

College of Education talks productive, town and university says

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Out of nine possible sites, Appalachian State University has selected a location on Howard Street for the new College of Education.

The university has opposition, however. Not only is the location zoned as a residential neighborhood, but town officials are concerned about traffic and walkability.

It's caused quite a bit of controversy- a hot topic in the municipal election. Patrick Heavner with the planning commission hopes it's resolved soon.

"The issue here is not zoning, it's not the College of Education, it's an issue of power struggle: who has the power. This meeting is not about the College of Education. Really, we should have a judge a jury to decide who has power over who."

At last night's forum, several concerns were brought to light, including the lack of green space with the proposed plan. At its Howard Street location, the four-story building would provide only fifteen feet of greenspace in some areas.

Board of Trustees Chair Jim Deal agrees it's not the perfect location- but it's the best of the sites explored by the University. He hopes the building will be aesthetically pleasing- and provide a nice transition from the downtown to the university.

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Chancellor Kenneth Peacock says nothing about the proposal is set in stone except cost limitations.

“The architect has done the work and it’s what the college needs now... but you can always make changes. The architect was here listening to this to see what we can do.”

He says the forum was a success.

Loretta Clawson, who has spoken her opposition about the location, was also encouraged by the forum.

“I do think that we need to get together and work on a plan for this town. I do think the College of Education will be built because we all want that, and I know we’re all going to work together to make it happen.”

All agree that a new College of Education is necessary to the university.