

## Citizens successful in overturning plans for Woodfin plant

By Ashley Horne  
Copy Editor

Community efforts against Progress Energy's proposed oil-burning power plant for Woodfin convinced the Woodfin zoning board to unanimously deny Progress Energy's conditional-use permit application at a public hearing on April 2.

"The decision is economically and environmentally beneficial to this community because we will be able to avoid major costs that will increase as a result from respiratory illness increases," said Dee Eggers, UNC Asheville associate professor of environmental studies. "It's economically a tremendous win for the community, and environmentally, it's a responsible decision that benefits the community."

In early December, Progress Energy released plans to build an oil-burning power plant in Woodfin on a former Buncombe County landfill site, which angered many Woodfin area residents.

Environmentalists, local developers and community activists organized opposition to the power plant and presented statistics and expert testimony at the public hearing. With both sides represented, the zoning board voted 7-0 against Progress Energy keeping the power plant's construction in Woodfin, according to Jason Young, Woodfin town manager.

To build the power plant in Woodfin, Progress Energy applied for a conditional-use permit to the seven-member zoning board. The board made their decision after being presented with facts and testimonies from local doctors and economists about the impact the power plant would have on the environment and the economy.

"This is just another case of people discovering that what's good for the environment is also good for the economy," Eggers said.

The board had to vote if Progress Energy's use for the land passed their seven-condition test and was beneficial to Woodfin. The board unanimously voted no, saying the power plant had a negative impact on the health, safety and welfare of the people of Woodfin, failing the first condition.

The Western North Carolina Alliance and the Canary Coalition, two local environmental organizations, presented facts on the harmful effects of the oil-burning plant's emissions to the community's respiratory health and current air quality.

Since December, groups like the WNC Alliance and the Canary Coalition organized and informed Woodfin area residents on the many concerns of the proposed plant through local information meetings, going door-to-door and



Woodfin resident Linda Larsen and her grandson stand beside the banner Larsen and her husband Ron displayed on their property to inform locals about the harms of the proposed oil-burning powerplant. After months of protesting and meetings, citizens managed to overturn the town's original decision to allow Progress Energy to build a powerplant. Earlier in February, police arrested two environmental activists for climbing a billboard, posting a banner in the earliest attempts at protesting the plans and standing up there in the 30-degree weather.

by displaying banners and signs along Weaverville Highway, according to Linda Larsen, Woodfin resident and a WNC Alliance community organizer.

Alongside the environmental testimonies, economists and developers alleged the power plant would diminish area property values and diminish the development of the town, thus failing another of the board's conditions, according to John Metcalf, director of business development for Reynolds

Mountain.

"We know specifically that we lost more than \$1 million in sales and that specifically a reservation for a town home was canceled as a direct result of the power plant," Metcalf said. "This was a doctor who was educated on the issues and it was certainly for health reasons that he decided not to hold his reservation."

Progress Energy previously leased the old county landfill site from the Buncombe County Board

of Commissioners to build the power plant on. Metcalf said this land could be developed into better uses for the Woodfin community, like green spaces and parks.

"We are currently involved with the Town of Woodfin and the remediation of a 156 acre former Asheville City landfill site. We feel the site they wanted to put the power plant on has great potential for other uses," Metcalf said. "One of the advantages of doing development on this purpose property,

like the landfill sites, is that at the end of the day, while you can build a sound, residential community you are also obligated to keep a great amount of space open."

While the arguments against the plant were separated as environmental and economic, the two depended upon one another to defeat the power plant, according to Larsen.

"We came to the table for different reasons but at the end of the day, it was the same cause."

SEE WOODFIN PAGE 1

## Cold Case

was not making money," Laughon said.

Shipman and Glass ran a small drug dealing business out of the back of their music shop in Hendersonville, but neither was involved with hard drugs, nor did Shumate participate in the operation, according to Miller.

"We knew she had a prescription pain pill problem, so we initially thought maybe drugs were involved," Laughon said. "But apparently, she hated illegal drugs to the point where she phoned police about drug dealing in her neighborhood, so we ruled out that this was a drug transaction gone bad."

The class investigates assumptions about the suspects made by multiple eyewitnesses who saw the victims riding in a car with an unknown driver, according to Laughon.

"The stereotyping really shapes this case," Laughon said. "They made assumptions about people just because they were black. A

black guy in Hendersonville would have stuck out like a sore thumb."

The culture of the late-'60s is what Laughon considers fascinating, she said.

"It's 1966, and two gay guys in their forties and this 60-year-old straight woman are murdered," Laughon said. "She's been a mystery."

Shumate was a very private person, somewhat of a recluse. It is possible that she may have spent time in a mental institution for depression and paranoia. Authorities ruled out mob connections as a cause of the homicide or Shumate's paranoia, according to Miller.

The students work with Jennie Jones Giles, a reporter from the *Hendersonville Times-News* and UNC Asheville alumna, according to Laughon.

Giles started working on the case January last year, and the *Times-News* published it in July. Giles said the tremendous amount of research required quickly con-

sumed her days.

"I'm just one individual, and this case is so old and so cold, and I'm thrilled these students are helping me with that research," Giles said. "They're helping us out a lot."

The students in the class do a great deal of research, according to Laughon.

While they studied a death penalty case that Laughon does a lot of work on at the beginning of the semester, they devoted the rest of the semester to this cold case, she said.

"We've made a list of documents to obtain and people to speak to," Miller said.

Laughon said her students do a lot of the legwork and much of the research for this particularly unusual class. Laughon said she believes the case will continue to drag along for quite some time.

"With this case, you just kind of have to, I'm afraid, keep looking into it," she said. "It's tedious. It's not always as fun as it looks."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Commission

said. "They can't just use it for their own organization, and it must be here on campus."

Students start these clubs for a variety of reasons, and anyone is free to start a new one if they do not find something to suit their tastes, according to Little.

"Basically, there are no unacceptable organizations. If it is unlawfully discriminating against anyone on campus obviously we can't have it, but if it is like an intramural sport or something students will be interested in, more than likely it will be able to be an organization on campus," she said.

Chakales said starting an organization is simple and can involve just a few students.

"They just need to get two or

three students involved, a full-time staff or full-time faculty member as their adviser, provide a constitution or statement of purpose and then they are approved by the Student Government Association," she said.

Clubs and organizations appeal to students because it is a chance to do something for fellow students, according to Chakales.

"It is the excitement of organizing something for a peer. The students know what other students want to see and hear, and there are some exciting programs that people want to promote," she said.

Groups give students more power and say in the school, according to Kee Hwan Jang, pres-

ident of the group Asian Students in Asheville.

"Everybody has different interests, and as a group, we can do things we can't do alone," he said.

Little said organizations are important because they get students more involved in the campus.

"This campus is usually known as a 'suitcase campus.' Everybody leaves every weekend. What we are trying to do is get students to stay on campus. The only way we can do that is by having student organizations, promote their organizations and get interest out there, especially on weekends," she said. "It is really about students promoting academic and campus life."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

UNC ASHEVILLE OFFICE OF CULTURAL & SPECIAL EVENTS PRESENTS

## LOS ANGELES GUITAR QUARTET



WITH LUCIANA SOUZA

Fri, April 13, 2007 • 8 pm  
UNC Asheville Lipinsky Auditorium

\$6 • UNC Asheville and all area students with ID  
\$15 • UNC Asheville faculty/staff/NCCCR/alumni  
\$24 • General public

Tickets: 828.232.5000 • Highsmith Union Box Office  
Information: 828.251.6227 • www.unca.edu/culturalarts

Grammy Award-winning LAGQ and special guest Luciana Souza, Brazilian jazz singer, bandleader, composer and musician

"One of the finest guitar quartets in the world... If you haven't heard a... guitar quartet before, this one won't just show you what you've been missing—they'll blow you away." — *Guitar Player*

Media Sponsor: WQXS PUBLIC RADIO

**Correction:** In Issue 8 of *The Blue Banner*, an article on the controversy surrounding Depauw's Delta Zeta sorority, "Sororities under fire for evictions allegedly based on appearance," attributed the Delta chapter of Delta Zeta at Depauw as the oldest active chapter.

In fact, it is the fourth chapter founded and the second oldest active chapter. The oldest chapter of Delta Zeta is at Miami U in Ohio.