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This sign greeted rally participants as they entered New Hill First Baptist Church.

'It's all about the money'

Shawn Daley
Editor
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The residents of New Hill are seemingly facing long odds in their battle against keeping a sewage plant out of their community.

So, last week, they looked for help from a much higher power.

About 85 people gathered Friday evening in the New Hill First Baptist Church to express their outrage over the proposed plant.

Cary, Apex, Holly Springs and Morrisville – the self-dubbed Western Wake Partners – are planning to build the Western Wake Wastewater Treatment Facility in the heart of the New Hill community just off Old U.S. 1.

Cary is taking the brunt of criticism since it has accepted lead role in the project.

The Partners plan to condemn over 200 acres of land despite the objections of residents. Cary also didn't

notify residents of the plan until its town board was nearly ready to vote on the matter.

Last week's rally at the historically black church was a way to get the many black residents of New Hill involved in the fight.

But Rev. James Clanton said the colors of black and white didn't matter in this battle. The one color of importance was green.

"The lust of money is why Cary wants to do this to New Hill," said Clanton. "They have land (in Cary) where they could build it but they know it would lower property values.

"It's all about the money. The leadership has already made up their mind. They don't care about you, whether you are black or white."

Clanton compared New Hill's plight with the biblical story of the young boy David slaying the giant Goliath.

He admitted that fighting a giant like Cary would be difficult but told the enthusiastic crowd that prayer would help.

"Do we really want to take on a city like Cary?" asked Clanton rhetorically. "Do we really want to fight for our community and our lifestyle? Well, roll up your sleeves and get on your knees because we need (God's) favor.

"There is a giant out there named Cary. If a young boy named David can slay a giant why can't a little town slay a giant like Cary? Unfairness anywhere is unfairness everywhere. We are going to stand."

Clanton said the residents of Cary need to be aware of what their leaders are doing to the "little town of New Hill."

"We don't want to be treated unfairly," said Clanton. "We will not be dumped on and we will stand for what is right.

"We don't want this on our front doors and on our front porches. We don't want your flushed toilets. Keep it to yourself."

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.

Cary, with the approval of Apex, has already moved the project forward. An environmental impact statement will be issued to the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which will hold public hearings on the matter later this year.