

Bob Proctor's Presentation to Chapel Hill Town Council

May 9, 2016

Our first issue is national:

Google's pressure on towns to rush their siting processes is a social justice issue for green space access.

So that Google can beat AT&T to become the internet provider for many neighborhoods, Google allows towns to nominate only town-owned parcels.

As Google continues elsewhere, soon there will be a school bus maintenance yard somewhere that could ideally host a hub, but that Google won't allow to be nominated because it is owned by a school district.

That town will instead include parks in their lists, and then Google will likely choose the humblest park.

So Google will be pilfering from the humbler parks.

Now for our second issue, which concerns half of southeastern Orange County, including those in Chapel Hill who will be served by the Carrboro hub:

After land lines go away, we'll need reliable internet service for health monitoring and for the monitoring of county parolees.

On April 19 we proposed a site in the center of OWASA's water plant campus that is close to the cemetery site on which the construction has been accelerated.

On April 28, the OWASA board was sympathetic to this presentation; their director immediately contacted the Town of Carrboro about looking into the possibility of hosting this facility.

Our proposed site is next to the employee's parking for OWASA's 24/7 manned plant, inside a fence.

Post-9/11, post-Katrina, and pre-Shearon Harris, all governments are obligated to consider the reliability of infrastructure.

The back-up electrical power at OWASA is far more robust than the natural-gas back-up generator in the cemetery would be.

Our third issue returns to social justice for green space, now for Carrboro:

The cemetery is on our densest block; most of its 500 transient and/or low-income residents work in Chapel Hill.

All of the parks in Carrboro are north of Main Street.

This gorgeous unused part of the cemetery is the only public green space that is south of Main.

It should eventually transition to a park.

The Google hub is exactly where you'd want to put a parking lot for a park.

Google's business priorities have put profits over people: An opaque siting process overlooked a superb site that would better serve the public.

If Google is not held to account for their deeply flawed processes here in this excellent model case, then it will not be held to account anywhere.

After the Sierra Club letter was read to the Commissioners on Thursday and I had made my presentation, Barry Jacobs requested that county staff look into what the county can do to address these issues.

Given Google's image needs, it might be good enough for this council to simply ask the national Google public relations office to explain why Google is refusing to pause this construction until there has been a public review.