

Zoning talks continue

By Anita Modi
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Henry Sahakian has big plans for a little plot on East Beaver Avenue, which was once home to more than 50 fraternity brothers.

Currently, 254 E. Beaver Ave. is designated as an R2 zone by the Borough of State College, meaning that in addition to fraternity housing, the property may host single family dwellings, elderly housing, churches, daycares, community centers, offices, nursing homes or private schools.

But Sahakian, the landowner and proposed developer of the plot, has something different in mind.

State College Zoning Officer Herman Slaybaugh said Sahakian planned to tear down the existing fraternity house to erect an eight-story building in its place. The first two floors would be reserved for parking and commercial use, while the six floors above would host 42 units of new student housing.

The landowner submitted a rezoning request to the borough council, who passed it along to the planning commission in July for its review and recommendation.

Should the commission agree to the rezoning, the borough council will hold a formal hearing to collect public opinions before officially voting on the item, Slaybaugh said.

Over the past couple months, the commission has come to the consensus to issue a rezoning, but cannot decide what zoning category would be most appropriate for the space. This new zoning category would determine the density of people allowed in the building and the overall height.

The commission held a meeting Thursday night to further discuss the proposed design, but did not vote on any of the parameters.

However, one thing is for sure — some of the commission members and local residents alike are hesitant to allow more student housing on East Beaver Avenue.

"We're just getting too student-dense at that end of town," Cynthia Carpenter, a commission member said. "There's not enough of a mix."

Michael Roeckel, vice-chairman of the planning commission, said the high concentration of student housing at the east end of town not only threatens the balance of students to locals, but also

threatens the safety of the students.

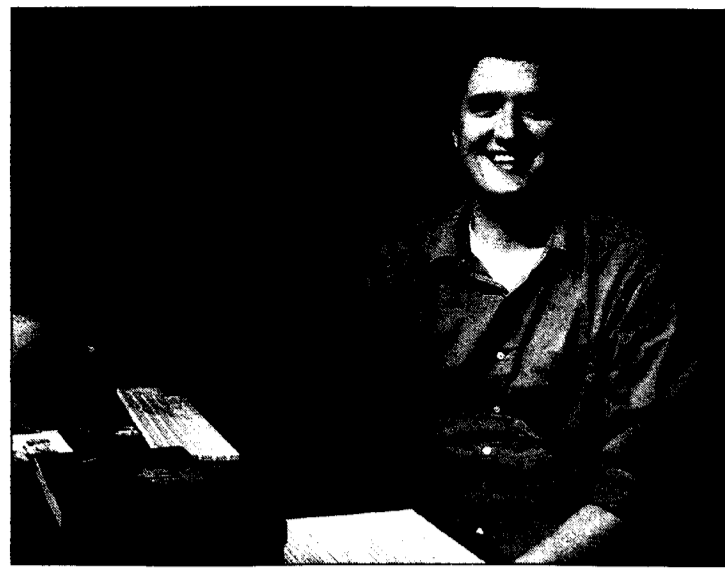
"There are too many students in too small of an area, which gives us problems with riots and rowdy behavior during football game weekends," he said.

Sahakian presented the commission with a student incentive plan, which consisted of performance standards that would ensure the safety of its residents. The ideas included cameras for security, centralized entranceways and a resident manager. Balconies and architectural designs that could facilitate climbing would be prohibited to prevent students from getting hurt if intoxicated.

While the plan did not convince the commission to approve student housing outright, it did present possibilities for making existing student housing safer.

"These measures would prevent behavioral problems, so the commission may want to make everyone do these things, as well," Slaybaugh said. "The commission might put out an ordinance and apply these standards across the board."

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Andrew Dunheimer/Collegian

Candidate Mike Pipe, D-Pa., sits in his Centre County office. Pipe is in support of restricting corporate influence on political elections.

Candidate backs constitutional bill

Michael Pipe supports a proposed bill that would restrict corporate influence on elections.

"Corporations already rule the roost in Washington," said Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen.

"We applaud candidates who stand up and say this must be stopped."

A statement released by Public Citizen used Exxon Mobil as an example of the sway big corporations can have on elections.

According to the statement, if Exxon Mobil used 10 percent of its 2009 profits to influence political elections, it would add up to more than the money spent by the Obama campaign, McCain campaign and every state legislator campaign combined.

Some Penn State students are also opposed to corporate influence in Washington.

"The government is meant to regulate people and corporations alike," Tyler Laubach (sophomore-chemical engineering) said. "It's unfair to give one a bigger voice than the other."

Pipe is one of 62 congressional candidates who pledged to support the amendment.

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By Nick Manella
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Congressional candidate and Penn State alumnus Michael Pipe, D-Pa., recently announced his support of a constitutional amendment that would restrict corporate influence on political elections.

Pipe is running in Pennsylvania's fifth congressional district, which includes Centre County and most of central Pennsylvania, against incumbent Glenn Thompson, R-Pa.

In January, the Supreme Court ruled that corporations can spend an unlimited amount of money to fund political campaigns — money that could potentially obliterate the less extravagant campaign of the opposing candidate.

The decision also incited outrage in political organizations like Public Citizen, a prominent consumer advocacy group.

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Author reads to packed house

By Hannah Rishel
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Susan Orlean discovered a love for skeet shooting, waded waist-deep in a swamp looking for orchids and delved into the mind of a 10-year-old boy through her work as a nonfiction writer.

Orlean concluded her Steven Fisher Writer-in-Residence program at Penn State this week with a reading of her work Thursday evening to a packed Foster Auditorium.

Orlean currently writes for "The New Yorker." Her novel, "The Orchid Thief," was modified into Spike Jonze's movie "Adaptation."

Orlean spent the past week mentoring graduate and undergraduate classes in the creative writing program as part of the Writer-in-Residence program. She also gave some advice to journalists and writers during her reading.

Orlean told the audience that the amazing thing about being passionate is that it makes you do things that you didn't think you could, such as wading waist-deep in a swamp or firing a double barrel shotgun for the first time.

Jonathan Morrow enjoyed Orlean's excerpt from her current project, a biography of Rin Tin Tin, the name given to several German shepherds featured on film, radio and television. She spoke about her experience in search of the birthplace and grave of the first dog named Rin Tin Tin.

"I liked hearing something from her that I haven't heard before," Morrow said.

Morrow (junior-political science and economics) became a fan of Orlean's when he was



Peter Tesonero/Collegian

Susan Orlean reads excerpts from her books Thursday night.

assigned to read "The Orchid Thief" in one of his classes. He has since read more of her work on his own.

Cyndy Bober, who attended the event for her English class, said that her favorite story Orlean read was "The American Male at Age 10." In the article, she wrote about her experience following around a normal 10-year-old boy, who called the girls in his class "gross" and made spider webs with his father's fishing line in his backyard to capture his dog.

"It's about a typical childhood," Bober (freshman-bioengineering) said. "It reminded me of stuff with my brother."

Brittany Truscott decided to come to the event at the suggestion of her English teacher because she's considering a minor in the subject.

She said her favorite excerpt

"It makes me want to read the book and see the movie now."

Brittany Truscott
freshman - premedicine

Orlean read was from "The Orchid Thief."

"It makes me want to read the book and see the movie now," Truscott (freshman-premedicine) said.

Orlean took questions from the audience after her reading, telling the audience that she loves "Adaptation" and that working for "The New Yorker" is closer to a graduate library than a newsroom, among other things.

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'Project' fights for sheriff's powers

By Nick Manella
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Thursday night members of the 9-12 Project of Central Pa. continued work on the "Sheriff Project," a cause taken up to fight against the reduction of sheriffs' powers in law enforcement.

Currently, sheriffs do not answer to state and local legislators, the only state law enforcement agency in Pennsylvania to hold such a distinction.

Centre County Sheriff Denny Nau spoke at the meeting about the importance of maintaining sheriff positions.

"Local and state law enforcement agencies want to take away sheriffs' ability to enforce common law rather than have to answer to legislators," Nau said.

To show the bias against sheriffs by other law enforcement agencies, Nau recited one partic-

ular narrative in which police officers sided with a man charged with dealing drugs against sheriffs, pointing out procedural mistakes the sheriffs involved in the case made.

In the near future, the 9-12 Project has scheduled to have local candidates in to talk to members, in addition to more sheriffs from across Pennsylvania. Both meetings are free and open to the public.

President Peter Trippett also announced the group would be attempting to increase their publicity as the Nov. 2 elections draw near.

Trippett ran down ways for members to support their choice of candidates, touching on everything from calling in to radio shows to working ballot booths.

Scott Stout, a candidate for state representative in the 76th district, which includes part of

Centre County, also spoke to the crowd. Stout, who is running as a member of the Constitutional Party, described himself as someone "people who don't like politicians should vote for, because I'm not one of them."

The 9-12 Project was launched by TV personality Glenn Beck to "bring us all back to the place we were on Sept. 12, 2001... we were not obsessed with red states, blue states or political parties.

We were united as Americans, standing together to protect the values and principles of the greatest nation ever created," Beck said.

The "9-12" stands for both the day after Sept. 11, 2001, and the 9 principles and 12 values the group believes they share with the original founding fathers of the United States.

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