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Glynn County Rewards Hercules for Superfund Site with Tax Exemption

Since at least 1988, Hercules has not paid taxes on the 16-acre Hercules 009 Landfill Superfund Site. How Hercules obtained this County tax exemption is not clear. Efforts to find minutes of the Glynn County Board of Assessors meeting where the tax exemption was granted have been requested but yet to be produced by the Tax Assessors Office.

Limited information was obtained concerning the reasoning behind the tax exemption from the tax cards available in the Assessor's Office. Hand written at the bottom of the tax card was, "Exempt, this land was required for burial of toxaphene waste." Another tax card reads, "Exempt, required for pollution control burial for toxaphene waste." Other cards have a note at the bottom. "Exempt, burial for toxaphene waste," and "Ck exempt status! Why (EPA)."

The tax cards told a far different story than the one Hercules told the Glynn County Zoning and Planning Commission when they had the property rezoned in 1974. Hercules represented that the property would be filled resulting in the reclamation of the property for future development. Hercules General Manager Harold Hicks explained that unusable byproducts, basically sand, lime and silt, resulting from Hercules' operations would be placed in catch-basins for drying and transferred to the site periodically. What Mr. Hicks failed to mention was that toxic toxaphene would be part of the sand, lime, and silt. Indications are that Hercules knew full well that toxic waste would be put on the property since they applied for and received a permit for disposal of hazardous waste from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division in 1975.

Currently, Hercules has leased part of what is now called the Hercules 009 Landfill Superfund Site to Nalley auto dealership for parking, taking in income, and exempt from taxes on the property. Meanwhile, the taxpayers of Glynn County continue to be a good neighbor, pay their taxes, and reward Hercules for putting a Superfund Site in our community with a tax exemption.

What has yet to be answered is why Glynn County felt land was required for Hercules to dispose of toxaphene manufacturing wastes. Many other questions remain. Did the Zoning and Planning Commission know that Hercules intended to dispose of toxic waste at the time they rezoned the land, or are the representations of Hercules for the rezoning misleading? Did the Board of Assessors approve a tax exemption for the Hercules 009 Landfill Superfund Site? If so, what were the reasons they felt compelled to provide Hercules a tax exemption?