

SOUNDED GOOD AT THE TIME...

By A.C. Cargill

'Poo' Hill in the crosshairs

The Western Wake Wastewater Partners are proceeding with plans for a new wastewater treatment plant with "a more economical, environmentally-sensitive solution than if towns were to try to go it alone." Strength in numbers, like an Aesop fable. Sounds good, but...

At the risk of seeming repetitive, I again address us dumping on our neighbors. First, no one, not even New Hill residents, are saying we don't need a new treatment plant. We do to continue growing. However, WWWP is acting as if New Hill residents were dancing in the streets, shouting "Yippee! Bring it on!"

The real issue has always been how the 200-acre family farm in New Hill got in WWWP's crosshairs in the first place. My guess is TAX REVENUES. (The "T" word strikes again.) Here's a rundown:

■Some of the land "acquired" from New Hill in the 1960s and 1970s for the Shearon Harris Plant is slated for commercial, industrial, and residential development (per the article "Using land near Harris" dated August 27, 2002, in the *News and Observer*).

■Tax revenue from such developments would far outweigh tax revenue from the farm and certainly from a wastewater treatment facility which generates no revenue. (Shades of *Kelo v. New London, CT* - homes were condemned for upscale development.)

■Local officials seem to be encouraging potential revenue growth on the Harris Plant land over a farm that they see as having little potential for such growth.

■Ergo, to stop this project, the folks in New Hill need to take another tack. Instead of reason or heartstrings, they must appeal to municipal coffers with a plan to develop the farm into a tax-revenue-generating enterprise.

Some possibilities:

■A few new restaurants (sure don't have enough of them in town)

■A "mini-mansion" subdivision (lots of tax revenue there)

■An office park just for chiropractors (can't have too many, it seems)

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These almost sound worse than a "mighty" smack in the middle of their tiny community. Might not smell as good either.

Meanwhile, Mayor Weatherly is fuming at Town Board "grandstanding," with their futile resolution to try to change the site. Seems like concern over public image of Weatherly versus the "Magnificent Five" (Jones, Gossage, Jensen, Schulze, and Sutton). Typical politicking and chest thumping.

The large ad New Hill residents took out in another newspaper last week said to "Visit NewHillCA.org for supporting documentation." There, I found information backing them up: Officials weren't forthcoming with residents; Cary grabbed the project lead; etc. Check it out.

Here and across the nation the right to property is not being upheld, especially when increased tax revenue is sought. Where does it end? When New Hill is just some faded lettering on a sign swinging in the wind?

As we demand more publicly funded services and projects, pouting and ranting about projects like this is useless. It's time to stop making such demands, or our "public servants" will continue grabbing our land to meet our needs. What a legacy to leave our children.

Oh, my aching back. Time to see the chiropractor!

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