

The Bandera PROPHEET

August 25, 2020

TCEQ Public Meeting set for Sept. 3

The Friends of Hondo Canyon landowner group has alerted members they should register for a virtual Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Public Meeting on a Water Rights permit being sought by a summer youth camp under construction in the Bandera County community of Tarpley.

The TCEQ has scheduled the meeting for Thursday, Sept. 3, at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held virtually, so people wanting to speak during the meeting should register in advance. More than 250 concerned area landowners filed protests in writing to the permit earlier this summer attracting enough attention and public interest that the TCEQ was prompted to schedule the meeting.

“We are pleased the commissioners recognized how much landowner opposition there is to the camp’s plans and has scheduled this meeting to allow people to voice their concerns. Now we need people to sign up for the meeting so they can ask questions and speak out first-hand to the commission,” Brenda Saunders, of Friends of Hondo Canyon, said.

“While this meeting is being held virtually because of the pandemic, it’s still so important that people attend to show their opposition to what’s being proposed.”

Here’s how people can register for the TCEQ Public Meeting:

Internet: Members of the public who would like to ask questions or provide comments during the meeting may access the meeting via webcast by following this link: <https://www.gotomeeting.com/webinar/join-webinar> and entering Webinar ID 610- 648-323. It is recommended that people register now.

Phone: Those without internet access must call 512-239-1201 at least one day prior to the meeting for assistance in accessing the meeting and participating telephonically. Members of the public who wish to only listen to the meeting may call, toll free, 914-614-3221 and enter access code 822-638-021

This Water Rights permit is the second permit being sought by the camp to draw passionate community opposition. The first, a Waste Water Discharge permit continues to move through the TCEQ process. That permit has received legal Contested Case Hearing status, which means a formal state hearing with legal arguments and expert testimony will be held in the coming months, unless the protestants are able to resolve their concerns in the meantime.

“We, in the community, want to be good neighbors to all who make this area their home. We are very concerned about the environment, especially with all the new construction in the area. We do not want sewage waste dumped into our, now depleted, tiny creek. We are also very concerned about our ground water. It would make so much sense to irrigate the field for horse grazing with the highly nutrient rich sewage effluent rather than dump it into our now dry creek bed, and pump more water out of the ground to irrigate the same field. Also, filling these lakes, with our precious ground water, for recreational use during our summer droughts is a major concern to all our community,” John Blackwell, president of Friends of Hondo Canyon, said.

The FOHC landowner group continues to attract more members concerned about these issues and will be launching an additional fundraising campaign, Win-Win 4 Water to help the organization raise additional funding for the legal and regulatory proceedings ahead.