

Subject: Hearing Held At The Historical Courthouse, Waynesville, NC
From: Suzanne Hendrix
Date: Thu, 17 Jun 2010 07:41:29 -0700 (PDT)
To:

Hello to all Federal, State, Local Governments and News Media, as well as WNCA staff, and WVEPG (West Waynesville Environmental Protection Group),

I wanted to somehow attempt to give each of you who were not present at the hearing, and those who were present, an update. Yes, I do know that you will probably receive an update from the hearing officer but I did want to tell you, from my view, what happened last evening. There will be those who will continue to make presentations during the next 10 days but this is my concept of what I saw last night.

First, and foremost, the State of North Carolina Department of Natural Resources conducted the meeting very well. Everything was well planned and ran smoothly and professionally. Everyone was asked to sign in with name and address, whether they wanted to speak, and/or receive a copy. Speeches were recorded mechanically as well as hand recorded. Persons speaking were given up to 5 minutes with approximately 25-30 persons speaking. No one was left out, although Mr. Monroe Miller didn't finish his presentation. For that, I felt sad, because Mr. Miller had spent many, many hours, and his own money to get photos from an airplane and drive to Knoxville to meet Mr. Quigg of Harrison and to Asheville to meet with DENR. So for him, the man who, in his very professional ways, was cut short because of time, I am sorry.

Once seated, it appeared that most Harrison people sat on one side of the courtroom while the homeowners sat on the other side. Then it all began. DENR reviewed the mining act and other important information pertaining to the hearing, the attendees wishing to speak were each asked to step forward, one at a time. I was completely surprised that as young as 14 years of age, to as old probably as mid-70's spoke, both men and women, some for, some against the situation. Business professionals, home owners, retirees, employees and some who, themselves, think they are just "ole country boys" but all professionals in their own way, in their own worlds of life.

No one spoke against jobs or workers from or involved with Harrison Construction Company as it wasn't the intention of any person there to remove much needed jobs from Haywood County. Nor was anyone actually speaking against Harrison Construction Company itself but rather sending out a plea of sorts in an attempt to find solutions to the already problems created by the slide and to be assured of the future years of usage.

It was always thought until Monroe Miller spoke, that the NCDENR was the highest level of government who had the final say to the situation. However, it seems from his presentation, that because of the accident the Federal Government has made the recommendations as to how to rectify the problem at hand. Mr. Miller's presentation was so lengthy, he was asked to stop and now it will be up to Mr. Jim Simons to read the presentation and make his determination or perhaps contact Mr. Miller so that he hears exactly what Mr. Miller had intended to say, facts he wanted to present. (This writer would hope that groups of involved and interested persons, such as Mr. Simons, Mr. Quigg and others Federal, State and Local, as well as homeowners and Harrison employees, would walk the ridge and know exactly what is involved. Don't take someone else's word for it. Know the facts!)

Finally, one last speaker, Mr. Quigg, from Knoxville and then, as it began, the hearing was over, quietly, professionally. It seemed to me as though, now everyone on both sides felt the most comfortable, all had been heard, all had been given the same chance to make their point. Now with the meeting adjourned, some of those people took to the front of the room to begin "talking", hearing each other for the first time as though to not only point out their opinions, but try to, as one, find solutions. Find solutions to have quality air, quality water, quality work environments, quality homes and land and quality beauty of mountains and places for visitors to view from the Parkway and tourism for Haywood County and Waynesville. A place to visit, a place to be proud of, a place to live!

I personally spoke with Mr. Quigg as did others after the hearing. I explained to him that the young girl of 14 had used her own words, speaking from her heart. She had assured me, prior to the hearing, that she wanted to speak. Wanted to tell it in

her own words, not words from adults. That she would speak with a strong voice, not be afraid, and also how she would show respect of her elders and the professionals that would be listening. Yes, then, I did encourage her, as she and others her age who were there at the hearing, are the future of this community. They are the ones who will be here long after most persons in that room have died. They will be the ones to carry on, to raise a families and see for themselves what was created by previous generations. She is an animal lover and has a love of mankind, not wanting to see any in danger. Her name, Hannah Dawn Parrott.

To finalize her speech, Mr. Quigg and I discussed building a fence of sorts to keep endangered species and humans out of the dangerous area. This one simple project of building a "cement" wall or fence could begin the process. This then the beginning to keep workers from loosing their jobs, to keep home owners with a water source, for a clean air quality source and to keep wildlife for the future generations. So until final decisions are made and delivered, perhaps a fence or wall will go up and dedicated to Hannah for her small part in preservation.

Yes, the evening was over. The concerns still on the table but as I watched the 11 pm news and saw those who are neighbors, those who are on medications and thought of those who had spoke earlier with oxygen tanks and ill children, I couldn't help but think that steps had been taken in the right direction. I became so thankful that people had the courage to stand for what they believe in because this is America. How persons had given their time and their talents to present the news both on the television and in the newspapers, attend meetings and earn money toward the cause. How persons were there in protection of their jobs, their families and their paychecks for yes, they too, must be considered in the final steps taken to preserve.

Oh, and yes, just one more thing as I'll think back on that evening, I was so very proud of that 14 year old girl for standing tall, and with a strong, calm voice, standing to be counted with her young thoughts of preservation and stating her viewpoints. For you see, I've held that girl since she was 5-1/2 weeks old. Perhaps it is that she has grown up on our farm, watched as the wild fox passed along the ridge line and called it a "box" instead of a fox. Perhaps it is something that has been instilled in her mind about humanity. But, more than likely it is what she has learned from her own experiences of hiking, fly fishing and now hunting in this great State of North Carolina, the mountains that she loves, that has taught herself to preserve and protect. For she and others like her are the future to this land.

Respectfully submitted to you as only my view points,

Suzanne Hendrix

[EDITORS NOTE: Jerry Smith used his own airplane and fuel for the flight to take pictures of the quarry - he refused to accept any money.]