

Memorandum

To: Board of Orange County Commissioners

From: Solid Waste Advisory Board
Jan F. Sassaman, PhD, Chair

Subject: **Summary SWAB Discussion Regarding Millhouse Road Proposed WT Site**
June 3, 2009 SWAB Meeting

Date: June 5, 2009

At its June 3, 2009 meeting, the SWAB devoted a significant portion of two hours to receiving and discussing Olver, Inc.'s draft analysis of the Millhouse Road site with respect to the county site-selection ranking system, and with respect to a comparison of its merits compared to other sites, particularly the Howell Site. In addition to discussing the Olver presentation, SWAB members (two of whom live in the Roger's Road neighborhood) provided their own views.

The SWAB discussions focused on three areas of concern – operational and technical considerations, environmental issues, and that group of issues associated with the local residents in the immediate vicinity of the site and in the Roger's Road neighborhood.

With respect to the operational and technical considerations, the SWAB generally agreed that the Millhouse Road site was a superior site for a number of reasons. It is close to the county's projected population centroid, as well as to major highways and a railroad right-of-way. It is close to current ongoing solid waste operations, thus providing for operational efficiencies and is also close to where both Chapel Hill and County solid waste operations trucks park, thus reducing the number of truck round trips. It is close to existing utilities at the Chapel Hill Operations Center, and utility services could presumably be provided as extensions of those facilities. Some of the money saved by the governments on the extra hauling to Millhouse over the Howell Site could be directed to neighborhood mitigation. Overall, with respect to operational and technical considerations, it just makes sense.

While there are several potential environmental issues that may need to be resolved, including the as yet unknown possible extent of wetland areas, the SWAB focused on the environmental pluses of the Millhouse Road site. These include a significantly lower carbon footprint associated with a location close to traffic corridors and the waste centroid, resulting in fewer miles traveled. There are a number of environmental aspects of the Millhouse Road site that would need to be considered further, including a more detailed wetlands analysis, endangered species analysis, specific traffic analyses that include new development and facilities along Eubanks Road, and permitting needs.

The SWAB discussed the issues associated with people at length and collectively expressed a concern that people along Millhouse Road adjacent to the proposed site could be adversely impacted. It was noted that the Millhouse Road site is located in an area that is considered by residents to be a part of the historic Roger's Road community. In addition, it was noted that the Emerson-Waldorf School is located nearby on Millhouse Road and there are properties backing

up to the railroad right-of-way along the western boundary of the site. The SWAB discussed a number of issues, including the potential generation of noise as trucks shifted gears entering the facility and warning beeping as equipment backed up, and whether or not this noise would be attenuated by the railroad right-of-way berm and if it would indeed be greater than that generated by traffic on I-40. Possible realignment of the access road indicated on the draft siting plan to move it further away from the west site boundary was discussed. It was noted that no matter where the transfer station was sited, the need to site near the waste generation centroid means that it would have to be sited close to people, but that the Roger's Road area has been the locus of waste disposal for a long time. Finally, the SWAB stressed the importance that governing officials commit to a specific plan of mitigation for the local community should the transfer station be sited at the Millhouse Road site, or any other site.

The Solid Waste Advisory Board hopes that this review is useful to you in your deliberations. We look forward to hearing your response and are ready to continue to assist the BOCC and Solid Waste staff.