

# The Woods' winding path

BY CAROLYN STEEVES

**WEDDINGTON** — Last week's meeting was another chapter in what has become a lengthy book about development and infrastructure. The Woods has been in the works for about two years and so far there is still no plan to provide sewer for the future residents.

Infinity Partners bought the property that will someday be The Woods in November of 2006. The developer for the Woods is IB Development, which is a partnership between The Base Group and Infinity Partners. Philip Walton, a partner with Infinity Partners, explained to **The Mecklenburg Times** in June that when they bought the land two years ago Union County was experiencing the sewer capacity problems that haunt the county today. Walton said that as they saw the delays mounting, they looked into alternatives to sewer. Initially they looked at conditional septic, but that was not a suitable alternative for the size of the development.

At this point the idea of an onsite wastewater recycling plant came to fruition. Walton noted that there has been a "whole shift in the public dialogue about sustainability and the need to be more conscientious." He said the plant would solve the issue of inadequate sewer capacity and would beneficially reuse the water.

However, the proposal met opposition from some Weddington citizens. They formed the Friends of Weddington, a citizens group opposed to building the plant.

Janice Propst talked to **The**

**Times** in June about the issue. Propst is a member of the Friends of Weddington. She owns property adjacent to the future site of The Woods. Propst said she was concerned about the lack of infrastructure in Weddington and the precedent a private plant could set. "If we allow this one reclaimed wastewater treatment facility in our town, then potentially" we could end up with 20 private facilities, she said.

"A lot of people don't consider private wastewater treatment plants infrastructure for sewer," Propst said. "If we're going to be developed in the future when the economy picks up, wouldn't we want the infrastructure?"

The public hearings dealing with the Woods' wastewater recycling plant began in late July. After multiple sessions filled with hours of expert testimony and witnesses, the Weddington Town Council decided unanimously to deny IB Development's proposal last week.

Walton said he planned to meet with his engineers the next day to start discussing new strategies. Their proposal met three out of four requirements — it was deemed that it did not meet the requirement that the proposal be harmonious with the Weddington land-use plan and future growth.

"As long as it's not a private sewer," Propst joked after the meeting last week. She said the group would continue to watch the issue.

Walton said that his group remains committed to this property and this project. "We'll find a way," he said. "We're not going anywhere."