

Judge Says Court will Investigate Concerns about Power Plant

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Lee County Judge Frank Malinak III said after Monday's meeting in response to public comments made during Commissioners' Court Monday morning, "We [Commissioners' Court] will not approve a Resolution for or against the proposed natural gas power plant slated to be built outside of Lexington right now. We will remain neutral until we do our own investigation looking in to it. That means, we will tour a similar power plant and ask important questions that will consider not only the concerns of the Move the Power Plant folks in Blue, but also the concerns of all Lee County residents."

With regard to some of the specific objections the court has heard, Judge Malinak said, "We understand there are many concerns some people have, including various kinds of potential pollution a natural gas power plant may introduce into our atmosphere and lives. We will investigate potential air pollution, noise pollution, light pollution, as well as increased road traffic to and from the proposed site.

"We will research what the projected emissions could be and we will ask the hard questions about the claim that natural gas is a clean fuel. We have been told that this plant will use the newest state-of-art technology for energy production, and that it will be air cooled and not water cooled. We will verify that the plant will be quiet and not produce noise pollution to the point of disrupting people's quality of life. We have heard the complaint that light pollution will be unacceptable to many, so we will get the details to those questions, as well.

"I will never trade money for pollution, but if our investigation confirms that this proposed natural gas plant is clean and without most of the accused pollution affects but will be a benefit to our residents and our county with increased property tax revenue that could help lead to the lowering of the property tax of our individual property owners, we will consider that a win for everyone.

"As for increased road traffic, if a developer comes to Lee County, as many have done, and builds large neighborhoods with streets and homes, there will be increased road traffic. We cannot stop them from building if they do everything by the book. So increased traffic is not unique to the power plant project."

Judge Malinak concluded by saying, "I want to get the emotions and biases out of the way. When we look at this project, I want to look at just the facts. Then, after doing that, maybe we will consider a Resolution – either supporting or not supporting such a project in Lee County."