

Orange OKs linking development to jobs beyond leg of beltway

By Will Wellons

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

The lure of a new international headquarters for a Christian ministry persuaded Orange County commissioners Tuesday to expand their growth boundaries and allow urban development on a remote lake near Orlando International Airport.

Commissioners opened up 1,137 acres of ranch land in southeast Orange for more than 5,000 homes and apartments, a business park and several shopping centers. The development, on Lake Hart, would go along with the international headquarters for Campus Crusade for Christ.

The worldwide ministry wanted to be located near homes and offices. With the county's approval, Campus Crusade will begin raising \$30 million to build a complex three miles north of the Osceola County line. It will include a 327,000-square-foot headquarters and retreat center along the lake's shores.

County approval came four years after Campus Crusade decided to

come to Orlando. And it took three different commission votes to get the development approved. But Leroy Eger, a director with Campus Crusade, never doubted the outcome.

"I have been expecting it," Eger said. "This is where God wanted us."

The ministry has temporary offices on Sand Lake Road.

In a daylong hearing to change their growth plans, commissioners also took the first step to allow more urban development around Walt Disney World and near the northwest Orange County community of Tangerine.

The Lake Hart project was the only item facing final approval. And to get the development approved, commissioners had to expand the urban area where the county allows intensive development and provides costly services such as water and sewer lines.

The biggest stumbling block for commissioners was whether to pass a regulation that the new homes would not be allowed if Campus

Crusade backed off its plans.

The Lake Hart development will be split by the newest leg of the beltway around Orlando. And county planners and Chairman Linda Chapin wanted an order that no new homes would be allowed outside the beltway unless Campus Crusade began construction on headquarters that could create nearly 1,000 jobs.

ty's growth plan was flawed and that commissioners should put more homes near the airport.

"The linkage is to the airport. That is where the jobs are and continue to be," Pignone said.

Lake Hart property owner Maury Carter had threatened to withdraw his plans — and consider having his land annexed into the city of Orlando — if commissioners tied approval to the construction of Campus Crusade.

Carter's attorney, Egerton K.

Chapin and planners consider the Lake Hart development uncontrolled, sprawling growth unless it is linked to jobs in the area.

Under a compromise commissioners approved 4-2, construction of homes and shops outside the beltway will be phased in after 1996, even if the ministry headquarters are never built.

Commissioners Fran Pignone, Bob Freeman, Tom Staley, and Mary Johnson supported the compromise. Chapin and Commission-

er Bill Donegan voted against it. Commissioner Mable Butler did not attend the meeting because she was hospitalized for treatment of a blood clot in her leg.

Chapin was angered by the deal to allow growth even if there aren't Campus Crusade jobs in place. "I'm baffled as to why the board would disregard the advice of the planning staff and violate its own growth management plan," she said.

Pignone argued that the coun-

van den Berg said it would be unfair to tie Carter's plans to Campus Crusade because the ministry has no timetable to build.

Ministry officials have said construction will start as soon as money is raised.

Commissioners Tuesday also agreed to send several growth plan changes to the state for approval. If state planners give their OK, the county is expected to pass the changes. They would:

■ Add nearly 2,952 acres near

Disney and the Butler Chain of Lakes to the county's urban core. Of that land, 750 acres are vacant. County planners want to allow more density in the area for affordable housing near Disney.

■ Allow development on the north edge of Orange County along U.S. Highway 441 that matches planned growth in Lake County. The 690 acres of mostly vacant land could include up to four homes per acre plus offices, shops and industry.