

Andover Receives First Glimpse At Proposed Natural Gas Facility



According to a presentation delivered at an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission meeting, the proposed Andover natural gas facility will receive five trucks per hour, 24 hours per day, for at least seven months out of the year. (Contributed Photo)

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Judging by attendance at an April 18 Andover Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, there is already a lot of interest in a natural gas infusion station proposed for Route 6.

With more than 60 people in attendance, chair Eric Anderson noted that the commission's meetings generally don't attract much of an audience.

Global CNG Holdings, a Delaware LLC, recently submitted an application to the town, which was first handled by the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission at its April 11 meeting. According to the commission's minutes, the application proposes the installation of a gas line, a gas metering station, a gravel access drive, a paved access drive, and an equipment area to be constructed on property owned by

Andover resident Robert Russell.

The property, currently part of Scott's Christmas Tree Farm, is located across from the Xtra Mart, at 497 Route 6.

According to meeting minutes, the site would be receiving delivery of natural gas from approximately five trucks per hour, for 24 hours per day. The trucks would be providing natural gas for approximately seven months out of the year – November through March – to help deal with current fuel shortages during the winter heating season.

The infusion station would bring revenue to the town in the form of property taxes, and revenue to the land owner in the form of lease payments. Andover First Selectman Robert Burbank said that he'd spoken to the town assessor about an estimated property tax.

"He stated that without the values, it will be impossible for an accurate value," wrote Burbank, via email. "He did estimate that it would be over \$100,000n"

The land owner could not be reached for comment. A similar proposal recently rejected by Rocky Hill residents would have brought in an estimated \$250,000 per year in rent and tipping fees.

Andover resident Dianne Grenier posted a letter regarding the proposal on the Facebook page Andover Grapevine. In it, Grenier calls the proposed trucks, filled with compressed natural gas, "bombs on wheels," and notes that the station will not bring natural gas service to Andover residents.

"It is merely dumping compressed natural gas into the pipeline to increase supply to customers downstream," writes Grenier.

Grenier cites the proposed location of the site, on a stretch of Route 6 known locally as "Suicide Six," "where five people have died in car accidents in 2015," and urges residents to become informed regarding the issue. Comments in response to the letter expressed both support for and opposition to the proposal.

Infusion stations, such as the one proposed, would offer a temporary solution to a natural gas shortage in the northeast. The more permanent solution is to expand the natural gas pipeline system. Expansion supporters say that increasing the supply of natural gas will enable the state to generate more electricity, reducing costs for businesses and homeowners until renewable energy sources are more readily available.

However, opponents claim that this approach is short-sighted, citing health, environmental, and safety risks associated with natural gas and fracking practices. Opponents reject the qualification of natural gas as a "cleaner" energy source, and encourage immediate investment in renewable sources.

At the April 18 Planning and Zoning meeting, attorney Leonard Jacobs, representing the gas company, spoke briefly.

"We're here tonight just to introduce ourselves," he said.

Jacobs said that he and an engineer planned to deliver a full overview of the project at an upcoming public hearing, set for June 20 at 7 p.m. at Andover Elementary School. There is a public hearing scheduled before the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission on May 9, currently scheduled for the Town Hall Community Room.

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