

1 PLACE: Dare County Courthouse
2 Manteo, North Carolina
3 DATE: Monday, March 18, 2024
4 TIME: 7:02 p.m. - 7:42 p.m.
5 DOCKET: W-1343, Sub 1
6 BEFORE: Hearing Examiner Ann Winstead
7
8

9 IN THE MATTER OF:
10 Application by GWWTP, LLC
11 for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity
12 to Provide Wastewater Utility Service
13 to Ginguite Woods Subdivision in
14 Dare County, North Carolina and
15 for approval of Rates
16
17

18 VOLUME 1
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1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2 FOR GWWTP, LLC:

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7

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NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

1	T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S	
2	E X A M I N A T I O N S	
3		PAGE
4	WAYNE AVERY	
5	Direct Statement by the Witness	9
6	Direct Examination by Ms. Newell	12
7	MATTHEW HUBAND	
8	Direct Statement by the Witness	13
9	Examination by Mr. Finley	15
10	LINDA SEARS	
11	Direct Statement by the Witness	19
12	Direct Examination by Ms. Newell	23
13	SUSAN JOHNSON	
14	Direct Statement by the Witness	25
15	CAROLINE HAAS	
16	Direct Examination by Ms. Newell	29
17	Cross Examination by Mr. Finley	31
18		
19	E X H I B I T S:	
20		IDENTIFIED/ADMITTED
21	Sears Exhibit 1	24 24
22	Haas Exhibit 1	30 31
23		
24		

P R O C E E D I N G S

HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Good morning.

Let's come to order and go on the record. My name is Ann Winstead, a Hearing Examiner for the North Carolina Utilities Commission, and I've been assigned to preside over this hearing tonight.

I now call for hearing Docket Number W-1343, Sub 1, in the Matter of an Application of GWWTP, LLC, or I may refer to them as GWWTPWTP or the Company, for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Provide Wastewater Utility Service to Ginguite Woods Subdivision in Dare County, North Carolina, and for approval of rates.

On January 11, 2024, GWWTP filed an Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for Approval of Rates seeking to provide wastewater utility service to Ginguite Woods in Dare County, North Carolina.

On February 2, 2024, in Docket Number W-1343, Sub 1, the Commission issued an Order Establishing New Docket for CPCN Application, Finding CPCN Application Complete, and Requiring the Public Staff to Provide Specific Applications Data.

On February 9, 2024, the Public Staff filed

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

1 a letter in response to Commission Order.

2 On February 14, 2024, the Commission issued
3 an Order Scheduling Hearings, Establishing Discovery
4 Guidelines, and Requiring Customer Notice. That Order
5 scheduled a public hearing for 7:00 p.m. on Monday,
6 March 18, 2024, in Manteo, North Carolina, which is
7 where we are tonight, for the sole purpose of
8 receiving testimony from GWWTP's customers in the
9 Ginguite Woods service area.

10 On March 1, 2024, GWWTP filed its
11 Certificate of Service, verifying that all affected
12 customers have been served with the required notice as
13 ordered by the Commission.

14 On March 11, 2024, the direct testimony of
15 Robert Howsare on behalf of GWWTP, LLC, was filed.

16 That brings us up-to-date.

17 I will now explain our process for how this
18 hearing will be conducted so that everyone is aware of
19 our procedures. When you are called to the witness
20 stand, I will seek your name and affirmation that your
21 testimony is the truth. Then, each witness will be
22 asked identifying questions by counsel for the Public
23 Staff so that it will be clear in the record who the
24 speaker is. After that, you are free to start

1 providing your statement.

2 Due to the number of customers that would
3 like to make a statement tonight, each customer will
4 have approximately 3 minutes to testify. The
5 countdown of the allotted 3 minutes will be reflected
6 on the counter to your left. Please strive to
7 complete your statement within this allotted time
8 period. Because your statement is important to us,
9 and we do want to hear from you this evening, if you
10 go slightly beyond your 3 minutes to complete your
11 statement, that will be allowed.

12 After your time is up and you have completed
13 your testimony, counsel for the parties and I will be
14 given the opportunity to ask you any questions
15 pertaining to your testimony. These questions are
16 intended to clarify your testimony for the record or
17 to supplement the record for this proceeding. It's
18 important that the Commission's record on this matter
19 is clear because it will be part of the evidence used
20 to base the Commission's decisions.

21 Each customer who wishes to speak will be
22 given an opportunity to do so, but only one person may
23 speak at a time. When your name is called, please
24 come forward to the table designated for the witness.

1 We are holding this public hearing tonight
2 because we want to hear from you, and your views are
3 important and need to be heard. Our Court Reporter
4 will take down every word of this proceeding and will
5 later produce a verbatim transcript of your testimony
6 and all that is said during this hearing. You will
7 not be allowed to ask questions from the witness
8 stand. The sole purpose of this hearing is to receive
9 testimony from the customers of GWWTP.

10 However, if you have questions, Ms. Darden
11 and Ms. Newell, who are part of the Public Staff and
12 represents you-all in this proceeding as part of the
13 Using and Consuming Public, and Mr. Finley, who
14 represents GWWTP will tell you how to be in touch with
15 them following this proceeding, so they can assist you
16 in having your questions or any service issues
17 addressed.

18 I would like to point out that, by statute,
19 the Public Staff is the advocate for the consumers,
20 both residential and nonresidential. The Public Staff
21 is an independent organization that has their own
22 experts like engineers, accountants, and attorneys to
23 help them in their representation of the public. The
24 Public Staff represents each of you that customers of

1 GWWTP in this proceeding.

2 Lastly, as I previously mentioned, I'm the
3 Commission Hearing Examiner, and I have been asked to
4 preside over this public hearing this evening. I
5 serve as an advisor to the three Commissioners who
6 have been assigned to make decisions regarding GWWTP's
7 Application for CPCN. I will inform the three
8 Commissioners regarding your testimony provided this
9 evening. They will also read the transcript of
10 tonight's hearing prepared by the Court Reporter.

11 Now, will the parties please announce their
12 appearances for the record, beginning with the
13 Company.

14 MR. FINLEY: May it please the Commission,
15 my name is Ed Finley, Raleigh, North Carolina,
16 appearing on behalf of the Applicant, GWWTP.

17 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you, Mr.
18 Finley.

19 MS. NEWELL: Good afternoon, everyone.
20 Davia Newell, representing the Public Staff the Using
21 and Consuming Public.

22 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you,
23 Ms. Newell. Ms. Newell, do you have any witness.

24 MS. NEWELL: I do, and we'd like to call the

1 first witness, Wayne Avery.

2

3 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Hello,
4 Mr. Avery.

5 WAYNE AVERY;
6 having been duly sworn,
7 testified as follows:

8 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: You may begin.

9 DIRECT STATEMENT BY THE WITNESS:

10 I want to introduce myself. I'm Wayne
11 Avery. I live at 43 Fox Wood Circle, Southern Shores
12 Landing. I am currently the President for the HOA.
13 I've lived there for 11 years. I'd like to give your
14 just a quick break down of our community. There's 38
15 homes in our community. Out of the 38 homes, 14 only
16 had one person living in it, 16 had two people living
17 in it, 6 houses has two or more people -- like some
18 children or some other kids there -- 2 of the houses
19 are not full-time residents. They come here a couple
20 times a year.

21 The possibly 67 percent of the residents in
22 our neighborhood are senior citizens aged 65 and
23 older, and they all are on a fixed income. The -- we
24 have paid over the years \$90 a month, which is \$41,000

1 a year, which I don't know what has happened to that
2 money while the plant hasn't been taken care of. And
3 as Saga has it, which they rebuilt, which they needed,
4 but they purchased it so they can develop the land
5 next to it. And I realize they put the money into it,
6 but now they want us -- they want to double our rates
7 to 180. If you're looking at over \$80,000 a year,
8 they want us to pay to pay back all the -- what they
9 have -- the money they've invested into the sewer
10 plant, which they are going to use to develop the land
11 next to us. I just -- the rate is just unsustainable
12 to us. It's just very difficult for us on a fixed
13 income to have to pay this type of sewage rate. And I
14 ask you, how many in this room would like to pay \$175,
15 80 (sic) a month for sewer? And the problem with this
16 is, it's not going to stop at this, they're going to
17 want to increase it again. And, you know, my question
18 is, when is it going to stop? At what point?

19 I just ask the Commission to please do not
20 grant this type of rate for us that we just -- it's
21 just difficult for us in the neighborhood to pay it.
22 It's just way too high.

23 Usually, any type of development that people
24 build, is included for the buyers like, the roads, the

1 sewage, and water. We've already paid for that.
2 And now, Saga wants us to pay more for their
3 development. And I can't imagine them going to sell a
4 house where they want to develop and tell somebody,
5 "Oh, by the way, you're going to pay \$200 a month for
6 sewer." That's not going to fly, but they want us to
7 pay these rates. And it's just too difficult. Like I
8 said, you can look at the audience, at the people out
9 there, these are our residents that have come here
10 today, and there's a few of them in there that's over
11 65 and on a fixed income, and to try to pay these
12 rates, it's just going to be very difficult for us.
13 And I just ask the board to, you know, please do not
14 grant them this type of rate.

15 We have had no input whatsoever, the
16 residents, in regards to the sewer plant as far as the
17 development, and even before that, we never knew
18 anything about it. So -- I don't know if my time is
19 up -- but anyway, I just ask to not charge that type
20 of rate to give us a lower rate on that. And if we
21 could have some type of discussion with someone about
22 the rates instead of just sending us a letter saying,
23 "Well, this is what they requested you pay." It's
24 just too much for us.

1 So does anyone have any questions for me?

2 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. NEWELL:

3 Q I do, Mr. Avery. Just, are you affiliated with
4 any --

5 A If you're going to talk to me, you're going to
6 have to come up here. I can't hear you.

7 Q Are you affiliated with any parties to this
8 proceeding?

9 A Ma'am, I can't hear you. I have bad hearing. If
10 you come up here and talk to me.

11 Q I'll come on up. Are you affiliated with any of
12 the parties in this proceeding?

13 A Any what?

14 Q In this proceeding, the Company or --

15 A No. I'm just a resident. I'm a full-time
16 resident of Southern Shores Landing, Dare County.
17 I live here full-time.

18 Q Have you had any service-related issues?

19 A Not since I've been there. I've been there 11
20 years. I've never had a problem. None
21 whatsoever.

22 MS. NEWELL: Thank you.

23 MR. FINLEY: No questions. Thank you for
24 coming, Mr. Avery.

1 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you for
2 coming, Mr. Avery. You may be excused.

3 MS. NEWELL: The next witness is Matthew
4 Huband.

5 THE WITNESS: Hello. I'm Matthew Huband. I
6 live at 110 Landing Trail in Southern Shores Landing.

7 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you very
8 much. Could you also state your name and spell it for
9 the record.

10 THE WITNESS: M-A-T-T-H-E-W. Last name,
11 H-U-B-A-N-D.

12 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you.

13 MATTHEW HUBAND;

14 having been duly sworn,

15 testified as follows:

16 DIRECT STATEMENT BY THE WITNESS:

17 As Mr. Avery stated, most of the people in
18 our community do live on a fixed income and are
19 retired. What I would like to ask the Commission to
20 really take a look at is most of the residents,
21 including myself, I live directly across the street
22 from the wastewater treatment plant, and since I've
23 been there since 2018, the Applicant has owned the
24 plant. And they bought the plant, knowing the

1 condition that the plant was in. Knowing that it
2 needed to be -- that it wasn't functioning properly.
3 For us residents, we have had to go through, in the
4 last five or six years, continual smell coming from
5 the plant. Effluent coming up out of the manhole
6 covers running down our street. Having the effluent
7 discharged in our neighborhood. And the retention
8 pond that wasn't being kept up, or being used in the
9 function of what it was attended. And the whole time,
10 the Applicant has had the opportunity to make repairs
11 and bring our sewage treatment plant up to the
12 standard of what it should have been, but they refused
13 to do that because it didn't benefit them. And now
14 they want to develop their property, again, like
15 Mr. Avery said, they're looking for our community to
16 foot the bill for that so they can, in turn, make
17 millions of dollars on development.

18 Having an increase that doubles our rate, I
19 find it very unfair to the residents that have, for
20 the last 20 years, paid into the maintenance and
21 upkeep of the sewer plant and nothing has been done to
22 it. You don't see any type of insurance commission or
23 electrical commission all of a sudden doubling their
24 consumers rates. You know, things like that should

1 be -- at least if the rates are going to go up, they
2 should phased in over time. Not when you wake up one
3 day paying 90 and the next day you're paying 180. And
4 they've also indicated in the letter that the
5 Commission sent out that they already want another
6 rate increase for next year.

7 As the Public Staff, I would hope that you
8 would fight and advocate for the residents and
9 citizens of our community to fight against this
10 outrageous rate increase that we're looking at.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. NEWELL: Nothing from the Public Staff.

13 EXAMINATION BY MR. FINLEY:

14 Q Mr. Huband, can you help me identify where the
15 manholes are where you say that the effluent has
16 come out of --

17 A Yes. They are located on Landing Trail. I can't
18 remember the house number it's in front of, but
19 it's on Landing Trail and we have seven homes
20 starting at the bypass and go around the curve,
21 and this is the last house on Landing Trail on
22 the curve. There's a manhole cover there.

23 Anytime we had excessive rain, the effluent
24 would just run right out of the manhole cover and

1 right down the street multiple times up until the
2 Applicant decided to finally replace one of the
3 main tanks in the front.

4 Q And when did that -- replace the main tank
5 happen?

6 A Last year.

7 Q Okay.

8 A And I will add -- can I continue to speak?

9 Q Sure.

10 A I will add that the Applicant, when they were
11 making repairs to the sewage treatment plant,
12 they had an opportunity to bring the sewage
13 treatment plant up to its full operating
14 standard; however, they chose to take the easy
15 route and the cheapest route and just replace one
16 of the tanks because they thought they could get
17 away with that and that the Town Southern Shores
18 would give them a building permit for them to
19 build on their property.

20 They can't build on that property unless
21 they have a functioning sewer plant to hook up
22 to. Now, they own that property, and they own
23 the plant, so we are at the mercy of them.
24 Again, they didn't decide to do anything in the

1 last five years because they weren't going to
2 develop that property, so there was no -- there
3 was no benefit to them. And the operators of
4 that plant, who are actually taking care of that
5 plant, would inform us that they have just been
6 told to just keep the toilets flushing because
7 that's all they want to do.

8 They did not want to put any money into it
9 because it wasn't going to be any financial
10 benefit to them. And now that they are going to
11 develop that property, all of a sudden now they
12 want to do it and they took the easy route, only
13 replacing one of the tanks, knowing full well
14 that they were still pumping the fluid into the
15 retention pond when it was supposed to be going
16 through the and out through the landscaping
17 through the irrigation system, which is
18 nonfunctioning and has not functioned.

19 So there has to be some kind of
20 accountability held for the Applicant. Not only
21 that, but the State Utilities Commission has been
22 fining them repeatedly over the last five years.
23 Thousands of dollars and numerous, numerous
24 fines. So there has to be some type of

1 accountability instead of putting the burden on
2 us residents to help facilitate all those
3 repairs.

4 Q I know it's hard to do, but can you describe --
5 describe what what you say the smell is? I mean,
6 there's -- any sewer treatment is going to have
7 some smell. Can you just sort of describe it for
8 me, please?

9 A Well, it's raw sewage. It's what it smells like.
10 It's smells like effluent. You know, your poop
11 and pee that comes out when you walk down the
12 street that's when the wind blows at certain
13 times that's what we smell for the last 4 years
14 until they replaced the tank pretty much on a
15 daily basis.

16 Not only that, but multiple well testings
17 have been failing. And, again, for what we've
18 paid into it over the last 20 years at 90 bucks a
19 month for 20 years had to have added up to
20 hundreds of thousands of dollars. So where did
21 this money go? Who got that money? Where did it
22 go, and why wasn't it used to maintain this?

23 Again, we are being asked to foot the bill
24 for a portion of this repair and upgrade so these

1 guys can go make millions of dollars. And that's
2 the truth.

3 MR. FINLEY: Thank you, Mr. Huband.

4 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

5 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you, Mr.
6 Huband. I appreciate you coming out tonight.

7 Ms. Newell, do you have another witness?

8 MS. NEWELL: Yes. Linda Sears.

9 LINDA SEARS;

10 having been duly sworn,

11 testified as follows:

12 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Can you, please,
13 state your name and spell it for the record, please.

14 THE WITNESS: Sure. It's Linda, L-I-N-D-A.
15 Last name, Sears, S-E-A-R-S.

16 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you. You
17 may begin.

18 DIRECT STATEMENT BY THE WITNESS:

19 Okay. So this is old stomping grounds for
20 me. I'm a retired state employee. I worked in this
21 building for 27 years and nine months. Had extra time
22 to make 30. So although I'm under the age that Wayne
23 said, I am retired. I am on a fixed income, and I
24 want to address some things that Wayne and Matt have

1 not and it's on consumption.

2 So in the declaration of protected covenants
3 and restrictions that were dated 12/2/2002, when our
4 development was created, they put in there -- in the
5 deed, also, dated the same day -- that it was going to
6 have 50 single family units at 18,000 gallons per day
7 and no tap fee. So they cannot give us another tap
8 fee. Each time somebody was going to purchase this,
9 they had to carry on that same agreement.

10 So now we are at 38 single family units.
11 And by their own testimony, Mr. Gupta, and also
12 Michael Strader, which is from Quible, we use 6,000
13 gallons per day.

14 The tank is 32,500 gallons per day, which
15 means they are requesting for us to pay 100 percent,
16 because if you look at the Application -- and let me
17 tell you some issues with the Application so number
18 one: If you look at Exhibit 8, Atlantic OBX
19 Reality -- I mean, Atlantic OBX sewer people, the
20 contract's not signed by them.

21 How is it a contract if two people don't
22 sign it? How is it an agreement if two people don't
23 sign it? They put in there that we pay them \$4,000 a
24 month for their services. The contract wasn't signed.

1 How is it a valid contract? We do not know how much
2 Saga pays them, because it's not a valid contract.

3 Also, if you look at the -- number two on
4 the Application, the service area, Ginguite mixed-used
5 area has the same amount of sewage treatment as our
6 community. Now, we are mandated by our homeowner's
7 association to only have six people in each home
8 because of the restraint on the sewer system. That's
9 where they came up with the one \$18,000[sic] -- 18,000
10 gallons, but now they're asking for us to pay 100
11 percent. I'm running out of time.

12 So there is a lot of fallacies. There's --
13 I have minutes where they have made -- they have
14 spoken to the Town of Southern Shores. These aren't
15 drafts. These are actual minutes quoting that
16 Mr. Supta has spent nine \$900,000 on sewer. \$900,000.
17 But then you look at the Application, it's like,
18 \$100,000 here, \$400,000 there, \$500,000 there. It's
19 just -- we are a small community made up of retired
20 folks that love each other. We look out for each
21 other. We have widowers having coffee every morning
22 checking up on each other. I, myself, put the
23 trashcans back and forth for my elderly neighbor, who
24 until a year ago, was -- she's in her 80's. I don't

1 want to say how old she is. She'll get really mad --
2 but she was a volunteer for a hotline; a shelter for
3 abused woman. She was on call on Tuesday nights to
4 answer the phone to help these women.

5 My son and others are volunteers. My son
6 owns his own home in our community. They're
7 volunteers at the Southern Shores Fire Department. We
8 have one house that is a seasonal rental, and they put
9 on a they -- they did it last year. They didn't have
10 any rentals. And as of today, they don't have any
11 rentals.

12 So we are a community of friends and family
13 that look out for each other that are predominantly
14 on a fixed income. We have teachers. We have health
15 care workers. And these people -- we are not -- I'm
16 not getting a raise with my retirement to pay for
17 Saga's mistake. And I will have to agree with Matt on
18 the smell.

19 And if you also look -- and I'm very
20 surprised the Utilities Commission hasn't handled
21 this, but there's no signage. Keep out. There's no
22 contact this person, their contractor if something
23 happens. No stay away. Nothing. No Utilities
24 Commission thing. Nothing on their fence. And I

1 walked all around that at the end of the day.

2 Now, we were supposed to get -- according to
3 the deed, we're supposed to get sprinklers. Okay.
4 Sprinklers were supposed to be coming from the
5 irrigation system, filtered, and then every part of
6 the common area in Southern Shores Landing was
7 guaranteed sprinklers. They were there from the
8 beginning, and then they fell apart. But, if you
9 notice on Saga's plan, the irrigation system for their
10 new buildings is there. Miraculously, it showed up,
11 but they're not even giving us the service from the
12 very beginning on our deed.

13 And I'll shut up now, because I went way
14 over.

15 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. NEWELL:

16 Q Ms. Sears, just one quick follow-up. Did you
17 file a consumer statement and position on
18 March 8, 2024?

19 A I did.

20 Q And is this the statement that you filed?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And would you like that to be entered into the
23 record?

24 A Yes.

1 MS. NEWELL: And then at this time, I move
2 to have Sears Exhibit 1 entered into the record.

3 (WHEREUPON, Sears Exhibit 1
4 is identified.)

5 MR. FINLEY: May I have a look, please.

6 THE WITNESS: It's not as long as I talked.
7 Sorry.

8 MR. FINLEY: No objection.

9 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Without
10 objection, this document will be marked as Sears
11 Exhibit 1, and a copy will be provided to the Court
12 Reporter now.

13 (WHEREUPON, Sears Exhibit 1
14 is received into evidence.)

15 MS. NEWELL: Nothing further, Ms. Sears.

16 MR. FINLEY: No questions. Thank you, Ms.
17 Sears.

18 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you for
19 your testimony. We appreciate you coming out.

20 MS. NEWELL: And next up, we have Susan
21 Johnson.

22 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Hello, Ms.
23 Johnson.

24 SUSAN JOHNSON;

1 having been duly sworn,

2 testified as follows:

3 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Please state
4 your name for the record and spell it for us.

5 THE WITNESS: Susan Johnson. S-U-S-A-N.
6 J-O-H-N-S-O-N. 8 Fox Wood Circle.

7 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you so
8 much. You may begin.

9 DIRECT STATEMENT BY THE WITNESS:

10 My neighbors have done a pretty good job of
11 summing things up very briefly but, nevertheless,
12 summing up the major points. The 10 years I've been
13 in Southern Shores Landing, I've never once gotten a
14 notice of noncompliance about utilities. It seems to
15 have been a shell game between the license, the
16 ownership, who owns what when, who's taking
17 responsibility. It's very difficult for consumers to
18 understand things like that, and over the years it --
19 it baffles me trying to understand if you have a
20 Utilities Commission that is overlooking something
21 like this, how is it going on this long and it's still
22 out of compliance? How do you put \$400,000 into
23 something and it's still out of compliance? Where's
24 our money gone over the last, for me, 10 years.

1 That's over \$400,000 right there. And it's worse
2 now -- well, two years ago -- a year and a half ago,
3 this is worse than it's ever been. That money just
4 vanished.

5 That's very upsetting. Especially to those
6 of us -- I'm not 65 yet, but I'm close. I'm almost
7 there. Soon we'll be on a fixed income.

8 Time and time again, we've never been told
9 the full truth. We have to dig it out, and it's only
10 until we dig out the truth and throw it out there that
11 anybody pays attention to this. If we aren't the
12 strong community, the little 38 homes that we are
13 standing up for ourselves, Saga would've gotten their
14 plants. Saga would've been trying build their million
15 dollar commercial and apartments and everything else
16 they want to put on that little sunken piece of land
17 using a utility that doesn't even work now for 38
18 homes.

19 And the stench is awful in the summer. I
20 don't want to walk my dog there anymore because it
21 stinks. If something stinks that bad, for somebody
22 like me who knows nothing about sewage systems, that's
23 a bad sign.

24 And it also baffles me why -- if something

1 is out of compliance, why does it continue to remain
2 out of compliance and the entity that is supposed to
3 be overlooking it does not pay attention. I don't
4 understand that either. And I don't understand why
5 the shell game was being played for so long. Nobody
6 knew anything. We've never been given a notice that
7 anything was wrong. We had to smell it to find out.
8 Fortunately, we can still flush.

9 I would hope and pray that you have our
10 backs when you make this decision because we're a
11 little community. I heard in the Town meetings that
12 we use 70 percent of the whole thing, and yet, it's
13 out of compliance for 10 years and now you want us to
14 pay for fixing it all. I don't know -- that just
15 doesn't add up to me. That's a whole lot of money for
16 somebody else to get rich. Because nobody in our
17 neighborhood is that rich. I can guarantee you that.

18 Questions?

19 MS. NEWELL: Nothing from me.

20 MR. FINLEY: No questions.

21 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you,
22 Ms. Johnson, for coming out tonight.

23 MS. NEWELL: So Ms. Johnson was the last
24 person on our sign-up sheet, and I will just ask if

1 there's anyone else in the audience that would like to
2 make a statement.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: (No verbal response.)

4 MS. NEWELL: So Caroline Haas will be
5 speaking next.

6 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Hi, Ms. Haas.

7 CAROLINE HAAS;

8 having been duly sworn,

9 testified as follows:

10 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Can you state
11 your name and address for the record, please.

12 THE WITNESS: Yes. My name is Caroline
13 Haas, and my address is 15 Foxwood Circle.

14 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Can you spell
15 your name as well.

16 THE WITNESS: Caroline is, C-A-R-O-L-I-N-E,
17 and Haas is, H-A-A-S.

18 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you. You
19 may begin.

20 THE WITNESS: Thank you. Great job to my
21 neighbors for speaking already, and I just wanted to
22 add in one thing because I thought the \$1,308 dollars
23 a month because I live alone, you know, trying to stay
24 in a county where I've raised my kids. I looked into

1 what typical sewage rates are throughout the state.
2 In Durham County, the average sewer cost is 25 a
3 month. So I moved in four years ago paying 90 a month
4 to now paying 180. You know, it's just -- I agree so
5 much with what's been said already. Where has the
6 money gone? Why wasn't it maintained? And, you know,
7 we found out, luckily, through the town meetings that
8 we've had about the development that Saga's trying to
9 build next to us that, our sewage has been running on
10 the bypass 158 that runs next to our neighborhood. A
11 main road.

12 So it's just incredible to me that, you know
13 we've got kids and dogs and people outside throughout
14 the day all day everyday and we're breathing in this
15 sewage and living, you know, with this subpar system.
16 And, you know, I just don't understand why we're
17 paying so much more than typical in the state for a
18 system that has been fined regularly. And it's great
19 that the Commission can see enough that it's not in
20 compliance that they're issuing fines to Saga all this
21 time, but, again, where's -- where's the next step of
22 repairing when the fines are issued?

23 That's all I wanted to say.

24 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. NEWELL:

1 Q And Ms. Haas, did you file on January 18, 2024, a
2 statement of position in the docket system?

3 A Probably. I know I filed, but I'm not sure what
4 date.

5 Q May I approach?

6 A It sounds like me.

7 Q Can you take a look at this?

8 A I had to put my reading glasses back in the car.
9 Yes, that's me.

10 Q Okay. And would you like for your statement to
11 be included in the record?

12 A Yes, please.

13 Q And --

14 (Hands to counsel.)

15 MR. FINLEY: No objection.

16 MS. NEWELL: And so at this time, I'd ask
17 for Ms. Haas's exhibit to be marked as Haas Exhibit 1
18 and entered into the record.

19 (WHEREUPON, Haas Exhibit 1
20 is identified.)

21 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Without
22 objection, the document will be marked as Haas Exhibit
23 1 and a copy will be provided to the court reporter.

24 (WHEREUPON, Haas Exhibit 1

1 is received into evidence.)

2 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Do you have any
3 questions?

4 CROSS EXAMINATION BY MR. FINLEY:

5 Q Ms. Haas, have you actually seen sewage from the
6 GWWTP plant on Highway 158?

7 A I don't go that way purposely. I take Landing.
8 I just stay on Fox wood Circle down and out the
9 other way.

10 MR. FINLEY: Thank you, ma'am.

11 HEARING EXAMINER WINSTEAD: Thank you for
12 coming out, Ms. Haas. All right.

13 Are there any other witnesses that would
14 like to speak tonight?

15 And I know there were a lot of questions
16 tonight so I, again, encourage you to ask questions to
17 the Public Staff after hearing tonight. So as stated
18 in your customer notice, information concerning this
19 proceeded can be accessed from the Commission's
20 website at www.ncuc.gov under Docket Number W-1343,
21 Sub 1. The Public Staff and GWWTP will be making
22 additional filings in this docket for consideration by
23 the Commission making its decision in this matter.
24 You may access these filings at the Commission's

1 website.

2 The expert witness hearing will be held in
3 Raleigh, North Carolina, on Tuesday, May 7, 2024,
4 beginning at 10 a.m. A panel of three Commissioners,
5 who I previously mentioned, will preside over that
6 hearing. The hearing will be live-streamed on
7 YouTube. You may also watch the recorded version at a
8 later time.

9 There after, the Commission will issue an
10 Order of setting forth this decision of the matter.
11 The Commission's Order will be available for viewing
12 on the website. The Commission appreciates you coming
13 out tonight and providing your statement. This
14 concludes the public hearing. We are adjourned, thank
15 you.

16 (The proceedings were adjourned.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, KAYLENE CLAYTON, do hereby certify that
the Proceedings in the above-captioned matter were
taken before me, that I did report in stenographic
shorthand the Proceedings set forth herein, and the
foregoing pages are a true and correct transcription to
the best of my ability.

Kaylene Clayton

Kaylene Clayton