

COUNTIES OF WARREN AND WASHINGTON
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
WL PLASTICS
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
December 4, 2019

Dave O'Brien, Chair of the Counties of Warren and Washington Industrial Development Agency (the "Agency"), called to order a duly noticed Public Hearing for WL Plastics at 10:00a.m. on the 4th day of December, 2019 at the Town and Village Hall located at 118 Broadway, Fort Edward, New York.

Present:

Dave O'Brien
Michael Bittel
Brian Campbell
Travis Whitehead
Alie White
Kara Lais
Eon Nichols
Gwen Craig
Erik Balthrop
Carol Kuhr
Richard Doty
James Wilson
Julie Wilson
Darleen Lundgren
Vicki Hayner
James Donahue
Neal Orsini
Terry Middleton
Mark Mulholland
Matt Soriano
Brian
Aimee Mahoney
Laurie Lafond
Katy DeGroot
Tracey Frish
Theresa Rose
Matt Fuller
Nancy Ellett Crosby

Representing:

Chair, WWIDA/WWCDC
Sec/Treasurer, WWIDA/WWCDC
Member, WWIDA/WWCDC
Member, WWIDA/WWCDC
Office Administrator, WWIDA/WWCDC
WWIDA/WWCDC counsel (via conference call)
WL Plastics counsel (via conference call)
Post Star
Project Representative
Self
Public
Public
Public
Public
Town of Fort Edward Assessor
Public
F.E.L.P.D.C.
Town of Fort Edward
WNYT-TV
WNYT-TV
Town of Fort Edward
Town Clerk, Town of Fort Edward
Public
Public
Public
Public
Public
Public

Alie White, WWIDA Office Administrator read into the minutes the published statement [legal notice] describing the proposed project and financing.

Erik Balthrop, Project Representative made a brief presentation describing the proposed project. Mr. Balthrop stated WL Plastics is the largest HDPE producer in the United States, noting there are currently eight plants with the Fort Edward location to be the ninth and the only one in the northeast. Pellets are received by rail, heated and formed to certain diameters of coil and stick pipe. A brief PowerPoint presentation was shown. Mr. Balthrop noted this area would be ideal due to the location, existing buildings, paved lots as well as well-trained and available workforce.

Mr. O'Brien noted this project would bring at least fifty new jobs and a seventeen-million-dollar investment to the community. Full taxes would be paid at the base value as set by the Town Assessor as well as taxes for Special District, Fire, Sewer, etc. There is approximately four million dollars of additional value for the new construction of which 100% would be exempt for the first five years and 50% for the next five years. In year eleven and forward the full taxes would be paid based on the full assessed value. Mr. O'Brien also noted a sales tax exemption is being sought for construction of which 20 new jobs will be created for the next six to nine months.

Dave O'Brien, Chair opened the hearing for public comment.

Terry Middleton asked Mr. Balthrop to describe how waste is handled. Mr. Balthrop explained that a closed-loop water system is used; eight to twelve thousand gallons of water is used to cool the pipe and recirculates. This water is retained and reused by EPA standards. Also, any scrap is reground, re-melted and reused. Mr. O'Brien also stated the WL Plastics' impeccable safety record is in the top one-half percent. Mr. Balthrop and Mr. Nichols noted the emissions are steam and normal household waste.

Laurie Lafond voiced concern over the steam still having plastics in it and asked if there was emissions data that could be released to the public. Mr. Balthrop said he could get that information and asked her to meet with him after the meeting. Ms. Lafond also asked what had caused the fire in Casper, WY and Mr. Balthrop stated it was caused by arson from a past employee and noted security has improved at all facilities with controlled access to their yards since the incident.

Julie Wilson noted she lives closest to the potential site and voiced concerns over water, light, air, noise, odor toxicity and overall quality of life and hopes the responses to her concerns are sincere. She also asked where the access to the site is located. Mr. Balthrop stated that is currently being discussed with Canal Corp and EPA.

Ms. Lais, via conference call, stated the purpose of this public hearing was to review the tax benefits that are being requested and considered by the IDA as the IDA does not have the authority to approve the project, just the tax benefits being requested.

Katy DeGroot expressed concern over project longevity and the reasons why a tax incentive should be given. Mr. Balthrop noted the long-term employees in all their facilities,

including their first one built almost twenty years ago that is still operating. He also noted the investments are significant with intentions of being a good partner with the communities to maintain good employees and produce the best product possible with opportunity for growth. Mr. Nichols stated the tax incentives are critical to the project noting the cost of production, construction and doing business in New York State in addition to some issues that are currently being address that is increasing costs. Mr. O'Brien noted if the site was left as is, there would be no gain for the community as far as increased value, jobs and benefits. He reiterated 100% of taxes would still be paid on the current assessed value.

Tracey Frish voiced concern over the lack of public notification and information on this project as well as the timing of a tax incentive approval prior to the project approval.

Terry Middleton responded that for at least the past five or six years it's been the intent to redevelop the ex-dewatering plant to make it a tax base that Fort Edward desperately needs and noted there were many meetings where this information had been discussed.

Dave Cutler stated he's been a Fort Edward resident for almost sixty-five years, worked in manufacturing in Fort Edward for forty years and knows many residents that also work in manufacturing and pointed out manufacturing has carried this community for nearly one-hundred years. He noted Irving Tissue received a PILOT ten years ago and they invested over six hundred million dollars in their facility during that time. Mr. Cutler also noted he attended the WWIDA Board meeting where WL Plastics gave an informative presentation.

Theresa Rose stated she had worked in plastics at Mallinckrodt for over twenty-two years and didn't experience any health detriment from exposure to the products and materials. She asked if local contractors would be used for the production and construction of the facility and Mr. Balthrop answered most work would be hired locally.

Katy DeGroot suggested looking into non-polluting economic development and actively soliciting green industries and also asked about the IDA recapture policy. Mr. O'Brien stated there are provisions to recapture benefits depending the situation and circumstances at the time. This information is available on the WWIDA website under policies and procedures. He also stated the Authorities Budget Office requires and reviews all project information annually and the WWIDA has not had a recapture at least in the past ten years.

Nancy Ellett Crosby asked if this is a manufacturer that the community welcomes, what product is manufactured and is it welcomed as a community, what percentage will be used for hydraulic fracked gas, what is the undisclosed company WL Plastics will be partnering with as mentioned in the Post Star, what is the newer product to be manufactured as mentioned in the Post Star, how will final waste be disposed and what is the life expectancy of HDPE.

Mr. Balthrop stated they produce pipe for the oil industry as well as municipal sewer and water and will be actively pursuing growing that market. He also stated he would defer to other parties for additional information on the rest of her concerns.

Bob Dillon expressed concern over the cost of infrastructure, specifically the temporary bridge. Mr. O'Brien stated at this time discussions are in the process with Canal Corp and EPA. Terry Middleton noted this kind of information will be discussed at future planning board meetings.

There being no further comments from the public and no further comments from those in attendance, Dave O'Brien, Chair closed the hearing at 11:00 a.m.

Dated: _____

Dave O'Brien, Chair