

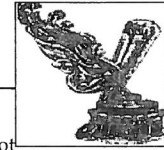
OPINION & POLITICS

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Post-Register

Thursday, March 5, 2015

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Neighbor questions Court decision
To the Editor:

My wife and I live and own property within one half mile of the land on which the Green Group is proposing to permit and operate a solid waste landfill. On Feb. 23, I attended the Commissioner's Court meeting to speak against the approval of a resolution opposing the Green Group's TCEQ application. Although I signed up to speak, they ended public comment before my name came up. I was then left to watch as the Commissioners approved the resolution and effectively threw all of the County's eggs into the weakest of possible baskets.

It is my understanding that the Green Group is not required by law to offer an agreement to the County. The only incentive for the group to offer an agreement is the commitment on the part of the County to not oppose their application. Since the County has now taken this official action, I would see no reason for the agreement to be offered in the future, especially as it becomes increasingly obvious that the permit will be issued.

I have a business that facilitates the issuance of development permits in Central Texas. Although I have never been involved in the permitting for a solid waste landfill, I have been involved in the

processing of many other permits through TCEQ. The decisions on these permits are technical rather than discretionary. There are almost always engineering solutions to technical issues. Based on my experience, I believe there is a very low chance that this application will not be approved, even if an organized opposition is in place.

The current agreement offers substantial future revenue to the County and Cities and commits the landfill operator to higher performance standards. This is just the first draft. The terms of the agreement could have been improved and there are many other issues that can and should be addressed in the agreement.

I'm asking that the Commissioner's Court reconsider the opposition resolution with the goal to accomplish the following:

Amend the effective date to have the resolution become in effect only at a specified future date.

Appoint a committee of 5 to 10 of the most qualified folks that can be found in Caldwell County.

Task this Committee with negotiating the terms of the Host Agreement and presenting a report regarding the improved agreement back to the Commissioner's Court within one month.

If the Court determines that

progress is not being made and that the best interests of the County are not being served, allow the opposition resolution to become effective on the specified date.

If the Court determines that progress is being made and that the best interest of the County are being served, allow the Committee to continue its work and come back to the Court with a recommended agreement for consideration.

This process will at least allow us all to know that our Commissioners acted in our interest and only after careful consideration of all options.

Sincerely,
Ed Theriot
Lockhart

Court praised for 'brave' stand
To the Editor:

Caldwell County Commissioners named Green Group Holdings' threats to sue the county and GGH's disempowering host agreement as reasons they passed a resolution opposing the controversial "130 Environmental Park" landfill. The commissioners cited conversations with worried citizens, a year of discussions with the Georgia-based GGH execu-

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tives and their own research as the reasons convincing them to pass the resolution on Feb. 23. It passed with only one dissent from Judge Schawe.

Placing a 175-foot landfill near Texas' second-largest aquifer worried Commissioner Roland. He stated that the potential pollution

from the landfill would last "from now to now on." Equally troubling was GGH's host agreement. Commissioner Madrigal compared the host agreement to someone giving you "a dollar and you give him the keys to your house? Come on!"

Commissioner Roland

observed that "many businesses come to town and we don't have to sign a host agreement with them." Some Caldwell residents have dubbed it a "hostage agreement" because the county would not be able to legally defend its citizens should the landfill pollute air, surface water or

aquifer.

"We'd have to give up all of our rights and that's not right," said Commissioner Moses referring to the county's potential losses should the host agreement be accepted.

"Twice we have been threatened... go our way or we will sue you," said Commissioner Madrigal

quoting GGH's lawyer Brent Ryan. The threats from GGH seem to have backfired again; now Caldwell County has passed both the December 2013 landfill ordinance and also this "Resolution in Opposition to the Application by 130 Environmental Park for Municipal Solid Waste

Landfill".

If you would like more information about this contact Chairman of EPICC, James H. Abshier at email: jhabshier@yahoo.com or Lou MacNaughton at email: bleuloulou@gmail.com
Lou MacNaughton
EPICC