

Petition update

# Toll Brothers executives put in an offer on the alternative site

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## **Nittany Valley Water Coalition**

State College, PA

Nov 15, 2017 — Nittany Valley Water Coalition Press Release - Nov. 15, 2017

Toll Brothers makes offer to Penn State for an alternative site to Whitehall Road for student housing

Nittany Valley Water Coalition (NVWC) held a follow-up meeting on November 14th with Toll Brothers' representative Richard Keyser, Vice-President of Apartment Living, to discuss their recent review of PSU-owned land that would serve as an alternative site for a student housing project currently slated for Whitehall Road.

On October 31, Toll Brothers submitted a formal Letter of Intent expressing interest in purchasing a 19-acre parcel on West College Avenue in front of the Blue Course golf course and across the road from the Waffle Shop as the alternative site.

In prior meetings with NVWC, Toll Brothers expressed interest in the W. College location due to its proximity to campus, downtown, and student amenities. There is also strong community support for this property as an alternative site for the planned development.

Since August, Toll Brothers has been conducting due diligence research and design planning to determine the feasibility of this site for a mixed-use development, a combination of student housing and commercial use. Most new and proposed developments in the region have some type of mixed-use component, which is also consistent with regional planning directives and has support by the larger community.

Mr. Keyser emphasized that Toll Brothers wants to work with the community and hopes to engage in the development process and land sale with the cooperation of Ferguson Township and Penn State as quickly as possible.

However, in a follow-up meeting with a representative from Penn State, Charima Young, she cited a poorly defined "process that must be followed" that could delay or thwart any desired "land swap" even though Kurt

Kissinger, Associate Vice- President for Business & Finance has previously stated in writing to the NVWC that Penn State has no plans for the West College site.

According to Toll Brothers and Penn State, price is not at issue. Mr. Keyser stated that Toll Brothers wants the W. College site, not Whitehall, so the impediment to this “land swap” is a timing issue exacerbated by Penn State.

Ms. Young informed us that there is now a task force of Board of Trustees members who are charged with reviewing and making decisions on all Penn State land holdings to determine best use of these properties. She did not know when this task force was established but that question is relevant to consideration of the sale of the W. College parcel to Toll Brothers in lieu of the Whitehall parcels.

Putting this decision into the hands of a task force is a stalling tactic. PSU told the public many times that they were just the seller of land, and it was not their concern what is done with it after the sale. What changed? It appears that Penn State’s objective is to run out the clock forcing Toll Brothers to take possession of the land on Whitehall via the existing sales agreement, which is due to close in the next few weeks.

However, Toll Brothers could walk away; besides losing their funds in escrow, it is not clear that Penn State could force Toll Brothers to pay the remaining balance. Instead, they could purchase and build on any number of parcels available in the region.

The community supports Toll Brothers building student housing on W. College, not on Whitehall Rd. upslope of Slab Cabin Run and the Thomas-Harter wells.

Although Penn State contracted with local farmers for winter wheat to be planted on the Whitehall Road site, no such planting has taken place. Therefore the risk to the Whitehall Road site for imminent development remains.

For additional information, contact:

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### Nittany Valley Water Coalition

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[Arthur Curtze](#)

[Nov 15, 2017](#)

I sincerely hope Penn State gets on-board with selling Toll Brothers the West College Avenue site, and keeping the Whitehall Rd site as farmland! It is truly the right thing to do for our community and our entire region.

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**[Andrew McKinnon](#)**

Nov 15, 2017

Right on, Art. Here's Penn State's chance to show it's either for... [Read more](#)

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