

Tompkins County Council of Governments Gas Drilling Task Force (TCCOG-GDTF) Minutes – August 18, 2011

Update - Land Use Analysis and Impact Assessment Project

- Funding: \$10,000 maximum for the total project
 - TCAD - committed \$3,000
 - TCCOG – tentatively \$2,000
 - Art Pearce is applying for \$5,000 in Park Foundation funding.
 - Tompkins County will be the “fiscal sponsor” for the project
- The consultant will be in Ithaca on August 22 to meet with the Steering Committee.
- The model will be based on the Middlefield Study done by Greenplan but will be geared to Tompkins County using local data and new information from the revised sGEIS. Towns can contract separately for more detailed information specific to their own locality. (see the Middlefield example at:
<http://www.otsego2000.org/documents/forwebsiteMiddlefieldLandUseAnalysis-Greenplan.pdf>).

Responding to the revised sGEIS

The Task Force has committed to gathering comments in response to the revised sGEIS for municipalities to draw from when submitting comments to the DEC. To organize this effort, Lawrence McCann created a google doc which is an electronic document, used like Word, but with the capability of allowing multiple users to add or edit the document. Anyone with the url will be able to see the document, but only members of the Task Force will be able to add or change content. A subset of the Task Force consisting of Lawrence McCann, Joe Wilson, Liz Thomas, Darby Kiley and Marie McCrae are meeting on 8/25 to finalize the details of how the Google Doc will be organized. The url will then be sent to the rest of the Task Force and TCCOG.

Once the final revised sGEIS is released, the Task Force will assist in sponsoring or organizing additional public information meetings and potentially public hearings.

Road Protection Working Group – Don Barber

The Tompkins County Legislature held a public hearing on their Road Protection Law on August 16 and is in the process of assessing the comments they received. Three Towns within Tompkins County are moving ahead with similar legislation working with Delta Engineers. The Road Protection Working Group looked at various legislation that could be used throughout the county to create some uniformity between road laws but for various reasons many towns are working independently on road preservation laws. If any towns need information on road protection and preservation legislation, Don is willing to assist but the Working Group is now on hold. New road protection laws may need to be adjusted as unintended consequences arise.

When the County passes their Road Protection Law, trucks will likely use town roads more especially if no road protection laws are in place. All municipalities should be aware that even if no drilling is allowed within their boundaries, trucks from nearby drilling areas will pass through as they travel to drilling sites with the potential to cause damage to roads.

Recent Land Use Legislation

The following municipalities have recently passed zoning to prohibit drilling and various drilling activities:

Town of Geneva – August 9- also bans storage and treatment of drilling wastes within the town limits

Town of Ithaca – July 11 – lists drilling for gas as a prohibited use

Town of Dryden – August 2

Town of Ulysses – August 10 – prohibits exploration, extraction, support activities, and waste disposal, storage or treatment.

Town of Danby – August 22 - holding a public information session on proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning.

Town of Enfield – a petition drive is underway to ban drilling.

Progress Report from Task Force Coordinator – Darby Kiley

Upcoming mapping presentations Darby and Art will give:

8/23 – Town of Danby

8/25 – Town of Enfield

8/30 – Town of Caroline

TBA – Town of Newfield

None scheduled for Groton

If time, one final general mapping presentation will be made in downtown Ithaca or for the County Legislature.

Request to Extend Comment Period for the Revised sGEIS

The following letter requesting a 180 day comment period was introduced by Liz Thomas, moved by Richard Driscoll and seconded by Martha Robertson then passed by the Task Force.

The Tompkins County Council of Government's Gas Drilling Task Force requests that you direct the DEC to allow a 180 day comment period on the revised supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (sGEIS) for high volume hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. The Task Force has been organized in Tompkins County for nearly two years and has maintained a steady interest in hydraulic fracturing in the Marcellus Shale during that time. The topic is complex and we are studying the parts of the document that have been released so far. The new version has significant improvements over the last draft but there are still numerous areas of serious concern.

Given the complexity and length of the sGEIS, it is unrealistic to expect municipal and citizen groups to digest and produce meaningful comments in just 60 days. Time is required to study sections, consult with experts, and formulate comments especially when working with boards and committees. In order to provide for adequate municipal and citizen input, we urge you to grant more time for this effort by extending the comment period to 180 days.

In addition it is essential to hold public hearings in the affected areas. Given the intensity of public interest we respectfully request at least 8 hearings throughout the affected areas of the state.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Thomas, Chair

on behalf of the Tompkins County Council of Governments Gas Drilling Task Force

Addressing Pipelines – Don Barber

The regulation of pipelines appears to be vague or non-existent and raises issues of who has the authority to regulate where pipelines are placed. Municipalities may well have a great deal of jurisdiction under Home Rule laws. If wells are drilled prior to a pipeline being laid and the resulting gas is not flared, the gas is simply released to the air. Don suggests if the Task Force is able, a group should look into this topic to determine the risks and what municipalities have the right to do (determine pipeline depth, location, etc).

Next meeting

Thursday, September 15, 3:00pm

Drilling Prohibitions as of August 10, 2011

| <u>Movements for a ban</u> | <u>Proposed bans under official consideration</u> | <u>Ban in place</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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