

Dear Citizens and County Commissioners,

With the recent concerns being circulated about the proposed White Cross Vol. Fire Department substation on Neville Road, we would like the opportunity to clarify several items in an effort to correct some misinformation and to properly inform everyone.

The White Cross Vol. Fire Department was evaluated and rated by the NC department of Insurance (NCDOL) in 2008. NCDOL awarded us a rating of 7 improving from a 9. This rating only applied to homes within 5 road miles of the fire station located at 5722 Old Greensboro Road. At the conclusion of this evaluation it allowed homes within the 6 road mile range to receive a grade of 9E. This is the lowest possible rating to which you can be classified and still be considered protected by a fire department. The 9E rating is not based on the performance of the department like the lower classification; it is based on distance from the fire station.

During this same evaluation we discovered many homes in the east part of the district from Bethel Hickory Grove Church Road at Oxbow crossing to Jones Ferry Road at the county line, and several roads off Neville Road were either further than 6 miles or between 5 and 6 miles from the fire station. This gave the home owner the lowest possible grade from their insurance company of a 9E or worse, a class 10 which insurance companies consider no fire protection at all.

In an effort to address this issue and improve service delivery of the fire department services on the eastern side of the district, we began searching for land about two years ago that would effectively cover the most north eastern and south eastern parts of our fire district. The goal of this effort was for all properties to be located within 5 road miles of a fire department substation and receive the lowest possible ISO rating and insurance cost. We reached out to numerous land owners with no success. During our search, the fire department found the property on Neville road through realtor.com.

When we performed our analysis, the Neville road site was the best possible location for a fire station. The topography for the building site is flat with minimal slope. The Neville road site allows adequate coverage to all the homes south and north of this location. This would effectively provide adequate coverage from Jones Ferry Road area at the Woodlawn Subdivision to the homes at Oxbow crossing off Bethel Hickory Grove Church Road, including Neville Road and all side roads off Neville Road. All the homes would be covered within 5 road miles of a fire station. In addition the land was economically feasible making the fire tax increase as low as possible.

Based on statements made in the Public comment section during the Orange County Commissioners meeting on the June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 we would like clarify some items that were expressed as a concern to the citizens.

- “The land was purchased intentionally to financially benefit a specific individual”  
This is false, the land was found on realtor.com purchased through a realtor on the open market. The owner had no ties to the Fire Dept. or any of its members.
- “Highway 54 would be a better location for the Substation”

Locating the fire station that far north would cause the distance traveled to southern part of the district to exceed 5 road miles.

- “ Numerous wells would have to be drilled to be able to fill the fire trucks affecting the water table”  
This is false, The White Cross Fire Dept. Has never used wells to fill apparatus, this method would be time consuming and ineffective. We have strategically located static water points throughout the community to fill apparatus and to provide water for fire protection.
- “The Fire Department would cause excessive run off to Phil’s Creek, washing the truck would cause additional run off”  
This is false; the site for the proposed fire station would meet all current impervious surface rules, limiting the runoff as much as possible. Site landscaping would also help address this issue as well. All maintenance and care for the apparatus would be performed at the station located at 5722 Old Greensboro Road. The needed equipment and supplies are kept at location where there is adequate storage and space to perform these maintenance actives.
- “The area has been the site of two accidents since I have lived here...”  
In the last seven years there White Cross Fire Department has responded twice to the area for motor vehicle collisions. In both cases the determined factors of the accident were ruled as excessive speed, being under the influence or both. We would also like to point out that we have a close working relationship with the Orange County Sheriff’s Department. The Deputies have access to our stations 24/7 and often drop by to do paperwork. We encourage this and it would likely mean that the neighborhood would see an increased presence of deputies.
- There will be excessive noise and traffic created by the substation  
The impact will be very minimal, attached you will see a series of graphs that show the number calls by hour of the day. One set of graphs shows calls over a 3 year period (exhibit 1) and the other calls over a 1 year period (exhibit 1A). As you can see the busiest a hour between the 8:00pm (20:00) and 7:00 AM during the 3 year period is the 8:00pm hour(20:00) have only 26 calls for the entire district, and only 13 calls during that time period last year. What’s even more significant is during that time period between 8:00pm and 7:00am 50% or more of the calls are EMS related (exhibit 2) that requires no large apparatus response from the substation. Over three year period totaling 644 call responses (exhibit 3), only 58 calls would have required a response out of the Neville Road Substation (9%). Out of those 58 calls, 20(34%) of those calls were on Neville Road or were accessed off Neville Road.
- “How can a fire station be put near residential homes...? (Our understanding of this concern being that Fire stations are only located in commercial areas)”  
In some case fire stations may have to be located in or near residential home sites and rural residential roads, to be able to meet the travel distances limits set forth by the department of insurance, meet insurance industry guidelines allow home owners to a have protective classification, and provide adequate coverage to all citizens. There are already several fire station located in similar settings.

New Hope VFD Station 1

Orange Rural VFD Station 2

Orange Rural VFD Station3 (subdivision is being built next to it)

White Cross Vol. Fire Station (also along a very heavily used cyclist's route)

Cedar Grove VFD Station2

Orange Grove Vol. Fire Company Station (also along a very heavily used cyclist's route)

- “People walk up and down the road, and I excise a lot along the road...(Our understanding of this concern is that this station increases the danger to pedestrians)”  
All the equipment operators for the White Cross VFD, have to complete a training program in order to drive the apparatus. Our training program adheres to the volunteer fire insurance services requirements and follows the guidelines set out in Chapter 5 Training and education of NFPA 1451 2007 edition. The must initially take and pass a 20 hour State of North Carolina Emergency Vehicle Driver course (EVD). Be 21 years of age and have an acceptable motor vehicle driving recorded. Take a 100 question written test and go through hands on piratical evaluations. There are giving an EVD refresh course every 5 years. Each equipment operator receives an additional 8 hours of training annually.
- There were concerns voiced about the curve on Neville road that might cause dangerous sight distance issues.  
The fire department met with District DOT Engineer C.N. Edwards, JR. on June 6, 2013. Mr. Edwards advised there is adequate sight distance from where the station is being placed on the parcel. (Exhibit 4)
- There were concerns expressed about the bridge located on Neville Road at Phil's Creek.  
The fire department met with District DOT Engineer C.N. Edwards, JR. on June 6, 2013. Mr. Edwards advised DOT have noted some structural deficiencies in that bridge. Mr. Edwards also advised that DOT is currently working on proposals to replace the bridge and are estimating the replacement to start at the end of this year (2013). The bridge's current weight limit is posted at 18 tons (36,000 lbs.), our trucks are under that weight limit at 35,000 lbs. GVW. (Exhibit 4)