

Petition update

Thanksgiving Message from NVWC to Penn State

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Nittany Valley Water Coalition

State College, PA

Nov 22, 2017 — Thanksgiving: It is time for PSU to give to its neighbors

Penn State University sits within the community and is reliant upon the community. However, it is fair to say that it has less than ideal town-gown relationships.

For almost three years the community has asked Penn State not to sell farmland along Whitehall Road near Blue Course Drive for development.

The Nittany Valley Water Coalition (NVWC) objects to a large student development in this location because of the risks to the local water supply and the quality of Slab Cabin Run, which is downslope from the development site.

A conservation easement is being placed on other land in this area, and Penn State should preserve this parcel for the same reasons.

More than 5,000 signatures on petitions opposing this development, 1,000 yard signs around town, and more than \$40,000 in donations for legal costs all speak to the community's support to protect this farmland.

NVWC also protests on the grounds that any development on farmland threatens neighboring farms because of increased run-off and flooding and pressure on other farmers to sell. There is a great deal of research showing that development on farmland increases the likelihood that nearby farms will find it difficult to keep farming.

Now the developer, Toll Brothers, has submitted a letter of intent to Penn State to purchase and build on an alternate site on West College Avenue, across from the Waffle Shop, which presents far less environmental risk.

To date Penn State's response has been to stonewall, hoping that the Whitehall Road sale will close in a few weeks with no decision made by Penn State on the offer from Toll Brothers on the alternate site.

You are a Land Grant University with a strategic plan that aims to be good stewards of our natural resources. It should not require the citizens to tell you the right thing to do here.

As a show of good faith, we ask that you immediately begin to work with Ferguson Township to rezone the West College Avenue site, which would allow Toll Brothers to purchase it, and put a hold on the closing of the West Whitehall Road parcel and the escrow deposit until negotiations with Toll Brothers over the West College Avenue parcel are complete.

This does not commit you to the sale but it would show that you are acting in good faith.

In this Thanksgiving week please give us, your neighbors, something to be thankful for.

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Nittany Valley Water Coalition

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