

MEETING NOTES
COLUMBIA ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, June 20, 2017
Adella G. Urban Administrative Office Conference Room

EAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Drabicki, Bryan Tarbell, Carole Williamson, Carol Coley

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: Tom Carrier, Jennifer Siskind, Rosemary Senyk, Mark Walter

TIME: 5:30 – 7:00 PM

MEETING CONTEXT: Open discussion with Columbia residents concerned about the potential risk of the storage, disposal, and or use of fracking waste on Columbia property. Should Columbia adopt an ordinance banning fracking waste?

Discussion notes:

- 'Fracking' wastes are derived during a process of hydraulic fracturing of rock and soils. Wastes comprise a blend of chemicals used in the extraction process of 'Gas' and 'Oil' extraction wells. These two categories of extraction wells use different chemicals during extraction. There are presently 3 legal sites to dispose of fracking waste here in CT.
- Presently, the CT State General Assembly has drafted House Bill (HB) 6329. This bill essentially stops CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) from submitting regulations of fracking waste streams and creates a statewide ban for only a small group of waste by products from Gas wells. HB 6329 appears to ban toxic substances from 'Gas' extraction wells but not 'Oil' extraction wells, with significant loopholes for disposal of a variety of fracking waste streams. HB 6329 was passed overwhelmingly by the CT House but was not passed in the CT Senate.
- The EAC is looking into why the state Senate did not adopt HB 6329. (Why did it not pass in the Senate?)
- Presently 19 CT Towns have passed individual town ordinances banning fracking waste, including Lebanon, Hebron, Andover, Coventry, Mansfield, Chaplin, Hampton, Pomfret, Ashford, Woodstock, Windsor, Bloomfield, Portland, Middletown, Litchfield, Washington, and Branford. Approximately 41 more CT towns are interested and or have started the process of adopting legislation to banning the storage, disposal, etc. of fracking waste.
- HB 6329 was voted down by the CT State Senate and therefore does not provide 'umbrella' legislation banning all fracking waste streams in CT.
- Jennifer Siskind indicated that Food and Water Watch is a non-profit organization (presently rated by charitynavigator.org) funded through private donations (no corporate or PAC monies accepted) and that she herself volunteers her time to help educate communities on the risks associated with fracking waste.

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EAC Action Items:

- As EAC prepares to provide information to Columbia residents, the committee will research as many pros and cons of the waste disposal ban as possible so as to provide residents with the most accurate and informed information.
- EAC is aiming to provide an educational presentation followed by an opportunity for questions and open discussion at the end of July. EAC recognizes that some families may be away on summer vacations and unable to attend, and as such, will consider providing additional educational presentations / open discussion forums if necessary.
- EAC will reach out to and invite neighboring town communities who have not passed a local legislation banning fracking waste. (Colchester, Marlborough, Bolton).
- Outreach to other towns environmental / green committees who have adopted a Town ordinance banning fracking waste.
- EAC will evaluate community feedback and other resources and make a proposal to the Town BOS.

Questions:

- Why did the CT State Senate vote down HB 6329?
- Can the State override individual Town ordinances banning fracking waste?
- What are the negatives of an ordinance banning fracking waste?