

OP-ED

Do you want to live next to a dump?

By Robert G. Blake
Wm. S. Long Prof. of English

How would you like to have a hazardous waste treatment facility located less than three miles from Fonville Fountain? One that is designed to treat 90 million tons of dangerous contaminants per year?

Until recently, such a question might have been taken as the beginning of a sick joke. But not now. Last January the N.C. Hazardous Waste Treatment Commission, whose task it is to select a suitable location for the facility, reduced the number of potential sites from more than 500 to 139. Since the the commission has systematically eliminated possible sites after applying various criteria, so that as of this writing approximately only dozen sites remain on the list.

Incredibly, Gibsonville is one of them.

On the evening of Sept. 8 in a steamy Elon College gym, more than 2,000 people attended a public hearing on locating the hazardous waste treatment facility on some 50 acres of land adjoining the Gibsonville Cemetery --no irony intended. Politicians, civic leaders, and medical doctors gave many reasons why the facility should not be located there. Rev. Clyde Christmas,

director of Twin Lakes Center, was especially effective in describing the logistical nightmare of evacuating hundreds of elderly persons in the event of a catastrophic accident.

Others spoke of the narrow, winding, dangerous access roads from Interstate 85 to the proposed site, roads that are unsafe for the school buses that have to use them and that are definitely not suited for the half dozen or more tankers that would be bringing in hazardous substances every day. Still others deplored the drop in property values that would take place in precisely that part of the county that is the focus of future growth. The list of valid objections goes on and has been widely reported in the press.

Suprisingly, nowhere have I seen any concern expressed about the effects that a hazardous waste treatment plant in Gibsonville would have on Elon College, the institution. I should have expected the college to mount a vigorous public campaign opposing the Gibsonville site. Elon College has nothing to gain and much to lose from such a facility.

Imagine the horrendous difficulties of evacuating the thousands of people at Elon College if a serious accident should occur. A hazardous waste treatment plant

a few miles from the college would destroy forever the almost pastoral ambiance which this college enjoys and which has played no small role in its growth over the past decade.

Even if the plant were totally safe (which of course it could never be) and caused no air or water pollution, there would still be the knowledge that it was there. The psychological pollution in my opinion in my opinion would devalue our image, hurt our future enrollment and have a negative impact on every person who attends or works for Elon College.

Elon College is on the move. Just witness the beautiful new Fine Arts Center. A hazardous waste treatment facility in Gibsonville would stop that movement dead in its tracks.

I do not believe the facility will end up in Gibsonville. But I do not feel good about that assumption. I would never have thought that Gibsonville would still be on a list of about a dozen sites out of the initial 500. The North Carolina Hazardous Waste Treatment Commission is due to make a final selection on October 1. I will not rest until some other, more suitable, site is chosen.

See Blake, page 6

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S.G.A. Elections Sept. 22-24

(Last day to file for elections — Friday, Sept. 18 at 3:00 p.m.)

Positions Open

Senior Class: Treasurer

Sophomore Class: Treasurer

Junior Class: Treasurer

Freshman Class: President
Vice-President
Treasurer

Senate Seats

First Precinct: Up to Eight Positions

Second Precinct: Up to Eight Positions

Third Precinct: Up to Eight Positions

HOMECOMING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wed, Sept. 16, 7:00p.m.

Senate Room — 2nd Floor Long Student Center

All Students Invited to Participate

HOMECOMING QUEEN NOMINATIONS

Due Friday, Sept. 25, in the S.G.A. Office—Long 204

Organizations and Residence Halls must submit black and white photo of candidate.

Have Any Questions?

Stop by the S.G.A. Office or call at Ext. 2333