Stafford Township Landfill Closure and Business Park Redevelopment

June 15, 2011
Landfill Closure

1983 Landfill closed
1987 Applications to Pinelands & NJDEP
1990 Voters approve Business Park
1990 Pinelands approves Business Park
1991-1993 Development Occurs
1994 NJDEP issues Disruption Permit
1995 NJDEP awards Landfill Mining Demonstration Grant
1999 Pinelands issues Landfill Disruption Approval
1999 Stafford Resort Dev. Co. proposed capping landfill/ developing adjacent area
2001 Township ordered by NJDEP to sign MOU
2003 RFP for redevelopment
2004 Walters Dev. Co. designated redeveloper; assumes all landfill closure costs

Responsible Redevelopment
Township’s Proposal

• Unique opportunity to “link” landfill closure to redevelopment of business park
• Mine three unlicensed landfills
• Cap licensed landfill with an impermeable cap
• Redevelop the business park to finance landfill closure costs
Licensed and Unlicensed Landfills
Landfill History

- **Unlicensed Landfills**
  - 3 that total ±25 acres
  - Informal dump sites dating back to the 1950’s
  - Dumping stopped in the 1970’s

- **Licensed Landfill**
  - 55 acre municipal landfill
  - Operation ceased in 1983

- **Closure Plan**
  - Initially approved in 1994
“... landfill degrading groundwater quality...”
and “... leachate plume exists and an impermeable cap is required...”

The Pinelands Commission

“... landfill degrading the groundwater resources...”
“... landfill has impacted the nearby stream...”
“... statutory requirement to properly close the landfill...”

DEP Commissioner, Bradley Campbell
Contaminants

- Licensed Landfill – Groundwater
  - Arsenic
  - Cadmium
  - Iron
  - Lead
  - Sodium
  - pH
  - TDS
  - Ammonia
  - Chlorine
  - Chromium
  - Chloroform
  - Manganese
  - Silver
  - Zinc
## Contaminants

- **Unlicensed Landfill – Groundwater**
- Ammonia
- Aluminum
- Arsenic
- Calcium
- Chromium
- Chloroform
- Iron
- Lead
- Manganese
- Sodium
- Benzene
- Chloroform
Contaminants

- Mill Creek
- Ammonia
- Fecal Coliform
- Methylene Chloride
- Alpha Chlordane
Issues To Address

• Competing Environmental Issues
  ■ Mandated landfill closure versus Threatened and Endangered Species

• Litigation – PPA v. Pinelands Comm. and the Redeveloper

• Pinelands Regulations versus NJDEP regulations regarding groundwater

• PILOT for the Commercial/Retail
Existing Storm Water Basin
Den Area
Stafford Twp Business Park Commission

- Created by Township in 1990
- Separate legal entity by law
- 7 Members appointed by governing body
- One representative from banking, legal, commerce, labor, real estate, service clubs, & chamber of commerce
Selection of Redeveloper

- Creation of Business Park in 1990 by Referendum
- Approval of Business Park for Development of Pinelands Comm in 1990
- Limited success from 1990-2003
- RFP Process in 2003
- Competitive Negotiation and Award
Redevelopment Proposal

- Relocate existing facilities
- Mine unlicensed landfills
- Use mined waste to contour licensed landfill
- Excavate 1 million cubic yards of soil to fill mined landfills and to cover licensed landfill
- Install an impermeable cap on licensed landfill
- Direct costs = $31 million
“... redevelopment of the site will **not** violate Pinelands environmental standards...”
“... project clearly has environmental benefits...”
“... landfill closure and redevelopment project seems to warrant the Commission’s support...”

John Stokes, Executive Director, The Pinelands Commission
Capped & Closed Landfill
Species Management
LEED for New Construction

LEED for Homes

LEED for Neighborhood Developments
Renewable Energy
Streetscape Concepts
On balance, a good idea

Development of the Stafford Business Park in a designated regional growth area of the Pinelands makes good environmental sense. That may sound contradictory, but it is the only feasible way to seal the township’s former landfill and keep its polluted water from leaching into the ground and reaching the nearby Mill Creek.

The $31 million cost of closing the landfill would be absorbed by the Walters Group, which wants to build 520 homes, a shopping center, an ice rink and offices on 363 acres of the business park site, south of Route 72. The project, which would take an estimated 12 years to complete, fits the Pinelands Commission criteria for development. The area already hosts numerous businesses and Southern Ocean County Hospital.

The 55-acre landfill stopped accepting trash in 1983, but Stafford hasn’t had the money to cover and close it. Redevelopment makes it financially doable.

That’s why the Pinelands Commission has endorsed the environmental trade-off — the landfill closing in exchange for the right to develop the area. But members of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance disagree. They say the project would disregard commission standards for protecting rare plant and animal species on the tract, setting a dangerous precedent.

But the landfill area is unfit for animal or plant life. The closure and related development would be an upgrade. The agreement between Stafford and the Pinelands Commission takes the animal and plant life into account. The snakes and frogs would be relocated, a new pond would be created for the frogs and an area would be set aside to replant the rare grass and wild orchids.

We are concerned about the coziness between the Walters Group and the Ocean County Republican Party. The developer is a longtime contributor to the party and donated nearly $40,000 to campaigns last year alone. But on balance, this project deserves to move forward. It does not threaten Pinelands preservation. And by finally securing the landfill, it will be a net plus for the environment.