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## Landfill permit extension sought

Hearing set today to consider request on site near Wilson Town;  
Residents oppose 2-year request

By Lynn Anderson  
Sun Staff

Originally published April 29, 2003

An Anne Arundel County hearing officer is set to consider today a request by a Silver Spring developer seeking more time from the county to pursue the state permits he needs to open a landfill and gravel pit near Wilson Town.

Developer Warren Halle has been "diligently" pursuing permits through the Maryland Department of the Environment to open the Chesapeake Terrace landfill and gravel pit, according to his attorney, but the three-phase process could take another two years to complete.

Halle, who won the right to open the landfill and gravel pit in 2001 after a protracted legal fight with the county, is completing ground water testing, said his attorney, Susanne K. Henley of Annapolis. She said that the tests could be finished by September.

A county planner has recommended that the hearing officer grant Halle his two-year extension, according to a report. Still, Henley said she intends to call upon Edward M. Dexter, administrator of the state's solid waste program, to explain the review process at the hearing in Annapolis today.

Without the two-year extension, Halle risks losing special exceptions and variances granted him by the county. He would then have to reapply for permits, with no certainty of approval from a county that opposes his project.

"The reason we need the extension is nothing that my client or his company has done," Henley said. "The [state] process takes longer than two years."

Residents of Wilson Town, a predominantly black community near Odenton, are expected to show up in force. They have complained for years that the landfill would choke their roads with truck traffic and their homes with unhealthy dust.

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"So far, he has not proven a need for another landfill in this area," said Cathy Fleshman, a Forks of the Patuxent resident and longtime landfill opponent.

Towson attorney G. Macy Nelson will speak on behalf of homeowners at the hearing.

Nelson said yesterday that he was disappointed the county planning officer had recommended approval of the extension. Contrary to statements by Halle's attorney, Nelson said, the developer has not kept up with the state permit process and has been slow to respond to officials' questions.

"We are going to prove that during the past two years, the applicant has failed to aggressively provide to the state the information that the state has requested," Nelson said, adding that had Halle kept up with MDE's requests for information, he might have received his permits by now.

Nelson said that the county should not grant the extension because Halle has "created his own delay."

According to a timeline provided by Nelson, an agent for Halle informed state officials in January 2001 that he wanted to reactivate his application. However, it took nearly a year for Halle and his agents to fully respond to several questions posed by the state.

An August letter to Halle and his agents from the state set out "seven issues that must be addressed before MDE will consider the applicant's Phase II report complete." According to Nelson, the state is still waiting for an answer from the developer.

Wilson Town residents have long fought to keep Halle's landfill and gravel pit from opening. They have written letters to many elected officials, including Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. and Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele.

Anne Arundel County Executive Janet S. Owens has stated that she opposes the landfill, which would not cater to the public but to private firms, many of them from outside the county or the state.

Residents hope that their attorney can persuade the hearing officer to deny the extension.

"I have visited with the entire community and no one wants that landfill," said Wilson Town native Bessie Rollings-Queen.

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