

Meeting Notes

**NC Highway 57 Speedway
Small Area Plan
7:00 p.m. August 3, 2006
Caldwell Community Center**

Those in attendance: Mac Miller, Jackie Heron, Bruce Peters, Kathy Peters, Steve Yuhasz, Donna Chandler, Darrel Chandler, Mike Davis, James Walker, Anita Badrock, Aaron Cain, Debra Logner, Karen Barrows, Bill Barrows, Ollie Spain, Earl McKee, Sandra McKee, Andy Gates, Vickie McKee; Barry Jacobs of the BOCC; and Planning Department staff, Craig Benedict, Diane Reid, Tom Konsler, Michael Harvey, and Glenn Bowles.

After those in attendance introduced themselves, Tom Konsler of the Orange County Environmental Health talked to the group about Orange County wells. A typical well in the County ranges from 100 to 300 feet deep. There are many old hand-dug and bored wells still in operation. County staff, through the State laboratory, performs many tests for private well owners. The tests include coliform test, which is an indicator of re-occurring water quality problems and tests for inorganic constituents.

County groundwater commonly contains high iron levels, which results in a reddish color. Half of the wells tested exceed the iron standards for drinking water, but this is not a health risk. There are treatment methods for high iron levels. Manganese is another commonly found in water in high levels. It will discolor any plumbing fixture, but the high levels are not a health risk.

Treatment methods to help remedy well water quality include repair of the well casing, which encloses the pump mechanism or installing a liner to seal off the sources of the bad water.

Much of the County has low pH or acid water. The acid well water will cause a blue-green stain on plumbing fixtures. Low pH can also leach out lead from the soldered pipe joints. Elevated arsenic levels are also common in County well water.

County Health Department staff is dealing with a protocol to investigate community well water problems, like what has been discussed in these neighborhood meetings. A similar community water investigation was conducted in the Mill Creek area this year. County staff does have water testing request forms.

Several questions were posed to Mr. Konsler. His answers follow. *Can quarry blasting vibrations affect a well or make a change in the water table? We have experienced red water since the quarry has been in operation?* It is not our of question to believe that vibrations have affected the well casing, age and other well construction factors may contribute to the particular situation. Durham County residents have had real well problems, too.

Why do iron and manganese level problems occur over time? Poor quality well water filters down through rock fractures to the levels the well is pumping from and water quality deteriorates over time as more bad water mixes with the good. A lot of factors can lead to water contamination. The County does have a down hole casing camera that can identify well repair needs and can check out well base and casings. The County now requires 63 feet between the well base and casing. This seems to be addressing some water quality issues.

Has development affected well water? From our review of well logs, water table levels seem to be fairly sustainable, even with more wells tapping into the same groundwater. Drought does not seem to affect quantity, except for the old, shallow, hand-dug and bored wells. Orange County does have groundwater quality issues.

There is an active application for a new rock quarry in Chatham County. The County has the ability to address issues in 2008 to acknowledge and request the State to recognize the local water quality issues. We should involve the Durham County Board of Commissioners to see what can be done in this regard. The Orange County Sheriff has been asked to be in the study area to investigate truck traffic levels and speeding. Quarry trucks are traveling too fast through the area and Speedway race nights are a disaster.

The group then refocused itself to address what the study area might look like. Property values have plummeted as a result of the Speedway and the go-cart track re-opening. The study area should be expanded to include more people and an impact area should also be included. Traffic is a problem as far south as New Sharon Church Road and Guess Road.

The focus of the project should be a study area with an impact area. The point here is what we are coming up with in the study should be where are the impact. The quarry traffic impact is very bad in Orange County.

Finally, the group revisited the issue statements, opportunities and constraints, and vision statements. The term "motocross" was defined to mean off-road motorcycle racing. It was suggested that at future Task Force meetings, the property owners of the Speedway, go-cart track, and quarry make presentations to the group on what they envision for their property and local citizens can ask questions.

One resident's vision for the area is that he moved to the area 23 years ago to live in a rural community for the peace and quiet. The present noise and pollution aggravates him and a lot of the proposed visions focus on bringing in more uses that will generate more negative impacts. Keep the area rural!

Michael Harvey made a presentation regarding the non-conforming uses in the study area, what the non-conforming status means to the property owners and the County's ability to enforce its zoning standards on the activities. The County has little leverage to force the present non-conforming uses into conformance. However, should they wish to expand their businesses, Orange County will work with them to conform to its land development ordinances regarding buffering, signage, parking, traffic access, noise, setbacks, lighting and off-site impacts.

Craig Benedict concluded the meeting with a summary of how these neighborhood meetings may influence future Task Force recommendations to amend first the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan, which in turn may lead to additions of new zoning districts in the areas, which in turn would set standards for possible future expansions of existing non-conforming uses as legal, conforming uses.