

Dominion Gas Compression Station – Chapter #51

At the May 2011 meeting, Rich Eliaz read a written response regarding the Dominion Gas compression station issue which involved the Randall family property. Jane Eliaz noted that her father lost half his land to NYS parks and that land meant a great deal to him. She planned to fight for their land and keep their family and the community's interests a priority. Her 89 year old mother still lived there and would stay. She encouraged people to talk to her or her brother Eric Randall if they had any questions or concerns.

Dick Swanson suggested discussing this issue. Dominion filed last November to construct the project located on Oak Hill Road off West Lake Road. A notice of intent was filed in December. The FERC (Federal Energy Regulation Commission) was to provide an environmental assessment that had not yet been completed, a comment period would follow. If nothing came up during the comment period, the project would be approved; original deadline for comments was January 31, 2012. FERC recently requested additional information from Dominion. Dick said that a print out of the public comments and responses to/from Dominion were in the folders that he handed out. A print out of questions & answers from FERC to Dominion were also included. The issues regarding eminent domain were moot because a tentative agreement had been reached between the Randall and Richards families and Dominion. Dick showed a map of the area with alternative sites very close to the Randall property. If the project was not built there, it would be built anyway, very close by.

A summary of the testing for noise levels was shared. A chart showed the property lines of area residences around the Randall property and the resulting ambient day & night sound levels, it also showed the existing vs. predicted sound levels. The project ran through multiple states so it was Federally-regulated.

Bill Soules noted that noise travels over water. He suggested that SLA petition Perry and Castile Planning Boards to use Industrial Wind Turbine noise regulations and apply these to any non-agricultural construction in the agricultural zone in the Towns of Perry and Castile. It was possible to reduce noise from this project if necessary. Sally Genco's email stated that Oakfield-local residents noticed very little noise. Judy Baumer visited a site in Pittsford and noted that all the noise was inside the buildings and it was located near the thruway so noise was not an issue; the larger issue would be contamination of water, runoff, etc. Dick then read comments/response from Dominion. They would retain contaminants in containers for disposal. Bob Frosino asked if Dominion took our community's land, did the community get anything besides a pumping station. He continued asking if jobs, access to natural gas where there was none or tax breaks be available from this project. Bill Soules noted that complete plans needed to be written out in detail to be approved for the construction.

Mick Griffin noted that Rich Eliaz was advised not to comment on the project by the Randall family's lawyer. He was not trying to withhold information from the community. This project involved his wife's family and had nothing to do with his position, involvement or opinion. He had personally removed himself from discussions regarding the project. Dick asked if the board would like him to ask Dominion to come and do a presentation regarding the compressor station project and have a question & answer session. Ruth suggested making the meeting a public one so that everyone in the community would be able to ask questions. Bill Soules proposed that SLA sponsor a public meeting by renting space. Dick would contact Dominion to see what could be arranged. He would let the board know what they were willing to do. Larry Bauer suggested a pre-meeting prior to a public one to review the issues.

Dick reported on the presentation given by Dominion about the gas compressor station at the June 2011 meeting. He noted that Dominion had an "Open House" planned. They agreed to answer questions but in their own way. Rich Eliaz mentioned that he and Jane attended an Open House and questioned Dominion's credibility because of the fact that Dominion did not supply the site plan to Randall family. Any project needed to go through the local planning process. Paul Emens questioned the information provided by Dominion at the Open House. He believed that some of the information was incorrect. He continued saying the process began a year ago in April, why was the project kept from the public. It was noted that Castile had no noise law that affected this project. NY State had no law, only guidelines and recommendations from the DEC. There was a limited amount of time available to try to create a law to regulate this type of project; people needed to act quickly. The SLA was a critical element to making this happen. Only 5 of 50 Board Members were at the Town meeting where this project was discussed. There were flaws in the noise studies related to the time of day studies took place, etc. It did not take lake effect (noise travelling over water) into account.

Ann Heizmann tried to speak with a sound engineer but he avoided her questions. It was not sure where study took place. Paul Emens questioned the construction of building regarding soundproofing. It was assured the building was top notch then we were told the building was middle of the road as far as sound-proofing technology. It was reminded that we were stuck with whatever type of building was allowed. It could not be changed later. June 30th the environmental assessment came out and it could be commented on at that time; the comment period was 30 days (end of July).

Kelly Paganelli asked how the Town of Mendon got permission to build a compressor station near the thruway. It was told it was an ongoing process over 3 years and the company gave them a nice looking, more advanced building as far as noise and smell. Mick Griffin said Dominion did not make an official public notice of this project in local paper. 40-48% of Castile's income comes from the lake residents. Susan Griffin suggested going to the Town of Castile to ask for a moratorium. George Stevens, a Fairview Tract resident wanted to follow up on the smell issue as he was downwind from the gas compressor project. He asked how information was distributed from the SLA out to the membership. Dick Swanson said there was no formal process; the development of our website would help. Frank Bright suggested sending open letters to the local newspapers and putting copies on the website. It was suggested that the SLA needed to slow this issue down and aim at stopping the process. George Stevens added that the SLA did not need to stop the process, just needed to slow it down and have it done right. Frank Bright agreed with that statement. Jim Coles asked Rich Eliaz how long it would take to get a noise ordinance for Wind Turbines. Rich said the Town Board could do it at the next meeting. There was already a moratorium in place before writing the law so there was ample time to do it right. Dick stated that the important thing was the building of the structure and what was used to protect residents from noise and smell. Bill Soules mentioned that before Dominion could build, a building code should be established that they must follow.

Ruth said the SLA Executive Committee would write a letter to the Mayor of Perry and the Supervisor of Castile requesting a moratorium in the Town of Castile and stating that the Town and Village Boards should mitigate construction of any industrial construction project in an agricultural zone through the Planning Board. It was requested that the Town and Village Boards hold a special meeting to get this process started immediately. Ann Heizmann moved that the Board of Directors supported the Executive Board in writing a letter that requested a 1 year moratorium in the Town of Castile for Industrial applications in an Agricultural zone. The board unanimously approved this action.

Jim Coles said that the town had information and they planned to tie it to the wind turbine noise issue. There was still 4 months left on 6 month moratorium.