



County board reviews transfer site complaint:

Rogers Road complaint to EPA alleges discrimination

The Carrboro Citizen Newspaper – Carrboro, NC - January 24, 2008

Staff Writer - By Susan Dickson

Orange County and the Board of County Commissioners are reviewing an administrative complaint against the county and others filed with the Environmental Protection Agency last summer.

According to a letter from the EPA to the county dated January 8, the agency received an administrative complaint in October “alleging that the Orange County, North Carolina Board of County Commissioners has violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ... and EPA’s nondiscrimination regulations.”

The complaint, filed by Rev. Robert Campbell on behalf of members of the Rogers Road community, states that the agencies and municipalities listed in the complaint “have a record of historical and ongoing discrimination” against the Rogers Road community.

According to the complaint, the earliest discrimination occurred in 1972, the year the county landfill was established on Eubanks Road, with the most recent discrimination ongoing.

The commissioners voted in November to reopen the search for a waste transfer station site, citing social justice reasons and outcry from the community. Commissioners had voted in March to locate the transfer station on Eubanks Road, near the site of the county’s 35-year-old landfill, which is expected to reach capacity in 2011.

The complaint states that the “residents of the predominantly African-American and low-income ... communities have made repeated requests and petitions before” to the towns of Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough, as well as the county, “to seek solutions to ... the disproportionate and adverse impact of the siting and operation of the Orange County, NC landfill on the complainants,” and the “disproportionate and adverse impact of the current plans to approve a permit for and siting of a regional solid waste transfer station on the complainants without the meaningful public participation, input or compensation of the complainants,” and the “[c]omplainants concerns about the public health risks and health related quality of life effects.”

The complaint also cites possible groundwater contamination, a lack of basic amenities in the complainants’ communities and the siting of the transfer station.

Board Chair Barry Jacobs said the board had referred the complaint to the county attorney, and would not comment on the matter.

County attorney Geoff Gledhill could not be reached for comment.

The complaint lists several agencies, departments and municipalities that committed the discrimination, including: Orange County, the Board of County Commissioners, Orange County Solid Waste Management, Orange County Environmental Health Services, the Town of Chapel Hill, the Town of Carrboro, the Town of Hillsborough, Orange Water and Sewer Authority, the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, the North Carolina Division of Waste Management and the North Carolina Division of Water Quality.

The county has now officially started the new search and has contracted with a private firm to do so. Members of the Rogers Road community have asked the board to officially remove the Eubanks Road site from consideration, but the county has not yet taken such an action.

Mayor Mark Chilton said the town of Carrboro had not yet reviewed the complaint and would not comment on it. (<http://www.carrborocitizen.com/main/archives/>)