

The Courier-Express

Reported by Katie Weidenboerner, staff writer. Email: katiew@thecourierexpress.com

DuBois Council, residents oppose injection well plan

Wednesday, November 28, 2012

Two residents and the DuBois City Council are taking a stand against a proposed disposal injection well in Brady Township. Resident Nancy Moore spoke of her opposition to the injection well at Tuesday's council meeting. The well is proposed by Windfall Oil & Gas and the Hoovers on the Zelman property in Brady Township. "Historically, industries have targeted small municipalities with limited financial resources and multiple municipal borders for locating this type of unacceptable land use which we call ULU. They take advantage of a natural reluctance of municipalities to influence land uses in adjoining municipalities," Moore said.

Moore wrote a letter to the EPA requesting the Northwest Clearfield County Comprehensive Plan be considered as part of the testimony and comments at its hearing in Brady Township at 7 p.m. Dec. 10. Representatives from DuBois, Sandy Township, Brady Township, Huston Township and Falls Creek Borough worked together for two years with a professional consultant to formulate the plan. Moore was one of the representatives involved with the plan, which was adopted by all the municipalities in June 2009. Highland Street was designated as residential. It crosses the boundaries of DuBois and Sandy and Brady townships. Moore said the plan identifies the Highland Street area where the well is proposed to be placed as a village. "If the proposed Hoover Zelman waste disposal well is allowed to locate in this long established residential area, it will be the first such well located in a residential area in Pennsylvania," Moore said. "This action will negate countless hours of hard work on our area's future planning and will open the door for more of these unacceptable land uses in residential areas."

Highland Street resident Darlene Marshall said there are two points the council may want to consider discussing with the EPA. First, Marshall would like to see a 2-mile review area enforced. "Approximately 6 acres of deep mines exist within the quarter-mile review area for the proposed disposal injection well. The deep mines begin in Brady Township and stretch to the DuBois Mall. If there was ever a breach in frack water, it could go as far as the DuBois Mall and into Sandy Lick Creek," reads a letter approved by the council to be sent to the EPA.

"Sandy Lick Creek runs along the city's park system and is a designated catch and release fishing site. Much volunteer time and taxpayer money made this park possible," the letter continues. Secondly, Marshall said the permit requires the company to put up \$30,000 to plug the well. She said that amount is insufficient, especially since there are some older wells in the area that may need to be plugged as well if the disposal well is permitted.

The council supports House Bill 2350, known as the Injection Well Safe Water Act, which was introduced in April. As a municipal water service provider, the council's letter says it feels the bill provides necessary protection like a 5,500-foot setback from public water supplies and bans deep waste disposal wells in floodplains. It also provides a 2,000-foot setback from trout streams and high quality/exceptional value waterways. "The earthquakes in Ohio, which have been linked to injection wells near Youngstown, were felt by residents in the City of DuBois. It is our understanding that geologic fault lines run through the Brady Township area where a well has been proposed," the council's letter reads.

Brady Township is 2 miles from the DuBois City boundaries. "We must do everything possible to ensure the integrity and protection of our water resources. Ohio has recently adopted new regulations to address many of the DIW issues, and we should do the same," the letter from council reads. The EPA hearing will be held at 7 p.m. Dec. 10 at the Luthersburg Community Center.