

# Waste transfer siting delayed Deaths prompt traffic concern

May be far from a final decision

BY EVAN ROSE  
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

As the search for a suitable site for Orange County's new waste transfer station enters its second year, it's still not clear where, or when, commissioners will make a final decision.

They announced in November that they would not make their next move until Dec. 11, when Chairman Barry Jacobs said the board could make a selection or restart the search process from scratch.

The commissioners will have to decide soon or risk running out of landfill space before the transfer station is operational.

And with three new commissioners taking their seats on Dec. 1, the county could likely be heading for the latter.

"If that's an option they're considering I can't see any end to it," said Nelo Jones, co-chairwoman of the Rogers-Eubanks Coalition to End Environmental Racism.

The coalition was successful in advocating against the Rogers-Eubanks neighborhood being named a top site for the new transfer station.

"No matter which area they consider, people are always going to be

*"No matter which area they consider, people are always going to be concerned."*

NEOLA JONES, ROGERS-EUBANKS COALITION TO END ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM  
concerned."

The siting process has been a long journey, especially for residents of the Rogers-Eubanks community.

Commissioners originally decided in March of 2007 to build the transfer station there.

But residents, who have been neighbors to the county landfill since 1972, protested the choice and forced the county to reopen a formal search for a site more than a year ago.

The Rogers-Eubanks site was removed from consideration in October.

Now three sites remain on the short list, all on a mile-long stretch of N.C. 54 just west of Orange Grove Road.

The pervasive sentiment is that no one wants to live next to a transfer station, which will serve as a daily collection point for all the county's garbage before it is shipped to an out-of-county landfill.



DTH FILE PHOTO

The landfill near the Rogers Road community is projected to be full by 2010. Commissioners still could restart the siting process from scratch.

Since the search focused in on the three sites in White Cross, residents of the area have also expressed their own concern that the county's 80,000 tons of trash produced annually will all funnel through a building in their neighborhood.

"The communities around those areas are up in arms," Jones said.

Residents have asked commis-

sioners to investigate alternative options to current plans, including waste to energy technology and smaller plot size.

Commissioners have stressed in response that the search process has been thorough and transparent.

"We tried to make it as objective as possible," Jacobs said.

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

BY KRISTEN CRESANTE  
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

In light of several pedestrian deaths this year, Chapel Hill Transit is considering making changes to increase safety.

Valerie Hughes, a radiology imaging specialist for UNC Health Care, died from injuries after being struck by a Chapel Hill Transit bus Oct. 27 in a crosswalk at the corner of South Columbia Street and Manning Drive.

The intersection where the incident occurred signals traffic to turn onto Columbia while simultaneously indicating for pedestrians to cross. It is often unclear that vehicles are legally required to yield to people crossing the street.

The driver of the bus involved, James Willie Orr, was terminated when the town completed its investigation. Orr, who worked at Chapel Hill Transit for eight years, was charged with a misdemeanor count of death by vehicle for not yielding to a pedestrian at the crosswalk.

Orr, 65, had been involved in 10 other traffic incidents since 2001, eight of which occurred while driving a Chapel Hill Transit bus.

Neither Orr nor Chapel Hill officials would comment on the prior accidents, and it is unclear why he was not fired.

In May, Scottish exchange student Lisa Carolyn Moran died from injuries suffered after being hit by a bus on Manning Drive while jogging outside of a crosswalk.

Shortly after Moran's death, Barbara Boone Sims, a Chapel Hill homeless woman was struck and killed by a vehicle at the corner of Weaver Dairy Road and Perkins Drive.


Current safety measures employed by Chapel Hill Transit include three weeks of training for new drivers in which they learn about defensive driving and other safety methods. Drivers then attend monthly training sessions to discuss safety topics.

Transit Director Steve Spade said the department plans to try to take more measures to prevent these types of incidents from occurring.

Spade said the department hopes to learn from these negative experiences to see improvements.

"I think these are the kind of things you look at and say, 'This is a really tragic incident. Are there things we could do to make sure these kinds of things don't happen again?'" Spade said.

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).



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