

August 17, 2009

Chatham County Board of Commissioners

Commissioners:

Re: County Wide Lighting Ordinance

Good evening. I am Loyse Hurley, President of Chatham Citizens for Effective Communities (CCEC). I live at 16 Matchwood, Pittsboro. On March 19, 2007, CCEC spoke out in favor of the application of a lighting ordinance in the unzoned areas and we are doing so again tonight. Our support is based primarily on safety reasons.

It takes time for eyes to adjust to changes in lighting. So, when pulling out of a brightly lit area into one of darkness, there is a delayed reaction while our eyes adjust. As one gets older - and we all hope to do that - various diseases can develop and the medications for these diseases can exacerbate this delay in eye adjustment. For example: Many of our older citizens have Glaucoma. The medication for the treatment of this condition can result in a longer time period for the pupils of the eyes to dilate and contract. A driver pulling out of a brightly lit service station onto a dark roadway can have a major problem adjusting to the sudden change in lighting, be temporarily blinded and may not immediately see oncoming vehicles in the road. The safety protections offered by this ordinance are needed throughout the County.

Another reason for implementation of this ordinance countywide is that we are a rural county and enjoy the ambience and quality of life that a rural county brings. The un-zoned areas are primarily rural and agricultural ones, where light pollution could be considered even more of a problem than in the more congested zoned areas of the County. Many of our residents enjoy the serenity of a star lit night. Misdirected and misused light obscures our view of the heavens, making a dark sky a thing of the past. This is a great loss to our children and the future generations of Chatham. Looking to the sky for beauty, education and perspective on our place in the universe could become impossible due to the effects of light pollution. This ordinance stipulates "down" lighting, which provides adequate illumination for walking and nighttime tasks but decreases interference with the peaceful enjoyment of our night skies.

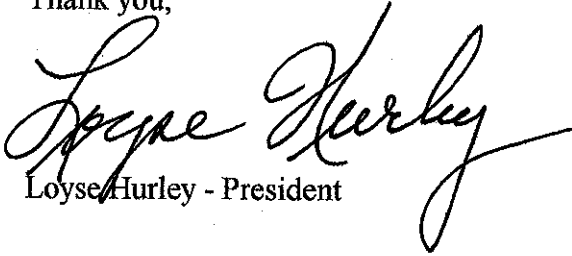
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While there is a cost associated with implementation, the ordinance provides for a lengthy time period for the replacement of current lighting. It also provides energy savings by the utilization of more modern fixtures which eliminate "splash over".

The safety benefits far outweigh the risks of doing nothing. One accident is far too many and one fatality is unconscionable. Our rural areas deserve just as much safety protection and enjoyment as do our zoned areas.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Loyse Hurley". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Loyse Hurley - President