

New Hill residents take fight to Cary

BY SHAWN DALEY
EDITOR

About 20 New Hill residents carried homemade signs and chanted slogans outside Cary Town Hall last Thursday prior to the town council meeting.

It was the words they delivered during the meeting, however, that carried the most weight.

In protesting Cary's decision to build a regional wastewater treatment plant in the heart of their community, the residents wanted to make sure their voice was being heard.

Resident Tonya Forbes told council members that she requested a detailed cost analysis to prove Cary's claim that building the plant on Progress Energy land, about one mile from the site chosen in New Hill, would cost an additional



PHOTO BY SHAWN DALEY

New Hill residents protested prior to the Cary Town Council meeting.

\$27 million.

It's been five weeks since she made the request and Cary has yet to provide the data.

Even if the \$27 million claim is true, Forbes added, it would be a small amount once it was spread

out over many years. Besides, it should be the responsibility of the towns to pay for their own plant rather than infringing on another community.

Forbes pointed out that she and her husband pay for their own septic system and they don't use tax money, grants or bonds.

"We don't ask the citizens of Apex, Holly Springs, Cary or Morrisville to subsidize it," said Forbes. "We haven't asked to place our septic tank on the golf course in Preston Village.

"So I don't think it's unfair to ask the citizens of these four towns to pay for their own sewage treatment."

Forbes told the council it's still not too late "to do the right thing" and reconsider their decision. She then left them with a

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French proverb: "There is no pillow so soft as a clear conscience."

New Hill resident Carolyn Sink said she sent a letter to officials in Cary, Apex, Holly Springs and Morrisville – the self-dubbed Western Wake Partners.

"One Apex commissioner (Bill Jensen) had the courage to speak up and I hope you do, too," said Sink.

Sink said the process has been "insulting" to residents and told Cary officials that their "ethics got flushed away."

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.

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.

Chatham County resident Larry Ballas also criticized the Cary council for the way it deals with neighboring communities.

"People in Chatham have issues, people in New Hill have issues, et cetera," said Ballas. "These people don't have any representation here but are still somehow involved in the process of Cary."

"You wonder why your mayor (Ernie McAlister) has to say that Cary is getting a bad rap. It's because of things like this."

Ballas then told the council his feelings about Cary being named one of the top towns in the nation by a national magazine.

"It's nice when Money Magazine gives you a write up that puts Cary in a high position," said Ballas. "It's not so nice when your neighbors don't think highly of you because of the things that have been going