

March 19, 2007

Re: Chatham County Lighting Ordinance

Chatham County Board of Commissioners
Gentlemen:

Good evening. I am Loyse Hurley, President of Chatham Citizens for Effective Communities (CCEC). I live at 16 Matchwood in Pittsboro and tonight I am expressing our concerns about the lighting ordinance.

The ordinance itself is excellent. Our concern is about it's application. Right now, it is being considered as a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. Yet, we do not have County wide zoning. CCEC feels strongly that this should be a stand alone ordinance, which would be applicable to the entire County and not be limited just to the zoned areas of the County. Our rural areas deserve just as much protection from light pollution as do our zoned areas.

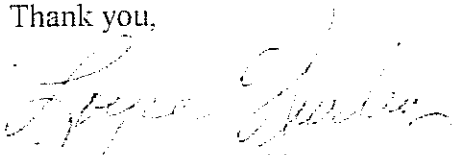
The un-zoned areas are primarily rural and agricultural areas where light pollution could be considered even more of a problem than in the more congested zoned areas of the County. The protections offered by this ordinance are needed throughout the County. We all want to enjoy the beauty of the night sky. No one wants the safety hazard of being blinded by bright lights when pulling out of a gas station at night.

If the rationale for restricting it to the zoning ordinance is because of enforcement problems since lighting occurs at night, how do you plan to enforce the ordinance in any zoned location? That is not a good rationale for restricting application of this ordinance.

There are many ways to enforce this ordinance - train and equipt the sheriff's department with light meters, and have them respond to calls about excess lighting, similar to how they respond to the noise ordinance; have someone from the Planning Department on night time emergency call. After the initial enforcement of the ordinance, the balance of enforcement problems should be based upon complaints, so this should not place an undue burden on our resources.

Our rural areas deserve just as much safety protection and enjoyment as do our zoned areas.

Thank you,



Loyse Hurley - President