

# Thom Tillis

19209 Hidden Cove Lane  
Cornelius, NC 28031

Phone: (704) 895-1769 / office  
(704) 728-9239 / cell

June 3, 2005

Kenneth Cooke  
17828 Jim Cooke Road  
Cornelius, NC 28031

Mr. Cooke:

On Monday, April 4, 2005, I received a hand written invoice in the amount of \$200.00 from your brother (See attached invoice copy: Bill for Cleaning Equipment & Buildings—Cooke Farms). This letter is being sent to inform you that I do not intend to remit payment for the work delineated in the invoice.

Your basis for invoicing me related to a comment I made in a past Town Board meeting in discussions about the annexation of the Stratford Forest subdivision and a parcel of land your family owns. In the process of hearing citizen comments and discussing the issue, I made an off-handed comment that "I may have played paintball there a time or two." I do play paintball on a regular basis, but I have never played paintball on your property. However, I owe you an explanation and apology.

My comment was made shortly after one of your family members and another citizen spoke out against the annexation. Their comments suggested that the Board was some sort of detached entity disinterested in the well being of the Town's citizens as a whole. In an effort to "humanize" the Board by my off handed comment, I became guilty of a white lie. My comment was not intended to harm anyone. My intent was to have the participants in the meeting think of us as people/neighbors trying to do this best we can to lead the Town, rather than insensitive bureaucrats intent on harming our citizens. Clearly, the approach I used was an error in my judgment, and I apologize for having misled you.

You may wonder how I would know that people played paintball on the property along McDowell Creek, and this also warrants an explanation. The year before last my dog Abe died, and I buried him on the County-owned property adjacent to your property. Before Abe died, I took him for walks on the property, and I worked with him for tracking and off leash training.

From time to time over the past year and a half, I have taken several walks on the County property, and I have visited his gravesite, which is still marked and not too far from McDowell Creek. This past winter, I was walking along McDowell Creek, and I heard the sound of paint ball marker, so I walked over to see what was going on. Although I never actually saw who was playing, it sounded like young kids. I am not sure if they were playing on your property or the small part of the woods that are actually part of the County property just on the other side of the creek. In any event, it would stand to reason that the people who did this were young kids. In my experience with playing paint ball with adults, respect for property and safety are of paramount importance, and I know the group I play with would never condone such behavior.

June 3, 2005

When I first received the invoice, I seriously considered paying the \$200.00, which you are most likely due from those who damaged your property. However, paying the invoice would take me away from being guilty of a white lie, which was not intended to harm anyone, to being a confessor of crimes I did not commit. Consequently, I have written this letter in order to explain my actions, and I intend to share it with the Mayor and fellow Commissioners.

I know you were present on the night I made the comment, and I do not fault you for the actions you took. You have every right to expect to be compensated for your work to clean up your building, and I hope you identify the persons who damaged your property.

Once again, I apologize for the confusion I caused you.

Sincerely,

Thom Tillis

copy: W.T. Campbell – Campbell, Campbell, and Edwards  
Town of Cornelius, Mayor and Commissioners

← no such  
law firm that  
we can find.  
- also, he did not  
give the mayor  
or commissioners  
a copy.  
- he sent this letter  
by certified mail.