

9 February 2010

Dear Mr. Wicker, Mayor Weatherly, Mayor Sears, Mayor Weinbrecht, Mayor Holcombe, et. al,

**Regarding the effects of noise, light and odor pollution on a National Historic District that is important to Apex, Holly Springs, Cary and Morrisville, as well as the residents of New Hill**

I am writing to add comments to the USACE response to comments made at the April 2009 hearing. I have read the comments and responses carefully, and I can tell that the USACE is doing a very good job in gathering information and trying to decide whether it is possible to permit site 14.

I also understand that it is not possible to go back and undo actions originally done by the partners. It is true that they should have considered this community in their long range planning for their "service area". They should have been more transparent about their plans. They should have considered more than short term economics when choosing Site 14. But they did not, and now the USACE must decide, based on the information we have now, whether to permit. I hope that all the facts presented will convince you that Site 14 should not be permitted.

In addition, I would like the Partners to consider whether or not Site 14 is really in the best interests of their towns. Please know that I am not addressing whether or not a Waste water treatment plant is necessary, but their choice of Site 14.

In a letter from the NC State Preservation Office on May 16, 2008, Mr. Peter Sandbeck wrote, "as previously determined, Site 14 (Partners' Preferred Site) " will adversely affect the New Hill National Register Historic District".

My grandfather, WT Roundy Sr., moved to New Hill in the early 1920's and built a small grocery store and tea room at the crossroads of what is now old US 1 and New Hill-Olive Chapel Road. He later built Troy's Cabins, which were a popular stopping point for people traveling from New York down to Florida. It is true that Babe Ruth stopped here on his way to Spring Training. My Dad took over the operation of the store and ran it until early 2002, when he became ill and passed away later that year. The Tourist Court is one of few remaining in North Carolina. In the 1960's, Troy's Grill was a gathering place for people from many neighboring towns, as it was known for having the best homemade ice cream and hot dogs in the area.

New Hill offered a rarity: a family owned country store - a place where locals gathered for food and conversation, feed for their animals, seed for their gardens, paint and kerosene, gasoline and fan belts. Farmers Supply Store was the place where they listed their taxes and the place they went to vote. It was where "lost dog" signs were posted. It had a public telephone; it had credit before Mastercard; and if you walked to get your groceries, the store would make sure you got home with them. It was a place that blacks and whites both frequented, because everyone was treated fairly.

Because the property and the buildings have not only historical value, but community value as well, my hope has been to restore them and reopen the store, instead of just selling the land "to the highest bidder". New Hill is a unique crossroads community, and I agree with Mr. Sandbeck's observation that Site 14 would "adversely affect it". In fact, I think it could ruin it.

It seems that our neighboring communities of Apex, Cary, Morrisville and Holly Springs are short sighted if they only focus on the immediate costs when choosing a site for the plant. Can they not see they are giving up a valuable opportunity by limiting the places their citizens might want to live? Can't they see how much more valuable it is to have a quaint and charming area that will add value to their towns too?

Is there no way to show these partners that it is not only in **our** best interest, **but in their own**, to preserve this area, and to develop it properly with respect for the unique qualities that New Hill has? I think we have all been able to see in the last 2 years that it is not just a sentimental notion to say, "there are some things money can't buy". And there are some things that cannot be replaced once they have been destroyed.

Even if we consider the economics alone, it seems better for the Partners to consider a different site. In a letter dated June 24, 2008, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) wrote to add comments concerning the effect of site 14 on the Historic District. They based their comments on information and maps provided at a June 18, 2008 meeting (it is not clear who provided the maps and information). The SHPO indicated that the **only way** the historic district would not be adversely affected were **if several conditions were met**. These included

1. No lines running through the district with the exception of the connection site on the Beaver Creek force main, which would allow for a future connection for New Hill
2. Access to the site would have to be from Shearon Harris Road
3. A 200' vegetated buffer would have to be maintained. The area along the CSX rail right of way, would have to be planted with native plants, especially evergreens, to provide the 200' buffer
4. Lighting on the site would have to be kept to a minimum and be directional to reduce light pollution on the historic district
5. Operational procedures would have to, to the maximum extent possible, prevent and/or control noxious odors from the facility
6. The SHPO will review all proposed future lines to the facility to ensure that historic properties and archaeological sites are not adversely affected

In addition, The SHPO noted their understanding that the facility has moved slightly south from its original site. Is this correct?

Are the partners so confident that the odors, light and traffic will **not** have a negative impact on the quality of life, and will **not** have a negative economic impact, that they are willing to risk law suits if the plant does have these negative impacts? What are the consequences to the Partners if these conditions

are not met? What are the consequences if the businesses and residents of New Hill do experience economic hardships because of the sewage plant at site 14? We need to know this.

The NHCA attorney has stated that the legal battles that occur could easily eat up the difference in cost between site 14 and the alternative sites.

Contrast that with the cost **benefit** of creating a beautiful adjacent community that can become a little gem that Apex, Cary, Morrisville and Holly Springs can be proud of ~ and that can eventually bring in more income for those towns. New Hill has long had a good association with these neighboring towns. Isn't it better that this association continues? As Mr. Tim Gauss said on behalf of Mayor Faulkner, "the welfare of all our citizens is best served when the common purpose and expertise are combined in a collaborative effort to address emerging issues".

We are fortunate that this is not an unavoidable situation. It still is not too late. The site choice can be changed.

I want to be able to say "Welcome" when all the people who make up Western Wake Partners come to New Hill. "We're happy to see you. So glad you changed your mind about site 14!"

Sincerely,

Loretta Roundy Young