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# In My Opinion: Why doesn't Cary treat New Hill like Green Level?

By PAUL BARTH

I attended the Southwest Wake planning meeting at the C.C. Jones Building in Apex on Jan. 24. During that meeting, there was an excellent presentation by Scott Ramage from the Town of Cary Planning Department.

Mr. Ramage made numerous statements about how the Town of Cary worked with the residents for more than two years on ways to protect the Green Level Historic District. He also mentioned the Green Level Historic District is now protected, and the surrounding property can be used only for residential or open spaces. Industrial uses are not permitted in and around the Green Level Historic District.

Compare the above to how the Town of Cary worked with the community of New Hill when they selected the site in New Hill for their regional sewage plant.

1. Town of Cary did not notify anyone that property in the center of the New Hill community was being considered for a sewage plant, other than the family who owned the property that was about to be condemned. Cary had a communication plan for the sewage plant that called for a minimum of two public meetings with at least a 30-day notification prior to each meeting, but never executed this communications plan.

2. As a result of a New Hill community meeting held May 31, 2005, Cary hastily scheduled a public information session on June 14, 2005. Cary had planned to condemn the property at their June 9, 2005, council meeting, but at the urging of Wake County Manager David Cooke, Cary decided to wait until after the public information session.

3. New Hill citizens wrote letters and made public appearances at town meetings held in Cary, Apex, Morrisville and Holly Springs, as well as attended Wake County commissioners meetings. We requested the towns delay the condemnation for 30 days to give the citizens of New Hill time to study the situation. Even though the Wake County commissioners passed a resolution agreeing to the 30-day delay, the Town of Cary refused our request for the delay and proceeded with condemning the land for the sewage plant.

4. In our many letters we wrote and in our pleas at the town meetings, we mentioned several times that the sewage plant was being built adjacent to our historic district, two churches, four rest homes and many residences. The Western Wake Partners — those four municipalities — did not care, as they proceeded with condemning the land.

5. Even Cary council member Jennifer Robinson realized the Western Wake Partners had made a mistake. In an e-mail dated June 26, 2005, she writes: "First, historical or societal issues were not considered when the site selection process was undertaken. For that, I am very sorry. I was disappointed when I learned that the preferred site impacted the community as it does. It should have been a factor as important as meeting the standards of the Inter-Basin Transfer."

Given the Town of Cary's track record working with the residents of Green Level to protect their

historic district, why was similar protection not given to the New Hill Historic District? Is it because the Green Level Historic District is within Cary's extraterritorial jurisdiction and the New Hill Historic District is not?

New Hill is in the Long Range Urban Service Area for Apex, which means one day Apex will annex the area. Why did Apex not stand up to Cary and the Western Wake Partners and refuse to let a sewage plant be constructed adjacent to our historic district?

**Paul Barth is president of the New Hill Community Association.**