

October 14, 2009

Honorable Commissioner Lindy Brown
Wake County Board of Commissioners
P.O. Box 550, Suite 1100
Raleigh, NC 27602

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Commissioner Brown:

We write to you today as representatives of our respective organizations, the New Hill Community Association (NHCA), the Raleigh-Apex branch of the NAACP, and the Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ), hoping to sit down with you in the coming days to discuss the attached resolution and the possibility of the Wake County Commissioners also supporting this resolution that calls for the Western Wake Partners to select another site for their proposed sewage treatment facility.

As you might already know, the Western Wake Partners, a coalition including the towns of Cary, Apex, Holly Springs, and Morrisville, announced plans in 2005 to build a sewage treatment plant in the middle of New Hill, dubbed Site 14 in subsequent documents. In response to the land condemnation that preceded this construction effort, the NHCA petitioned the Wake County Commissioners to weigh in on this plan, resulting in the Commission recommending the Partners' delay condemnation proceedings for 30 days to consider alternative sites. Unfortunately, the Partners' did not abide by the Commission's suggestion and moved forward with the condemnation and plans to build the sewage treatment plant at Site 14.

The overwhelming majority of New Hill residents, the NHCA, the Raleigh-Apex branch of the NAACP, and SCSJ oppose Site 14 for the sewage treatment plant for a number of reasons, all of which are delineated in the enclosed resolution. Most notably is the compelling evidence that Site 14 is an inferior option to the other alternatives under consideration. For example, Site 14 is the only site in the middle of the New Hill Historic District, directly impacting multiple historic buildings and both of the community's churches. Along the same lines, of all the options being considered, Site 14 has both the largest human impact as well as the greatest impact on New Hill's African-American community, which it directly abuts. It is unfortunate that these issues have not been adequately considered by the Partners during this process, but we hope the Partners, with Wake County's encouragement, will correct these oversights.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. New Hill is an unincorporated community, making the Wake County Commission its closest elected political representation, thus our solicitation of your support. We appreciate the Commission's past assistance to the community and we hope to meet with you in the near future to explore the possibility of the Commission supporting the enclosed resolution.

Regards,

Paul Barth
President
NHCA

Rev. Portia Rochelle
President
Raleigh-Apex NAACP

Christopher A. Brook
Staff Attorney
SCSJ

Resolution to Remove Site 14 as the Preferred Site of the Western Wake Regional Wastewater Management Facility (WWRWMF)

WHEREAS, the citizens of the New Hill community have formed an association to oppose the siting of the Western Wake Regional Wastewater Management Facility (WWRWMF) in the center of their community for the treatment of waste from Apex, Cary, Holly Springs, Morrisville and RTP South; and

WHEREAS, the New Hill community was not adequately included in decision-making surrounding the siting of this sewage treatment plant. Decisions about the plant were made by parties outside of their community and without meaningful consultation with members of the community who would be directly impacted; and

WHEREAS, the population in New Hill most directly impacted by the WWRWMF siting is disproportionately African-American, low income and elderly, meaning the burdens of a sewage treatment plant will be borne by an overwhelmingly black, impoverished, and elderly community for the benefit of overwhelmingly white communities, creating a severe case of environmental racism; and

WHEREAS, the proposed site is located in the middle of the New Hill Historic District and near two historic churches, factors that were not considered in the siting process according to a member of the Cary Town Council; and

WHEREAS, a final decision in regards to where millions of gallons of sewage would be discharged has not been made, nor have the environmental impacts of such a discharge been adequately considered. This failure to lay out specific plans stymies the public's ability to comment on the proposal in a fully educated fashion, and also precludes the public from fully weighing the impacts of this proposal.

WHEREAS, no decision in regards to the management of sewage sludge residue from the sewage treatment plant has been made. In particular, no final decisions have been made on how sewage sludge will be treated and where it will be applied to the land. This failure to lay out specific plans stymies the public's ability to comment on the proposal in a fully educated fashion, and also precludes the public from fully weighing the impacts of this proposal.

WHEREAS, the US Army Corp of Engineers have identified three qualified alternate sites with characteristics that are equal to or better than Site 14. Two of the three qualified sites are located on Progress Energy property, which was previously condemned and taken from New Hill residents for the Shearon Harris Nuclear Plant. Progress Energy has confirmed that their property, none of which have environmental justice or human impact concerns, could be used for the siting of the WWRWMF; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the undersigned community members and groups express their desire for the Western Wake Partners to remove Site 14 from consideration for the WWRWMF.