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## **Cary officials say sewage plant good idea**

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by Shawn Daley

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To hear the folks from Cary describe it, everyone should be so fortunate to have a regional sewage plant plopped down in the middle of their community.

A contingent of Cary officials, led by Mayor Harold Weinbrecht, journeyed to town last week as Apex Town Council held a quasi-judicial public hearing to discuss the major site plan for the facility. Council voted 4-1 in favor of the plan but, in reality, the site plan had already been quasi-approved a long time ago. With Cary, Apex and Morrisville forming the Western Wake Partners triumvirate, council's vote was little more than a formality.

Weinbrecht, Cary Director of Engineering Tim Bailey, and Inga Kennedy of Planners for Environmental Quality all spoke of the future plant in glowing terms. They claimed that technological advances will make the facility practically silent and odorless while allowing New Hill residents free sewage service and employment opportunities.

The residents of New Hill have been fighting against the proposed plant for more than five years and have recently taken the battle to court.

Weinbrecht said the facility will serve 370,000 residents and businesses and provide safe and reliable water and sewer services. He also added that he was confident the plant would not negatively impact adjacent property owners.

Bailey noted that the 207-acre site will be surrounded by a 200-foot wide buffer. The facility will abide by Town of Apex noise ordinances and downward pointing light fixtures will keep light pollution to a

minimum.

The pungent smell hovering near some sewage plants won't be a problem at this facility, said Bailey, because of an advanced two-stage process that "will greatly minimize and nearly eliminate" all odor. Bailey also noted that the project "creates little traffic" and that vehicles will be diverted away from the historical area of New Hill.

Kennedy told council that she has been working on the project since 2006 to ensure that the "community was involved along the way and part of the project development team." In meeting with residents Kennedy learned that many septic tanks were failing in the New Hill area and no sewer service was planned. The Partners eventually agreed to provide free service to residents near the plant.

"We are proud to offer that benefit ... that will greatly improve their properties," said Kennedy.

Councilman Bill Jensen, the lone dissenter in the site plan vote, asked if the plant would use an incinerator. Stating they use the word "furnace" instead of "incinerator," Bailey said the "furnace" is still an option based on cost-efficiency. If the "furnace" was used it would meet air quality regulations.

New Hill resident Sheila Morrison, who owns lands adjacent to the proposed plant site, spoke in favor of the project. She said her family has been forced to deal with three failed septic tanks and was thankful for the sewer service the facility would provide.

Morrison said she along with "many other minority families" strongly support the construction of the plant.

"It will provide an economic boost to New Hill with jobs in clearing

and construction,” said Morrison. Morrison also pointed out that the Partners were willing to help New Hill residents secure training for jobs at the facility.

“We will be able to work in our own town,” said Morrison. “(The facility) will help revitalize the community.”

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