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Western Wake residents discuss coming changes
Concerns about future quality of life voiced at community forum

BY RACHEL A. WITHERS, CORRESPONDENT

Apex residents and those from nearby New Hill, Friendship and Bonsal came prepared with questions and concerns at the first Western Area Plan community meeting Dec. 6 at the Apex Community Center.

With changes on the horizon for western Wake residents — including the building of Interstate 540 and Apex's recent annexation of nearly 1,000 acres, town planners and residents in planning for the future.

LandDesign consultants Meg Nealon and Scott Laguex opened the meeting with an extensive presentation based on their research and understanding of the area. The study area featured seven categories: land-use growth, economic, transportation, community facilities, infrastructure, recreation, neighborhood and environment. The objective of the meeting was to emphasize the importance of feedback from the community.

The Western Area Plan advisory board had its first meeting on Nov. 5, said Dianne Khin, Apex's planning director. "We'd rather plan with them than without them," she said.

Quality growth, reduced congestion and preservation of rural areas were important issues to many in attendance. So was the desire to create a definitive transition from I-540 corridor development to rural land-use.

Infrastructure projects, such as the planned wastewater facility and power substation, were also concerns to several area residents.

"CPL started the process by taking two acres for their needs followed by Cary coming in for sewage lines and taking another one and a half acres," said Bob Kelly, who owns 41 acres on Olive Farm Road.

The land has been in Kelly's family since 1887 and is not just a home for Kelly and his wife Mimi, but a place for raising fish, tree farms, fields, horses and cows. Sewage spills are the main concern for Kelly.

"It's not a question [of] if there will be a sewage spill, but when?" said Kelly. "Who is going to pay to clean it up?"

While some residents raised questions about the plan, others were interested in being a part of new beginnings.

"I live in western Apex," said Ann Mullin. "I want to voice my opinion and see a picture of the future with bike trails and equestrian areas — a recreational way of life."

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Area resident Leslie Kennedy said, "I want to know whatever development takes place that it is acceptable."

After the presentation by LandDesign, attendees were encouraged to make suggestions. Those included: staying residential, no big-box retail in New Hill, maintaining agriculture and viable farming, maintaining the rural character of Old U.S. 1 and New Hill-Olive Chapel Road, building a new library and a sports complex, preserving and promoting historic neighborhoods, burying utilities and plans that address water lines.

Residents are encouraged to attend the next community meeting scheduled for Jan. 9 and 10 at the Apex Town Hall in the third floor conference room. The town plans to conclude its planning process in April.

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