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New Hill's sensible sewer plant settlement

The following editorial appeared Saturday in The Sanford Herald:

SANFORD -- Score one for the little guys.

The New Hill community - located just off U.S. 1 near the Shearon Harris Nuclear Plant - has for years fought urban sprawl.

Situated just south of fast-growing urban areas like Apex, Cary and Morrisville, New Hill is in prime position for the apartment complexes, condos and shopping centers that have popped up around them in just the past decade. Its position near the still-under-construction tollway that will connect U.S. 1 with RDU Airport won't help its cause.

But New Hill won a battle of sorts Friday when it learned its New Hill Community Association settled a lawsuit with Western Wake Partners over the company's desire to site a wastewater treatment plant there.

Represented by the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, the NHCA reached a compromise - allow the treatment plant in return for \$500,000, which will be used to build a community center, a long-held goal for the residents.

"During the course of our efforts, our community has come together as never before with neighbors becoming friends," said Rev. James Clanton, pastor of the First Baptist Church New Hill. "These efforts will help mitigate impacts to our community."

Plus, this new facility will connect to the treatment facility free of charge, and another part of the settlement will bring two bus stops for community children on the treatment facility's dime.

New Hill and its "Stop Cary" signs can only do so much to stop the sprawl - no easy feat with the Triangle considered one of the fastest-growing urban areas in the nation.

But if growth is going to come, it's good to see the residents are fighting so that it benefits them. New Hill will certainly benefit from its new community center, and the settlement will mean their relationship with the treatment facility gets off on the right foot.