

Dear Board of Commissioners,

I am submitting written comments for the January 16, 2024 hearing to express my strong opposition to the proposed rezoning of the parcel at the corner of Seaforth Rd and N. Pea Ridge Rd. to a light industrial conditional district, that would permit the construction of a large regional water treatment facility (RWTF). I urge you to reject this request and require the Western Intake Partnership (WIP) to identify a property that is either already zoned appropriately or does not have existing adjacent and nearby residents/subdivisions.

As a homeowner and resident of Seaforth Landing, I have multiple concerns that focus on 1) the health and safety of nearby residents, 2) the disruption to peace and quiet of the area impacting our ability enjoy our property, 3) the environmental risks, and 4) the negative impact to home property value. After having read through all the materials, including the Five Findings Report and the WIP Environmental Impact Assessment, having sought additional clarification from the WIP on several areas that were lacking in the reports, and having met with the community outreach manager, I hope you will agree with my conclusion that the rationale and 'preferences' of the WIP to utilize this parcel, do not outweigh the negative consequences to nearby residents. I have outlined my specific concerns below.

- The parcel is too small and too close to homes and subdivisions for the number and size of the 34 structures proposed, ranging from 2,600 sq ft to 18,000+ sq ft with heights of 23 ft to 54 ft. The fact that these facilities will receive, store and utilize hazardous materials, including chemicals in the quantities of 6,000+ gallons and large quantities of fuel while producing light and noise pollution in a 24/7 operation should give the Board pause. Based on the preliminary site plan, most structures and RWTF roads abut to the 100-foot buffer. This includes the two 190-foot diameter water storage tanks along N Pea Ridge Rd. These two tanks will be larger than a football field. This industrial facility is inconsistent with the rural beauty of the residential and recreational nature of the area.
- While I appreciate that OWASA has owned this property for many years, it is inconceivable that they envisioned a facility of this scale and magnitude. It appears that the WIP is over-reaching in what is reasonable for the size and location of this parcel.
- A 24/7 operation that has the risk of operational noise, vibration, hazardous materials and light pollution impacting residents does not seem like a reasonable ask when options that don't impact residents are readily available in Chatham County and the 180 miles of the Jordan Lake shoreline.
- The chemical storage facility is located on the side of the parcel nearest to Seaforth Landing homes. The report indicates large quantities (over 6,000 gallons each) of 12 types of hazardous materials will be stored and offers no information on the risks to our health or safety if a chemical spill or fire were to take place. I have requested this information twice and been told it is forthcoming. I am concerned this was not addressed transparently in the report. Transporting into the site, transferring hazardous materials to storage and then utilizing the chemicals in the treatment all offer unique risks of an accident. We have been told of mitigation that will be developed in the design phase

and it is 'low risk' and the WIP 'doesn't have all the answers.' A hazard mitigation plan should be developed, reviewed and approved prior to any rezoning approval as well as transparency on the health, safety and environment risks should an accident occur.

- Similarly, large quantities of fuel will be transported and stored at the facility on the parcel side nearest to the Seaforth Landing subdivision. As we are reliant on well water, a leakage or spill could poison our drinking water. A fire with large storage facilities of fuel and hazardous materials could be catastrophic. No analysis has been provided to the impact to our drinking water as a result of a fuel spill or tank leakage. Impact of a fuel or chemical fire has not been provided. The report indicates a fire hydrant would be installed which is a shockingly inadequate response and useless for gasoline and chemical fires.
- The size and magnitude of this operation places an undue burden on nearby residents for water treatment for other counties and communities, with no benefit of water service being extended to nearby homes. The nearby homes are destined to take on all the safety/pollution risks, construction nuisances and the downside of living next door to an industrial 24/7 operation, which inevitably brings added non-auto traffic and litter.
- Not only do nearby residents not benefit, it appears that other counties are benefiting greater than Chatham County at our detriment.
- A construction period of three years with 150 daily construction workers is a significant disruption to the community and will produce particulate matter, road debris, litter, noise, and significant traffic issues that will hinder the ability to enjoy our home and the neighborhood. Jogging, walking, and bicycling anywhere near that property will become hazardous. This neighborhood has limited access to enter and leave being required to navigate directly past the site. The scale and duration of this type of project is an undue burden. Residents would see this everyday coming and going, as well as interested persons in home resale opportunities that could provide a negative perception.
- Neither Seaforth Rd. nor N. Pea Ridge Road, that are narrow two-lane rural roads with no shoulders, are equipped to handle the duration, size and scope of a construction project with heavy equipment, logging, deliveries, etc. As it stands today, both roads are already dangerous for homeowners with the existing traffic and would not be suitable for this type of project. Following the construction period, the WIP indicates that delivery of hazardous materials, fuel and removal of waste and sludge will be required by large diesel tanker trucks on average 10 times per month. Again, these roads are not equipped for this type of traffic. These are rural, no outlet roads, with no shoulder and poor drainage.
- Homeowners purchased into this subdivision with the expectation and good faith of enjoying a quiet rural setting and understood surrounding parcels to be residentially zoned. The report asserts that land and property values will not be impacted. When I sought evidence to support this assertion, I was not provided any but simply provided hypotheticals, with no substantiation.
- The WIP Environmental Impact Report indicates that this recommended site is part of an alternative analysis conducted as opposed to utilizing the previously acquired site for a RWTF. I requested clarification on where the original site was located, why the WIP chose to seek alternative sites and when. I did not receive a clear response.

- The alternative analysis that identified this as the recommended site included no assessment of sites that are already zoned industrial and only reviewed residential parcels all seemingly with impact to existing home and landowners.
- The report acknowledges that this area is extremely quiet and the facility would emit noise 24/7 and also potential vibration. While the report indicates it would remain within the county noise ordinance, the fact that residents are asked to withstand 24/7 industrial noise does not seem reasonable.
- The preliminary lighting plan appears to contribute a significant amount of light pollution for both residents and wildlife with 40+ light poles across the entire compound.
- While I feel that the Board should require the WIP to find a more suitable location that does not abut a residential development, at a minimum the entire facility should be “out of sight” and of enough distance from the road so that the 34 large structures, lighting and fencing are not visible. The preliminary plan would not achieve this as the structures and roads are planned right up to the 100-foot buffer line that is composed of pine trees and any screening planting installed is unlikely to hide 50-foot high structures for many years.

Based on the significant impact to residents, I would urge the Board to require the WIP to complete an alternative site analysis on non-residential or ‘less-residential’ parcels, including shifting the proposed site North, closer to Hwy 64. The analysis should be done without regard for the ‘preference’ to have the pumping station at the same site. It seems that this is driving the recommendation of the selected site that is clearly undersized for the size and scope of the proposal. This would mitigate safety and environmental risks with distance, greatly lessens home value impacts, and allows homeowners to not pass directly by the facility for an escape route.

I once again urge you to “deny” this inappropriate rezoning request and require the WIP to utilize an already appropriately zoned parcel/site proximate to Hwy 64 to avoid disruption to homeowners, minimize impact to the environment, maintain existing health and safety, and help retain some of the eroding rural beauty of our Chatham County.

If the Board chooses to move forward regardless of resident objections while dismissing the health and safety risks to the nearby community, I ask you to require the WIP to complete the following **prior to granting rezoning approval**:

- A land and home value analysis to support their assertion that values will not be impacted “prior” to approval.
- Requirement of full analysis and report of the health and safety risks of potential chemical spills, fuel leakage/spill and impact to our well water and safety risk of potential fire to residents “prior” to rezoning approval.
- Hazardous mitigation planning and approval be completed “prior” to approval
- Noise and vibration studies completed “prior” to approval. The report acknowledges that the industrial facility will generate noise 24/7 and pose the risk of vibration and mitigation

should be required and approved “prior” to rezoning approval. All existing information regarding noise is vague, at best.

- The footprint of the facility be scaled back significantly, including the size and height of the 34 structures, with a minimum set back of at least 300 feet (more aligned to that of the Western Wake Regional Waste Treatment facility), additional solid panel screening/fencing and additional vegetation to hide the buildings, water tanks, etc.
- Lighting be significantly scaled back from the 40+pole lighting and extensive building lighting planned, particularly as the WIP has indicated the site would likely only be staffed by 2-3 persons overnight.
- Additional screening plantings and requirements that the buildings, structures and fencing not be visible from the first day of operation, not having us wait 10-20 years for growth.
- Relocation of the main entrance to the Northern part of the parcel on Seaforth Road closer to Hwy 64 and further away from the subdivision to mitigate nuisance coming and going.
- Removal of the 3rd entrance on N. Pea Ridge Rd.
- Extension of water service to the nearby residents and Seaforth Landing who will bear the burden of the facility and the construction.

Thank you,

Marissa Clifford