

Town of New Haven Selectboard Informational Meeting

1:00 pm

Saturday, April 23, 2016

Town Hall

Present: Chair, Kathy Barrett, Vice Chair, Steve Dupoise, Jim Walsh, Carole Hall, Bob Amalang, Dick Saudek, Herb Singleton and Clerk, Pam Kingman

Visitors: Victor LaBerge, Ralph Farnsworth, Caroline Donnan, Linda Cousino, Eugene Cousino, David Spencer, Eugene Allen, Donna Malzac-Brown, Annette Adams, Jess Whitney, Dale Hastings, Eldon Sherwin, Peter Rothschild, Doug McKain, Ruth Penfield, Barb Bolduc, Peter Bolduc, Floyd Siple, Sandi Bauer, Steve Bauer, Craig Zondag, Jane Ross, Jon Christiano, Todd Larson, Polly Darnell, Stacey Brown, Marcia Dupoise, Harry Chaucer, Kathleen Ready, Jason Bacon, Maura Lester, Sam Lester, Charlie Roy, Nina Bacon, Nancy Makowski

Steve Dupoise welcomed everyone; he talked about the informational meetings the Selectboard will be holding for the public in order to discuss the term sheet the Selectboard signed at the April 13, 2016 meeting. A lot of research went into getting us this far, he thanked Carole Hall and Dick Saudek for all of their hard work. Steve acknowledges the term sheet is not the very best deal they could have gotten, but after a lot of negotiating, both sides have to agree at some point. Steve pointed out a couple of the highlights of the term sheet: The Town would receive 1.4 million every year for the next 40 years (They have offered to renegotiate at year 38, so the town could see additional money). Additionally, VGL has offered 4 million to go towards building a new Fire Station and a new Town garage.

Initially, Steve had asked VGL to give the Town 3 million per year, after a lot of negotiating; it is 1.4 million over the next 40 years.

Sound has been one of the major concerns, VGL has promised to keep the sound level to 40 dba at the neighbor's property lines. VGL said take it or leave it.

Another concern is how the abutters are being treated; within the term sheet there is a tax map with circles around properties that have been identified as being affected by the converter station. These properties identified by our point people as well as VGL.

Dick Saudek said the term sheet is the basic terms of what will be incorporated into the contract. When it comes to the contract, the Selectboard can ask the Public Service Board to have both sides comply with what is within the contract. Dick explained VGL (Vermont Green Line Devco, LLC) is owned by Anbaric, and the investor behind the project is National Grid.

- Other towns have been considered for this project, what happens if the majority of the town doesn't participate in the survey. Steve said folks have 5 days to come to the Town Office to complete the survey, plus 7am -7 pm on the final day, Tuesday, May 24th. He is hopeful people will come out to answer the survey.
- Annette Smith asked if the last Emergency Selectboard meeting about getting more money? No
- Caroline Donnan said the term sheet supports the 40 dba level; this is what the Town's sound expert has recommended. Will this be added to the final contract? Yes, we want VGL to adhere to the Towns standards.
- Polly Darnell asked what happened to the Town hiring an appraiser; it now says in the term sheet the abutters will have to prove that their property has decreased in value. The people who have been identified in the term sheet as being impacted and feel their property values have decreased will have a chance to prove to VGL 1 year after the project is completed. This will be done at the property owners' expense. If VGL agrees with the property owners' appraisal, VGL may pay the difference to the property owner or VGL may contest payment with another appraisal, this one would be done at VGL's expense. If the parties still do not agree, a third appraisal may be conducted; the cost would be shared by both parties.
- Caroline Donnan is greatly concerned for neighbors of the project – it's not just about the money; this will affect people's lives. Also concern for New Haven as a whole, and how it will affect all of our property values. We've had so many utilities come through our town. Has the Selectboard given any thought about town wide property values being affected? Not sure of the answer to that.
- If the Convert Station ends up in Middlebury, but they still have to connect to the grid, will it be done in New Haven? Will the lines be above ground or underground? This is yet undetermined.
- Eugene Allen is one of the neighbors to the project is very concerned that his family hasn't been offered anything. They are offering the town all kinds of deals, but nothing for those who are directly impacted.
- Jim Walsh said recently a property along Main St. that backs up to the VELCO substation sold to a company called TDI, which is also a large utility. TDI is currently working on a similar project running cable under Lake Champlain to a substation in Ludlow. These lines will carry 1,000 MW.
- Caroline Donnan asked if is there binding insurance between VGL and the Town for the next 40 years that guarantees that the project will not grow? VGL has agreed to not exceed 400MW, which would be in the contract. Originally VGL had proposed 800MW, then decided to lower it to 400MW. In order to have the line be 800MW, all of the VELCO lines would have to be upgraded.

- Jon Christiano wanted to know if there a list of qualified appraisers for this type of converter station? These types of buildings are not common, but Attorney Dick Saudek felt there are qualified appraisers who could do the job. He added any conditions that get written into the contract, which will go to the Public Service Board, are enforceable; said conditions also carry forward to any new owners.
- Craig Zondag asked what the life expectancy of the Converter Station and is there a decommissioning plan in place? Bob Amalang said the life expectancy is 50+ years; we are looking at a 40 year contract with renegotiations at 38 years. During its lifetime, equipment will need to be upgraded. The current 345kV VELCO line can carry just less than 1,600 MW, once the VGL conversion is introduced, there won't be much of an increase through the lines. Bob has reviewed the study done by VELCO on EMF's at the Salisbury Elementary School. The results show the EMF level was far below the standard at 883. In the R.O.W. by the School the highest number recorded was 17. This test was done over a 6 month period.
- Caroline Donnan wanted to know the color of building / light and sound still raising concerns. Will our quiet nights disappear in New Haven? Sound Expert, Herb Singleton said WHO (World Health Organization) bases their standard on health. Between the larger cities and towns, New Haven lies somewhere in between. WHO governs many different environments; using the 40 dba for the converter station is a compromise. Noise lessens over distance, and weather conditions play a factor. The sound predictions consider the worst case scenario. Cross Spectrum Acoustics did 12 days of measurements; in the results study, he explained, you ignore the din and look for the background noise. There are peaks during the daytime and lows at night. Herb said you won't hear the converter station during the day, but will hear it at night, at least at the abutting locations. The color of the building will be of the towns choosing. The plant will be lit at night with minimal downward facing lights.
- Discuss having something at an upcoming meeting that emits 40dba, so that folks can hear what it sounds like. Herb Singleton will look into setting up a demonstration. The demonstration may not be the same noise we will hear from the plant.
- Peter Rothschild asked what is the recourse if the dba is not met? The PSB now requires post construction sound on projects, which is why they are trying to set a level before construction. By the time the project is ready to go online, we should have a better idea of noise. There are ways to shield the sound with berms, and the building will be built into the side of the hill. They can also increase the shielding inside the plant.
- Construction period is 2 years, 6 days a week, this seems excessive. Agreed construction noise could be an issue. Also concern about constant upgrades to

the facility. Bob Amalang said any upgrades to the plant will actually make the plant quieter as technology gets better.

- This is renewable energy, which is what we are coming more reliant on.
- Harry Chaucer asked will the 1.4 million help the average taxpayer? Steve Dupoise said our current town budget is 1 million. His thought process is to apply to taxes, roads, town offices etc. He would like to apply \$250k to savings and another \$140k could be applied towards our infrastructure. But it is ultimately up to the voters. Jim Walsh feels it would take closer to 2 – 4 million to make our roads perfect. Kathy Barrett would like to see a committee of townspeople and Selectboard members to decide what to do with the money.

The Board thanked everyone for coming on a Saturday afternoon. The next informational meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 10, 2016, at 6:30 pm in the Town Hall.

Adjourn: 3:10 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Pam Kingman

Approved:



Chair, Kathy Barrett


Vice Chair, Steve Dupoise


Jim Walsh