

Town board adopts

Residents disappointed in document's lack of bite

BY SHAWN DALEY
EDITOR

When discussing resolutions that called for an alternative site to the proposed regional sewage plant in New Hill, Mayor Keith Weatherly went on the attack.

The mayor called the resolution "an exercise in grandstanding" that had "no meaning or substance."

Considering the weak resolution the board finally adopted, Weatherly was actually pretty accurate in his description.

The board voted 3-2 at the Dec. 20 meeting to adopt a resolution proposed by Commissioner Mike Jones that requests additional evaluation of an alternative site located outside the center of New Hill.

Jones, Gene Schulze and Bryan Gossage all voted in favor of the resolution while Bill Jensen and Bill Sutton both voted against it.

Jensen and Sutton favored a more strongly worded resolution that was much more critical of the entire site selection process.

The document, which was proposed by Jensen, also pointed out that the Apex town board never voted on the matter.

Jones, Schulze and Gossage all rejected that resolution.

The board's actions left New Hill Community Association President Paul Barth with mixed feelings. He said Jones' resolution left the proposed site (Site C) in place while simply asking for the other members of the Western Wake Partnership — Cary, Morrisville and Holly Springs — to review another site.

"I have to be a bit positive because at least there is a discussion going on about the site selection process," said Barth. "The negative side is we didn't get what we hoped for, which was Site C being taken off the board.

"If one of the partners in the Western Wake Partnership pulls out or disapproves of the current site it would help us a lot in our political fight and legal battle

New Hill resolution

down the road.”

The discussion of the resolutions was a microcosm of the entire sewage plant debacle.

It began with the board going behind closed doors for 15 minutes to get legal advice from the town attorney.

Upon their return, Jensen introduced his resolution to the board. Jones quickly countered by introducing his resolution.

From there, the discussion turned into a lively but confusing debate over the controversial topic and included such comments as “amending the amendment to the second resolution.”

Jensen continually criticized the site selection process while Jones said it was not his intent



FILE PHOTO BY SHAWN DALEY

New Hill residents held a protest in Apex this summer.

Town: Board passes resolution in sewage plant controversy

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"get into the criteria" that was used to choose a site.

"We could debate that ad nauseam," said Jones.

Jones said it was too late to remove Site C from consideration since the partnership had already sent all the information to the state for review.

"That horse is already out of the barn," said Jones.

"Well, let's put it back in," countered Sutton.

Both Jensen and Sutton criticized the fact that the board never voted on the matter.

Weatherly said he sent a letter to Cary giving Apex's approval and noted that "hindsight is a wonderful thing."

Weatherly said the resolutions would not help New Hill resi-

dents because the process had already moved to the state level.

"This is just an exercise in grandstanding," said Weatherly. "It has no substance. The legal status is that the site has been selected. There will be no change in the site.

"I will make a wager with anyone that there will be no support in the partnership (for the resolution). Not a single member will support it until the state has a chance to speak. It has no meaning or substance."

The Western Wake partners have already paid over \$3.3 million to condemn a 221-acre farm just off old U.S. 1 in New Hill. The site is located near two churches and several homes.

The towns need to build the regional facility in order to ensure their ability to grow in the

future. They must also meet a state mandate by 2011 that requires municipalities to return cleaned wastewater from the same river basin it is drawn from.

Apex currently holds a state interbasin transfer permit to draw water from Jordan Lake, which is located in the Cape Fear Basin. But because the town's water treatment facility is located on a tributary to the Neuse River the water is not returned to the Cape Fear Basin.

If the town fails to act it could lose its permit to draw water from Jordan Lake.

Cary, with the approval of Apex, has already moved the project forward. An environmental impact statement has been issued to the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources.