



Preserve Rural Orange.org

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September 21, 2012

Attorney General Roy Cooper
Department of Justice
P.O. Box 629
Raleigh, NC 27602

To North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper:

We are writing to request an investigation into recent state property acquisition by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The acquisitions will expand the 57-acre UNC Bingham Facility to 80 acres. Specifically, UNC purchased one property and agreed to purchase a second property in 2012 without disclosing to the State Property Office that appeals made by the seller to the Orange County Board of Adjustment and NC Division of Water Quality were pending. Attached documentation is listed below.

The seller and the citizen non-profit Preserve Rural Orange (PRO) requested increased government oversight following a series of violations, illegal wastewater discharges and infrastructure failures at the UNC property. In response to these incidents which began in 2009 and 2010, neighbors, including the seller, asked the University to test for environmental impacts on surrounding properties, wells, ground water and creeks. UNC did not test for impacts on neighboring properties.

On April 18, 2012 UNC-Chapel Hill officials submitted a request to the State Property Office to acquire the seller's 8.3-acre property at 6703 Maynard Farm Road. The University never informed the State Property Office that the seller had filed an appeal six weeks earlier regarding the UNC Bingham Facility's direct impact on his adjacent property. As the attached document shows, on March 1, 2012 the seller and PRO appealed to the county Board of Adjustment (BOA) for a public hearing regarding a UNC Bingham site plan that was approved without requiring the University to apply for a Special Use Permit. The BOA hearing has not yet been held, but will go forward with another neighbor joining the appeal.

Since 2010 the UNC Bingham facility has added 23 acres, acquiring three properties that are not included on the 2006 Master Plan for a Resource Research Campus. In 2010 UNC acquired an adjacent 4.21-acre property and house, and in 2012 UNC acquired an 8.32-acre property and house and announced plans to acquire a third 10.56-acre property. The acquisitions are listed in State Property records as educational land use. The house acquired in 2010 is currently leased to renters.

We would appreciate your attention to this issue. Numerous requests by PRO to UNC officials for what should be public information regarding its facility remain unanswered. Please feel free to contact us for additional information.

Sincerely,



Laura Streitfeld
Executive Director, Preserve Rural Orange

cc: Mark Teague, Assistant Attorney General
Don Teeter, Special Deputy Attorney General
David King, Investigations Manager, Office of State Auditor
Lawen Becote, Investigative Auditor, Office of State Auditor
John D. Runkle, PRO counsel

Attachments:

1. September 7, 2012 Property map of UNC Bingham Facility expansion, Orange County
2. September 6, 2012 UNC email to neighbors re: UNC Bingham property acquisitions
3. June 18 2012 UNC letter and UNC Board of Governors' approval of property actions
4. March 1, 2012 Lobotsky & PRO application to Orange County Board of Adjustment
5. March 1, 2012 Lobotsky & PRO appeal to Orange County Board of Adjustment
6. September 29, 2011 PRO & neighbors' request for public hearing to NC DWQ Director
7. October 28, 2010 UNC response to Planning director and November 16, 2010 Planning letter
8. April 9, 2010 Orange County Planning Department letter to UNC Bingham Facility officials
9. June 28, 2006 UNC Master Plan for Resource Research Campus