Dear Mayor and Town Council:

I am writing in support of the proposed Brownfields redevelopment of the current Police Department property, located at 828 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd in Chapel Hill. Based on my extensive experience with environmental compliance and soil/groundwater remediation, as well as with regulation by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), I strongly believe this redevelopment will be protective of human health and the environment.

In support of this proposed Brownfields redevelopment, I offer the following thoughts:

* The NCDEQ Brownfields Program redevelopment process is extremely thorough, stringent, and will protect human health and the environment and monitor in the future to confirm and maintain this protection.
  + Rigorous requirements are in place for a site to be considered for redevelopment under the Brownfields Program. This includes sampling/analysis of affected media, including soil, groundwater, and surface water if these media could be impacted.
  + Land Use Restrictions, specific to the site, will be in place and enforced.
  + Site conditions will be continually evaluated to confirm that Land Use Restrictions are still in place and effective.
  + Information on the NCDEQ Brownfields program is, and will be, publicly available. This includes documentation such as Brownfield agreements, management plans, sampling data, and required surveys to confirm measures are in place and still protective.
* There is a long, proven, history of safe and protective site redevelopment in North Carolina under the Brownfields program.
  + The NC Legislature enacted the Brownfields Property Reuse Act in 1997. In the 25 years since then, agreements for redevelopment for over 500 sites have been successfully implemented. This includes redevelopment to support a variety of uses, including commercial, industrial, and residential. Again, the Brownfields program evaluates each site and its potential risks. Brownfields Agreements include stringent measures to prevent impact to persons and the environment, and to monitor these to confirm that this remains the case.
  + Brownfields redevelopment projects are located throughout North Carolina (and the US). Shoppers at Wegman’s in Chapel Hill, or at Fleet Feet in Carrboro, may be surprised to learn that these are Brownfields redevelopment projects, as is the residential housing at the former Crown Honda facility on 15-501 in Chapel Hill. These are excellent examples of successful property reuse, with measures in place to protect people and prevent environmental releases.
  + Brownfields redevelopment provides an excellent opportunity for this site to safely, and protectively, provide much-needed housing, in a location well-positioned for easy access to mass transit, and access via foot for key needs such as access to grocery stores, medical facilities, banks, and government offices, including voting opportunities.
* For this site, there has already been thorough evaluation of site conditions, including testing of soil and groundwater. If the Brownfields program staff determines that this site can be safely redeveloped, with appropriate protective measures and monitoring in place, I believe this is an excellent opportunity for safe redevelopment, while preventing any exposure to coal ash, and monitoring conditions in the future to confirm that measures remain effective in preventing exposure.

By way of providing context for my input, I have over 30 years of experience with soil and groundwater investigation and remediation, as well as with environmental compliance for air emissions, wastewater discharge, petroleum management, and waste management. I have provided environmental compliance services through employment with consulting firms and private industry. I have worked extensively with several Divisions within the NC Department of Environmental Quality, including the Waste Management Division (which includes the Brownfields Section); Water Quality; and Air Quality. I have a B.S. in Geology from the College of William and Mary, and an MS in Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Sciences from North Carolina State University. I have been a licensed NC geologist since 1986. Governor Purdue appointed me to the NC Board for Licensing of Geologists in 2009, and I served 7 years on the Board, including several years as chair.

In conclusion, I ask the Town Council to approve this project, considering the strength of the Brownfields program, the protection of human health and the environment that will be provided, and the significant benefits to future residents for accessibility to much-needed resources.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Walata