

September 14, 2009

Commissioner Valerie Foushee
Mayor Mark Chilton
Mayor Kevin Foy

Dear Commissioner Foushee, Mayor Foy, and Mayor Chilton:

Approximately six months ago, at the March 26, 2009 Assembly of Governments' meeting, the county, Carrboro and Chapel Hill agreed to establish a work group to develop a funding and phasing plan for the provision of water and sewer services for the Rogers-Eubanks Road community. This work group was to have one member and one alternate from each of the governments, and one community member, and all parties agreed to make their respective appointments within the month.

To our knowledge, as of this date, no government has taken any action to establish this work group. If one option for this work group to consider is to pursue grant funds, we have wasted invaluable time. The Rogers-Eubanks Road community, and the Orange County community, can no longer afford to delay the implementation of an equitable and comprehensive solution, which will bring benefits into the Rogers-Eubanks Road community as compensation for the 37 years the solid waste landfill and facilities have impacted this community. Promises for the basic amenities have been made over the last 37 years. Now is the time for us, as residents of Orange County, to give the trust and the support this community needs.

We respectfully request that you appoint the representatives to the March 26 work group at your next meeting and charge your appointees with developing the plan for the provision of water and sewer service connections for the Rogers-Eubanks Road community within 60 days.

Furthermore, a troubling and faulty reasoning has entered public discussions about the provision of water and sewer service connections to the Rogers-Eubanks Road community. The residents of Orange County should know that the provision of basic water and sewer service connections for the Rogers-Eubanks Road community is a debt long overdue by virtue of bearing the costs of the landfill for the entire community—while enjoying none of the benefits—for 37 years and is the obligation of the towns and Orange County notwithstanding any issue related to the siting of a waste transfer station. For the local governments to "offer" Rogers-Eubanks Road community residents these basic amenities as a quid pro quo for siting another environmental hazard in the community is to ignore the history of the inequitable treatment of the community and the promises made over and over again. Further, the isolation of the costs issue in the waste transfer station siting discussions is a pretext for further burdening a minority community. Because of the governments' decision to cite the landfill here in 1972, the community and surrounding area has been systematically underdeveloped, thereby rendering land cheaper, making government uses among the only viable options, and effectively setting the area up so that the only viable developments are additional negative uses with similarly adverse impacts. That is the essence of environmental injustice.

Sincerely,
Minister Robert L. Campbell, President of the Rogers-Eubanks Neighborhood Association (RENA) and
Co-Chair of the Coalition to End Environmental Racism (CEER)