

My View: New Hill not asking to lose treatment plant, just move it

The March 6 edition of the Apex Herald contains an article titled "Delay Stinks for Town: New Hill sewage plant now two years behind schedule."

This article discusses the delay of the proposed sewage plant being installed in the center of the New Hill community, and the reasons why the completion of the proposed facility has been delayed until April 2013.







In this article, Apex Public Works Director Tim Donnelly once again attempts to categorize the issues New Hill residents have with the sewage plant as a "not in my backyard" issue.

In doing so, Mr. Donnelly continues to demonstrate his insensitivity to the residents of New Hill and his lack of understanding of their concerns.

Furthermore, if Mr. Donnelly's position is indicative of the elected officials and senior staff in the four Western Wake Partner towns (Apex, Cary, Holly Springs and Morrisville), I'm disappointed that they have not heard New Hill's repeated position on this issue.

In multiple presentations to the councils of each of the four WWP towns, New Hill residents have repeatedly stated we understand the need for a regional sewage plant and are willing to accept this facility in our neighborhood. However, we are not willing to accept this facility being located in the center of New Hill. Constructing the sewage plant in the center of New Hill will have very adverse impacts on two churches and their cemeteries and playgrounds; the New Hill historic district; and will

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disproportionately affect the predominantly elderly, low income, and minority residents who live adjacent to the proposed site.

New Hill residents conveyed this same position at a public hearing held by N.C.'s Department of Environment and Natural Resources on June 15, 2006. In addition, we have repeatedly stated this at the Army Corps of Engineers project meetings, which Mr. Donnelly attends.

The residents of New Hill have requested only one thing from WWP: move the sewage plant out of the center of New Hill.

Numerous superior alternative sites for the facility exist on the excess property owned by Progress Energy. The PE sites are only one mile from the WWP preferred site. If the sewage plant was constructed on any one of these alternative sites, it would not disrupt the New Hill community; would not disturb the two churches, playgrounds and cemeteries; would have no impact to the many elderly, low income, and minority residents.

PE sites would also direct facility traffic away from the center of the community; would provide quicker access to the facility for the partners; and would stop the waste of taxpayers' dollars to construct the sewage plant and its infrastructure.

The taxpayers of these four towns should contact their town representatives and demand they stop wasting taxpayer money (\$15 million to-date and counting) and do the right thing for New Hill and the project.

While Mr. Donnelly is wrong as categorizing New Hill residents as "NIMBYs," he is correct to be concerned with the plant's timeline. As long as the preferred site is in the center of New Hill, the WWP can expect additional delays beyond April 2013.

It is important to note that many of the residents of New Hill lost their homes when CP&L forcibly acquired the property to construct the Shearon Harris facility. PE has admitted CP&L took thousands of acres more than needed for the nuclear facility. The land was taken from New Hill residents for utility purposes, and what is a sewage

plant if not a utility?

Dr. David Bristol is vice president of New Hill Community Association.

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