

Despite protests, plans proceed on New Hill sewage-treatment facility



STAFF PHOTO BY GRANT HALVERSON

David Hyatt, with flag, leads other New Hill residents in a protest outside Cary Town Hall before the council meeting Aug. 11.

Cary takes land for plant

BY ADAM ARNOLD
STAFF WRITER

Despite the protests of area residents, the Town of Cary now owns more than 219 acres in the New Hill community in southwest Wake County.

Cary, acting on behalf of the Western Wake Partners — Cary, Apex, Morrisville and Holly Springs — filed condemnation documents, along with a deposit of \$3.38 million, with the Wake County Clerk of Court Thursday. The land will be used for a regional sewer plant.

"We now own that property," said Cary Town Manager Bill Coleman on Monday.

The towns are working together to build the plant at an estimated cost of more than \$190 million.

They have an agreement with the state from 2001 to start returning water to the Cape Fear River basin, currently discharged into the Neuse River basin, by Jan. 1, 2011.

Work on plant siting has been under way for several years.

Discussion of the condemnation, which started in late spring, generated staunch opposition from New Hill residents who do not want the plant in their community.

The site is across Old U.S. 1 from historic New Hill Baptist Church.

News about the condemnation was still sketchy Thursday afternoon as New Hill residents protested the plant siting before the Cary Town Council meeting, Paul Barth, president of the New Hill Community Association, said Monday.

"We knew we probably couldn't do much to stop the condemnation," Barth said.

Nevertheless, about two dozen New Hill residents endured about an hour in the heat in front of Town Hall Building B with signs making their sentiments clear:

■ "Danger Cary City Limits



Sources: Town of Cary; Wake County

SEE NEW HILL, 10A

NEW HILL

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Ahead."

- "Save New Hill Stop Cary."
- "¡No lugar para basura en New Hill!" (No place for trash in New Hill!).
- "Undo the coup give us a vote."
- "New Hill farmers doesn't need Cary's fertilizer."

"Who would want a facility like this in their backyard?" asked area native Louis Powell. "To put something like this in the center of our community, I don't understand. ... Cary wouldn't allow us to site one here."

Bob Kelly, who sits on the community association board, said the parade permit of 30 limited turnout.

"Our permit would not let us bring out the masses like we wanted to bring out," Kelly said. "We wanted to turn the whole crew loose."

Hundreds turned out for a march on a public information meeting the municipal partners held in New Hill in June.

The association's efforts to date have been mainly political, as members have attended governing board meetings in the partner towns, held protest marches and written letters to the boards, Barth said.

New Hill is unincorporated and area residents have no vote for members of any of the partner municipalities' governing boards.

The association has repeatedly said that other sites among the nearly 30 considered better meet the criteria used to select the New



STAFF PHOTO BY GRANT HALVERSON

Lauren Forbes, 17, an Apex High School student who has lived in New Hill since 1996, participates in a protest outside Cary Town Hall before the council meeting Aug. 11.

Hill property.

According to the partners' final study, the New Hill site would have the lowest cost of the three to pump the discharge to the river. Among other things, it also has the fewest property owners and residences to deal with, is in Wake County and offers the best potential for expansion.

New Hill residents have urged the town to consider acquiring land from Progress Energy, which owns thousands of acres in the area.

Politics will now just be one

prong in the approach. The group has hired Raleigh attorney Bryan Brice, whose practice focuses on condemnation and environmental issues, to examine legal options.

Members will also work on having concerns addressed through the environmental-impact-statement process that includes public comment periods starting in the fall and a public hearing either late this year or early in 2006, Barth said.

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