over small businesses.

Recently, Town Council saw an early concept from the new owners. No formal application has been filed so this is not an imminent situation. There is still a lot to learn and consider.

A formal application was filed earlier this month and a meeting date has been set (March 22nd). This is an imminent situation. If approved, this would be the death of a business we've worked hard to build. Town leadership has shown a constant history of approving development projects even when there is public outcry against the project. Our lease states that we can get kicked out of our space as soon as redevelopment plans are approved.

We have one chance to try and stop this project and it's by making our voice heard on March 22nd at the public hearing for the project.

If and when Longfellow chooses to submit an application, the process for approval could take up to two years and would involve public meetings and opportunities for public engagement.

This is disingenuous. Longfellow did file an application, a meeting date has been set, and we have been told by Longfellow and Pam that we will need to be out of our space in 12-18 months.

Town leadership is trying to divert public attention from the project. Town leadership doesn't want the public to voice their concern about the project at the meeting on March 22nd and is trying to push the project through without public attention.

Pam and town council hired a 3rd party consultant to evaluate how they could speed-up the process of approving real estate development projects in Chapel Hill and eliminate townspeople engagement in the process. They used tax payer funds to pay this 3rd party consultant \$470K (to one individual consultant). They have proposed testing this new process for the Longfellow project. The town's own lawyer stated in a public meeting that testing this process on our project would be illegal.

Bringing new employers and year-round jobs – of all types - to our downtown is something that our independent business owners have been advocating for over many years. Historically, our restaurants and shops have struggled because of the lulls they experience during winter and summer breaks. Many are still recovering from the pandemic. Having hundreds of new workers downtown, which is what a new building like this would do, will mean that more people dine and shop there regularly.

If the goal of this project was to bring year-round jobs to downtown Chapel Hill the building would not be a wet lab. Wet lab space is far lower humans per square foot than traditional office – that's why wet lab space is typically reserved for research parks and suburbs. The low humans/square foot in wet lab

space is being expedited by robotics – robotics are playing an increasingly important role in wet labs leading to a decline in headcount in wet lab office space.

Furthermore, there is a 200K+ square foot wet lab space already being built on East Franklin Street (Grubb Properties Building). Grubb has had difficulty finding tenants to fill that building – Chapel Hill can't digest and find tenants for the wet lab space we are already building, there is no reason we need to add 200K+ more square feet of wet lab space. We think it's highly likely this space will be both an eye sore and mostly vacant for years to come.

According to the early plans we've seen, this project would include retail space, room for expanded sidewalk dining, and a new pedestrian path between Franklin Street and Rosemary – all of which will enhance the area. If approved, the life science office space would provide hundreds of new jobs and more opportunities for student internships near campus. It would also allow Chapel Hill to have space for start-ups and growing companies that come out of UNC which are currently forced to go to Durham or RTP.

The early plans we've seen call for a modern building + 9-story parking garage that does not fit with the charm of Chapel Hill in any way. It looks like a building meant for a corporate office park.

We think the probability of a high number of student internships coming to fruition in this space is highly unlikely.

The retail space at the base of these new buildings is soulless with no natural light – that's why the retail space in many other new buildings on Franklin sits vacant - or if there is a tenant, it's a national chain.

I meet with our downtown businesses throughout the year and have talked to many West Franklin Street merchants. The vast majority are very excited about this idea.

We disagree. The West Franklin Street merchants are sick of the construction and the demise of the soul of downtown Chapel Hill.

The few that are in favor of the project are our competitors that are excited that the project decreases competition.

At this point, it is my understanding that the new property owners are working with their tenants. That is an area over which the town has no control. We can, however, provide support in other ways so I have asked our Economic Development staff and the Downtown Partnership to work with the Purple Bowl and their neighbors, helping them know what options exist and supporting them through any transitions that might occur.

We have received zero financial support and no viable alternatives have been proposed.

Again, there is plenty of time to work these things out and we are committed to providing all the support we can to help Purple Bowl and other independent businesses stay while also continuing to make downtown Chapel Hill more vibrant, walkable, and economically resilient.

We are running out of time and there are no viable alternative for Purple Bowl at this time. This project makes downtown less vibrant, less walkable, and increases the amount of space that will sit vacant.

It is also worth considering whether we can absorb this much construction at this time. We already have a number of large scale projects in downtown Chapel Hill and this would be larger than all of them. This will be years of noise, disruption to traffic flows, and reduced parking.

Sincerely,
Mayor Pam