

- Home
- News
- Sports
- Police Reports
- Obituaries
- Classifieds
- Weather
- Contact Us
- Subscribe
- Guest Book
- Coupon Page

© COPYRIGHT 2005
The Apex Herald,
all rights reserved



Over 150 New Hill residents walked Tuesday night along New Hill-Holleman Road before attending an informational meeting at Apex Fire Station No. 2.

'Hear Our Voice'

Shawn Daley
Editor
June 17, 2005

When New Hill native Richard Jenks first heard his family farm might be condemned to build a sewage plant he wasn't sure how to react.

Although his friends and neighbors were all talking about it, Jenks hadn't heard a word from any official in Apex, Cary, Holly Springs or Morrisville.

Those communities had formed a partnership to build a regional wastewater facility and, under the leadership of Cary, had chosen New Hill as the place to locate it.

Then, finally, on June 10 Jenks received his official notice. Cary had selected 200 acres of his 298-acre farm as an alternative site.

The official notice came just 13 days before the Cary town board plans to vote on condemning land in New Hill.

The 69-year-old Jenks was stunned.

"I wondered what we were over in Iraq fighting for," said Jenks. "That was the first thing I thought of. I thought we were over there fighting to keep things like this from happening."

“They spent a bunch of money on their plans and maps and everything. Then – ‘Bam!’ – all of sudden you find out about it.”

Jenks was one of more than 200 New Hill residents who attended an informational meeting Tuesday night at Apex Fire Station No. 2.

Over 150 residents marched along New Hill-Holleman Rd. chanting “Hear our voice” while carrying signs that read “Stop Cary,” “New Hill not Pooh Hill,” and “No Filtration Without Representation.”

Once they entered the fire station their frustration only grew.

The meeting was broken up into six different stations where residents could ask various town officials questions in a one-on-one setting. Various maps were displayed while information packets and public feedback cards were distributed at the door.

But the building proved an inadequate place for such a large crowd and the constant chatter of crowd noise made it difficult to hear what officials were saying.

“I don’t think this is a meeting,” said Judy Tysmans, who lives two miles from the preferred site along old U.S. 1. “This is divide and conquer. They give us a little blue piece of paper and tell us if we have questions write them down and mail them.

“Where is the person who is leading the meeting? I’ve been around the block once or twice and I know about business meetings. This is a joke not a meeting.”

Bill Ott said he and his fellow New Hill residents were hoping for a meeting where they could share their comments with town officials in a public setting.

The format of the meeting, he said, only adds to the feeling that officials don’t want to listen to them.

“We have no representation and no vote,” said Ott. “The ‘Waste Wake Partners’ have decided to put it in the middle of New Hill.

“Apparently we have no voice except in this kind of forum. That’s just wrong. That’s not the way democracy is supposed to work.”

The Western Wake Partners need to build the facility in order to ensure their ability to grow in the future.

They must also meet a state mandate by 2011 that requires municipalities to return cleaned wastewater

from the same river basin it is drawn from.

Apex currently holds a state interbasin transfer permit to draw water from Jordan Lake, which is located in the Cape Fear Basin. But because the town's water treatment facility is located on a tributary to the Neuse River the water is not returned to the Cape Fear Basin.

If the town fails to act it could lose its permit to draw water from Jordan Lake.

Many of the residents at Tuesday's meeting understood the need for the sewage plant but they remained highly critical of the way the process is being handled by Cary and its partners.

Apex Commissioner Mike Jones, who attended the meeting along with fellow town commissioners Bill Jensen and Gene Schulze, stressed that no final decisions have been made.

He said the town board is currently trying to get more information from Cary and is confident they'll have those answers soon.

"I'm not sure where we're at and I'm not sure where we're going," said Jones. "Obviously, there's a lot of questions being asked that deserve answers.

"I don't think it's a done deal. Some sites have been selected, one preferred site, but there's still many questions. I don't have the answers right now but I'm going to try and get them."

Answers were something Jenks was also hoping to find.

"No, I'm not getting any answers here," said Jenks. "I don't know what you call this, I really don't. You can't hear anything they are saying. They need to have a public hearing not something like this."

For more information on the proposed sewage plant visit www.westernwakepartners.org

A temporary website has also been started for New Hill residents at www.theotts.org/wwakecitizens.htm.