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Company kills plans for expanded Apopka landfill

By [David Damron](#) and [Kevin Spear](#), Orlando Sentinel

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A controversial plan to expand a landfill in Apopka has been dumped by the company that advertisement proposed it.

"Waste Management has decided to not proceed with our efforts to convert the Vista landfill," a company official wrote Apopka Mayor John Land in a letter released Wednesday.

The Houston-based company had offered the city \$1 million and other incentives in exchange for permission to convert its existing Vista landfill, which now accepts construction and landscape refuse, into a dump that takes nearly all types of trash.

Nearby residents mobilized against it. Orange County officials who also opposed the idea were in talks with Land about a compromise, possibly by lowering fees that Apopka and others paid to use the county's landfill east of Orlando.

But Waste Management officials said they were walking away from the proposal.

Senior manager J. David Green thanked Land for vetting the idea, but added, "as you know, a number of issues have arisen during the vetting process that led us to this decision."

Nearby residents were happy to hear that the proposal had died.

"That's really good news," said Glenn Evans, who lives near the proposed landfill and led a petition drive by the Keep Apopka Clean Coalition to let voters approve or ban the project. "But the fact of the matter remains that I don't think we are going to forget how City Council members treated South Apopka."

Another city resident, Randall Horn, said he is gratified that landfill opponents appear to have won a David-vs.-Goliath battle.

"I'm a business guy so I've learned to trust but verify," Horn said. "They [Waster Management officials] are very shrewd, having been around the block a few times and I don't particularly trust them."

Company officials declined further coment.

Richard Anderson, Apopka's chief administrative officer, said city leaders were never eager to expand the landfill, but were glad it opened up talks over county fees. "That was our goal," he said.

County Commissioner Fred Brummer, who represents the area, compared the city's tactics with "extortion" at a meeting Tuesday, where residents turned out sharply against it.

On Wednesday, Brummer said the company was used and "recognized the futility in it, so they closed it out in a classy way."

Mayor Teresa Jacobs lauded Land, the company and the residents "who did what they should do." And she agreed the county's landfill fees need review.

"It's a very good outcome," Jacobs said.

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