

**MINUTES**  
**WATER SEWER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, October 4, 2007**  
**7:00 PM Town Hall Barn**

**Members Present:** Marshall Gray, Tom O'Connor, Joe Phelps, Cheryl Thomas and James Watts

**Members Absent:** Dan Barker and Paul Kimple

**Elected Officials:** Mike Gering

**Staff:** Will Baker, Greg Siler and Jeff Mahagan

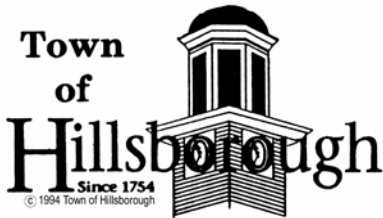
**Visitor(s):** Patriacia Plunkett (Wild Wood resident)

**ITEM #1** Vice-Chair Mr. Phelps called meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**ITEM #2** Greg Siler attended to give background information on the current deposit policy. This item, number 9, was moved on the agenda and renumber 4. Green Building Codes was renumbered 5, the Engineering Status Report was renumbered 6, the Update on Town Board Activities was renumbered 7, the WWTP study was renumbered 8 and the Town Board meeting assignments was renumbered 9.

A Wild Wood resident, Patricia Plunkett (2615 Wade Hampton), attended to discuss an odor issue in her neighborhood. She has lived in the subdivision for 3 years. There was standing water on the lot and after speaking with the Town Engineer, a French drainage system was installed and alleviated the problem. Unfortunately the sewer smell persisted. Ms. Plunkett has maintain communication with Kenny during her the three years and she feels like the Town has not been responsive enough about the problem. They send people to check on the odor in the afternoon, when the odor is not present. Ms. Plunkett said the odor occurs during the evening hours. A vent was installed at a manhole near her house and she is of the opinion that this vent is making the problem worse.

Mr. Baker is well aware of the issue and explained that the manhole in question is where two different pump stations dump into the gravity collection system. The line then goes right through Ms. Plunkett's lot. The vent is being removed next week, and chemical is now being fed into the line for the last two days. The chemical will start the treatment process before it reaches the plant and therefore decrease the odor. The elevations of the roof lines in the neighborhood is also being looked at, so when the wind shifts the sewer odor from houses at a lower elevation are blown in the direction of Ms. Plunkett's house. Smoke testing was conducted in the area last month and many cracked pipes were discovered and repaired. A Town Employee is going to spend the evening in the subdivision when the smell is reported to be occurring. Next month, another smoke test will be conducted at the same time of day, without forcing it, to enable us to not only smell the odor, but also see it.



Ms. Plunkett had pictures of the manhole with the vent. She is frustrated that this odor has persisted for so long and is only interested in results. Mr. Baker assured her that the Town is serious about the issue and doing all they can. Mr. Phelps suggested that Ms. Plunkett give the new chemical and efforts another month and if the odor has not eased then she should contact the Town and request to be added to the agenda.

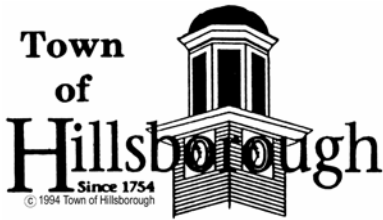
**ITEM #3 MOTION:** A **motion** was made by Mr. Watts and seconded by Ms. Thomas to accept the August meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM #4** Greg Siler provided background information on the Town's current deposit policy after a complaint was received on holding the deposit until the account is closed and not returning any interest on the deposit to the customer. Greg conducted a survey of surrounding utilities and their deposit policies. He distributed a sheet with his findings and expressed that some of them had the same policy as we did and some returned a portion of the deposit after a couple of years consistent payment. A new deposit policy was put in place after July 2007 that has a variable deposit rate based on the customer's credit rating (In-Town \$25 to \$175, Out-of-Town \$50 to \$225). Mr. Gering asked if the customer's credit rating is ever reevaluated after consistent payment and have their status reclassified. Mr. Siler stated that we do not do this, but a customer may request it and have their status reevaluated, with the results being possible partial reimbursement of their deposit.

The committee asked if the credit rating system was publishable and be able to be distributed to our customers upon request. To ensure that everyone is being treated equitably, the committee is of the opinion that the policy should be able to be distributed. Mr. Siler stated that currently it is not because it is based upon a wide variety of factors. The rating system is Green for good, Yellow for moderate and Red for bad. It is currently an in house policy and not incorporated into the Code.

**ITEM #5** The Planning Director, Margaret Hauth, attended to answer questions concerning the incorporation of Green Building Codes into the Planning Review Process. She started off by making two points:

1. Both planning staff at the Town and the County are currently viewing similar policies and are excited about the concept.
2. The Town of Hillsborough has no authority of enforcement over almost all Green Building Standards. The authority lies with County Inspections. We would need to require either a certification from the builder once a house is completed or have Orange County Inspections verify it for us to ensure that a particular house met a particular set of standards. However there are companies available that will certify homes for a nominal fee of \$120 to \$250, which comes a couple of months after the CO is issued. Therefore, if a subdivision is built in phases, a certain percentage of



structures in Phase I would have to satisfy the green building standards before the developer could move forward with Phase II.

Some background information on the topic for the new committee members was given as to reasons behind the need to push this topic in our committee. The committee feels that this is an avenue of making the best use of current resources, including water and sewer capacity. Planning should make sure all future projects are making the best use of all resources available and possibly not spend time and resources on projects that are wasteful. Since LEEDS certification does not necessarily include water usage, it was suggested that the committee make sure that water is included in the certification process.

Such policies are being implemented in Ashville and doing very well. Chapel Hill is currently writing their policies of encouraging more energy efficient structure building. Cities and States out west are also implementing such policies where water is more of an issue and solar power is more accessible. The Town Manager, Eric Peterson, has done extensive research on the topic and is willing to share all the information if the committee is interested. Margaret did point out that the fast track concept of moving applications forward that implemented Green Building Standards would not see much of an advantage, but the Planning Department could possibly think of other perks.

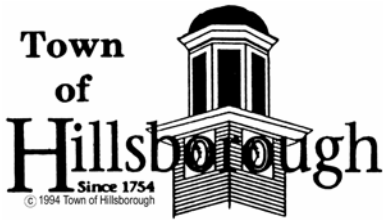
The Draft Statement is as follows:

*The committee is looking into incorporating Green Building Codes into the Review process. They see it as a way of finding near zero-cost ways to encourage green building as an easy, cost-effective way to influence future water capacity usage during Hillsborough's growth. In effect, they hope to stretch current water supplies by making the Town's capacity more effective. By stating that green plans get a priority or preference in the planning/approval process we can encourage more people to build green and postpone our immediate need for future water sources and thus keep our water rates lower for a longer period.*

#### **ITEM #6**

The October Engineering Status Report included briefing on the following by Mr. Baker:

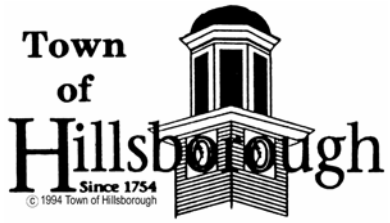
- WWTP in compliance with sludge management going well.
- No sewer spills this month.
- The reservoir is currently 4 feet down and Lake Orange has also dropped significantly.
- The scada system is being upgraded.



- TTHMs were elevated, but within compliance, which is normal this time of year.
- The flushing program is on hold until the drought is over.
- The annual water audit was released with a reduction of 3.23%, with 6 months of improved data recordings.
- We are continuing to loop lines as part of the miscellaneous water projects.
- No change in GIS progress.
- Phase I of Cates Creek Outfall is operational with Phase II in question at the moment.
- Habitat outfall on Tuliptree is complete and operational.
- The lakeshore outfall project is out for bid with the bid opening being on Nov 1.
- Elizabeth Brady pump station upgrade study will begin once lakeshore is completed.

- ITEM #7** Town Board Update  
September 10<sup>th</sup> (Meeting) – the re-evaluation of the WWTP study was presented with a savings of \$10 million.  
September 24<sup>th</sup> (Workshop) – the primary topic was the Boone-Collins study with little mention of utilities.
- ITEM #8** The WWTP ORC, Jeff Mahagan, attended the meeting to give an overview of the study, the plant and answered any questions posed by the committee.
- ITEM #9** The new meeting calendar was presented with the two new members of the committee added to the schedule rotation. Responsibilities of attendance were explained to the new members. It was also explained where to find agendas on the Town website.
- ITEM #10** The blank agenda item was not needed during this meeting.
- ITEM #11** The following information was requested for staff to assemble:
- Investigate the legality of paying interest acquired for deposits.
  - The policy should be more specific in the code on how much it will be and how long the deposit will be held. It should be clear to the public with no room for confusion.
  - A copy of the Town’s current policy.
  - An audit of accounts that currently have deposits on them.
- ITEM #12** A **motion** was made by Ms. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Watts to adjourn the meeting  
**MOTION:** and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie E. Vance,  
Secretary