

**Newington Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes**

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**July 31, 2002  
Newington Town Hall  
6:00 p.m.**

**In attendance:** Representatives from NewingtonEnergy LLC, Patterson Lane and Old Dover Road residents, Health and Welfare Officer Margaret Lamson, BOS Chairman Cosmas Iocovozzi, BOS member Jack O'Reilly, and AA Sue Newcomer.

Selectman Jack O'Reilly called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. He asked that each person state his or her name prior to speaking.

The purpose of the meeting was to give Town residents the opportunity to meet with representatives from NewingtonEnergy, LLC. to discuss noise concerns related to the commissioning of the energy plant.

Ron Bozgo, Vice President of Engineering, NewingtonEnergy, opened the discussion with an apology to the Town and the Town residents for the inconvenience they have experienced since construction began at the energy plant. Bozgo noted the following agenda:

1. Commentary on Safety and Health Issues
2. Sound Data
3. Expectations for the Near and Far Future

Bozgo then introduced various members of the NewingtonEnergy team, turning the floor over to Gary Ritter, Safety Manager.

Ritter stated his national certifications and continued to express that, although the noise levels that the residents were experiencing were annoying, they were not unhealthy. To explain further, noise data was displayed and an explanation regarding noise data collection was given.

Irving Beebe, of Patterson Lane, asked when the data was collected. At that time, Bozgo reviewed the noise data chart with residents.

Margaret Lamson, Newington's Health and Welfare Officer, mentioned several nearby residents. These residents included a heart patient, a young child, and an individual with a hearing problem. Lamson asked what the possible health effects might be to these individuals, particularly when they would become startled from the sudden loud noises generated from the plant. Lamson also asked Ritter if he understood the health impact and what could happen long term. It was noted that at 85 decibels, or above, a person is unable to hear someone talking to them on the telephone. Bozgo, at this time, showed the points of different decibel readings on the map.

Bozgo explained the stages of the plant's progress, up to the point of operation. He also explained the permanent noise requirements that would have to be met once the plant was on line. Bozgo compared the progression of the plant's commissioning phase to that of tuning a car.

In reviewing the July 4<sup>th</sup> steam-blow incident, Bozgo said it was an unfortunate event, but it had 2-3 weeks in the schedule and was done in 7-8 hours. He agreed that the durations were startling

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and loud, but short. Bozgo added that this type of operation is not typically done at night, but that an upset had occurred.

Mike Walsh, a resident who has experienced the majority of the noise impact, asked who it is that permits 24-hour operation. Both Bozgo and Selectman O'Reilly explained that, during the commissioning phase, there are no restrictions on hours of operation. O'Reilly added that the Selectmen could not legally stop anything during commissioning without legal action, which would take too long. He noted that commissioning would be complete before the case could be heard.

Bozgo pointed out that a lot of the sound should subside as they continue through the process. He reiterated that the noise and disruption should be lessened as the plant becomes tuned.

Irv Beebe asked Bozgo if the #2 had received damage during an upset. Bozgo replied that the supports were bent, but there was no damage. Beebe then asked if the bolts were shifting or if the elbow twisted. Bozgo said that all the slopes were checked.

With concern that the plant was being pushed too fast and that people didn't know what they were doing, Beebe inquired about neighborhood safety. Bozgo assured Beebe that it would be of no benefit to rush the project.

There was discussion on how the plant operates and why, and an explanation as to why a shutdown can't be done. Don Scott, Operations Manager, explained the technical aspects and the inability of intervention.

M. Walsh stated that he was sick of the noise, and that even his chickens were no longer laying eggs. Beebe asked what NewingtonEnergy would do to give the residents a good night's sleep.

Lamson, with a statement directed to the Selectmen, said that she was concerned with the residents' statements. She asked what the company was going to do to make life easier and healthier for residents, and what the impact would be to a 34 year-old with a hearing problem. Lamson strongly suggested that something be done to make residents' lives more palatable. At that time, Lamson requested, of BOS Chairman Iocovozzi, that a resident be permitted to play back, from her camcorder, noise generated from the plant.

Selectman O'Reilly gave a brief synopsis of the lifts and decibel readings that he had experienced and noted. He asked if there was a different noise criterion established for different age groups. Resident M. Reynolds stated her concerns in regard to her 10 month-old baby, noting she was working with the baby's pediatrician on the matter. Ritter responded that there was not much difference between a child and an adult. It was also noted that the amount of time that the decibel readings were at their highest was not long enough to cause a problem.

Anthony Avurtine, a Rye resident, who noted that he was an innocent bystander, said that the situation was intolerable at Walsh's house. Avurtine added that if something weren't done to relieve the situation, he would make sure that the Press, and anyone else that would find the story interesting, would be contacted.

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At this time, Walsh played the camcorder recording, noting that what was heard in no way compared to the actual noise that they were experiencing.

Selectman O'Reilly asked Ron Bozgo for decibel read-outs around the marked perimeter, as noted on the map.

To continue his explanation of the plant's progression, Bozgo noted that in 1 to 2 weeks, a lot of the vents would be closed and the noise would subside when the steam turbine comes in. Bozgo added that the company was working hard to correct the problems and that they had brought people in from California to help.

Irv Beebe said he thought there could be more of a schedule to let residents know when the blow-offs, etc. would take place. Chairman Iocovozzi asked Bozgo how the problem could be rectified, to which Bozgo replied that there wasn't much they could do. Walsh said the company should have bought the houses that are in the area.

Bozgo explained that the company has stricter noise restrictions in this area than anywhere else, but reminded the residents that all has not been put into place. Selectman O'Reilly added that the criteria set by the Town's noise consultants will have to be met before the plant is operational.

Chairman Iocovozzi asked Bozgo what could be done for the residents for the next 2 weeks. Several of the residents asked for a rest and to be left alone for the upcoming weekend.

Lamson addressed the BOS Chairman as the Health Officer, saying that she was concerned with the mental health of the residents. She asked that something be done for them. Chairman Iocovozzi asked Lamson if she was saying, as Health Officer, that there was a problem, because that was all he needed to hear.

Bozgo continued with the progression of the plant. He noted that the events of July 4<sup>th</sup> were unanticipated and he explained the procedure that would be used to shorten the steam blows. He added that the company has tried to minimize the impact, but sometimes they had no control over it.

Chairman Iocovozzi asked Bozgo if he could come up with a plan to minimize the impact within the next 48 hours, before the Selectmen do what they have to do. Bozgo responded that the company could not promise that. Selectman O'Reilly asked Bozgo what was on the plant's schedule for the weekend. Beebe noted that basically the company was saying it would be as usual.

Resident Mary Yeaton asked about the times of testing, noting she was sympathetic to NewingtonEnergy's problem. She stated, however, that she was concerned with the lateness of the hours.

Beebe asked if anyone in the room had the strength to stop the operations for the weekend, to which there was no response. Chairman Iocovozzi told Bozgo that the Town needed an answer, or something, in 24 hours, and the best solution would be to give the residents the upcoming weekend free.

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Bozgo noted that he would have an answer to the Board of Selectmen by 6:00 p.m. Thursday, August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mary Yeaton asked how long the operation would continue, and Bozgo said that the plant should be operational in September.

D. Walsh noted the rat and displaced animal problems, to which Lamson said she had read the report on the rats. O'Reilly said traps had been set in the areas that were recommended in the report.

Resident Sweeney asked about hot top that had been dumped, and there was further discussion on waste matters with Lamson and O'Reilly.

O'Reilly confirmed that NewingtonEnergy would contact the Board of Selectmen, with a plan, by 6:00 p.m. on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Newcomer  
Administrative Assistant