

# Project needs more 'float' to avoid sinking

Last week's article -- "Sewage plant falls off schedule" is the latest example of how the Towns Apex and Cary are still getting it wrong and continue to be arrogant.

Apex Utilities Director Tim Donnelly remains "optimistic" while his schedule for approving and constructing a regional sewage plant is eight months behind and slipping further.

The delay is due to the diligent work being done by NC Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) based on credible information provided and significant issues raised by the New Hill community.

Apex, part of the Western Wake Partners (WWP) have now devised a new water and sewage extension policy which they hope will "appease" DENR and the New Hill community. The purpose of this policy is to mitigate away an environmental justice issue which simply can't be mitigated.

While the policy would allow a few property owners bordering the sewage plant to connect to water and sewage, it will also require a lien to be placed on the property owner's deed. Town of Apex would like you to think that they are providing water and sewage service free of charge, however, the service connection fees will be due in the future.

The policy states annexation of property owners will not be required initially. However, there are conditions!

At some unspecified date in the future (that's comforting) Apex may initiate annexation proceedings and property owners can't refuse because of Town of Apex imposed deed restrictions or else their water and sewage connection will be disconnected. I would call

that a threat. Also, the policy does not address the remaining property owners surrounding the proposed site nor the rest of the New Hill community. How is this "providing easy access to water and sewer" Mr. Donnelly?

The cost of this mitigation and appeasement plan is about \$3 million. Why not use this money to move the site away from the center of New Hill, away from our historic district, away from our churches and playgrounds, away from our minority and elderly residents, away from our rest homes, where its' effect will be greatly reduced or possibly eliminated?

The policy does not address sewage spills that will occur. The Town of Cary will be responsible for managing the operation of this sewage plant and their track record speaks for itself - 41 spills between March 2000 and June 2006. Gallons spilled range from 40 gallons up to 8 million gallons per spill. Where is the policy to handle this environmental disaster?

If the Town of Apex thinks this mitigation appeasement plan will "pacify" the New Hill community and "get them off your back", they are wrong, seriously wrong. The New Hill community "coordinated opposition" is much more than that. New Hill community has documented serious issues with this project including environmental justice, project costs, and site selection process.

To "dismiss our opposition" is a mistake which we will continue to prove as time moves on. WWP have not "gone above and beyond", not even close Mr. Donnelly. Saying this is simply a matter of "not-in-my-back-yard (NIMBY) is far from the

truth. New Hill community has repeatedly stated at the DENR Public Hearing in June 2006, at every Wake County Commissioners meeting and every Town Council meeting we have attended, and in the media over the past 2 years that we understand the need for a regional sewage plant to support development in southwest Wake.

The New Hill community would accept the plant in our backyard, but we will not accept it in our front yard!

Mr. Donnelly might be correct in that the proposed site is the "most cost effective for our taxpayers, which we work for." However, New Hill is the target location and we have not had a vote, nor a voice, nor will we benefit from its' construction.

If Mr. Donnelly thinks further delays of the project would have "serious consequences", then why not do the right thing and move the site just a mile or so away to a better location such as Progress Energy land which has 14000 excess acres available.

Progress Energy already took this land from New Hill residents for utility purposes. Why not locate this utility there? Cost of doing this is less than \$1 per customer serviced by this sewage plant. Saving a community - priceless!

Mr. Donnelly, if your project schedule "float" time has been used up, well its' because your project is sinking! You should be "nervous".

You are "behind the eight ball" where New Hill community plans to keep you. And if you think we are going away, we are not.

**Paul Barth**  
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