

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Wednesday May 24th, 2023

Present: Chair Bob Blonigen, Selectman Brandon Arsenault, Selectman Chris Wayss, Eric Weinrieb, PE, Altus Engineering, Danna Truslow, Hydrologist, Truslow Resource Consulting, many Newington Residents and Town Administrator Martha Roy.

B. Blonigen called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Million Air Proposed Fuel Farm Discussion-Eric Weinrieb and Danna Truslow:

The Selectmen asked E. Weinrieb and D. Truslow to come to this meeting and review what they had spoken about at the May 2nd, 2023 PDA Capital Improvement and Land Planning Committee in reference to the Million Air proposed fuel farm.

E. Weinrieb explained that he had written many letters to the PDA about this proposed project and has gotten very little response. E. Weinrieb usually reviews the site design and storm water management of projects. He said that he agrees with the site design for this project, but the wetland delineation is still an issue. At the May 2nd meeting E. Weinrieb explained that there is a difference between the wetlands shown on a 2017 plan for Seacoast Helicopters and the wetlands showed on the plan this year for Million Air. The 2017 plan indicated a portion of the site, which is stated to have pavement underneath, in his opinion, qualifies as wetland. At that meeting E. Weinrieb requested an independent peer to confirm the new wetland area. The Million Air plan no longer shows a contiguous wetland area which is conveniently where Million Air would like to build a road for this project. E. Weinrieb believes that there is a larger wetland impact than what is indicated.

D. Truslow spoke at the May 2nd meeting about being a geologist/hydrogeologist who has reviewed many projects. D. Truslow said that there are usually many protections in place regarding resources. Most towns have an act of protection districts with land use restrictions in these areas, but because Pease was already an airport there was never that layer of protection at the municipal level. D. Truslow said that the aquifer at Pease meets or exceeds aquifers in the region. D. Truslow believes that the wetlands at the site should be connected, as is shown in the 2017 plan, and doesn't believe that the wetlands are separated as indicated now. D. Truslow said that there are wells underneath the ground in the area. These wells were part of the Gosling Station at Pease, but were abandoned. No one is sure if the wells were removed. This area is a very valuable water supply. D. Truslow can't understand why anyone would want to put 30,000 gallons of fuel so close to this area. If the wetlands are really land locked, as indicated on the most current plan, the surface water and the ground water are still

Resident Huddy Grandy asked how there could be such a fundamental disconnect between the size of the wetlands on the two reports. Do wetlands grow and reduce depending on how much rain has fallen? E. Weinrieb can't explain why the size of the wetlands is so different from 2017 and now and that is why he is asking these questions. Wetlands are usually determined by three conditions; running water is evidence, the plant species in the area and soil conditions.

H. Grandy asked what would happen if wetlands were paved over. E. Weinrieb said he doesn't know.

Resident Emily Savinelli asked if any of Newington's PDA Reps were on the PDA Capital Improvement and Planning Committee. B. Arsenault said neither is part of that committee. E. Savinelli thought it was a missed opportunity for the PDA Reps to not attend this meeting and asked if they were invited.

B. Arsenault said that they had gotten the same notice as everyone else. It was a consensus that Newington's PDA Reps were not representing how Newington's residents feel about this project.

B. Arsenault pointed out that Newington is not opposed to another fuel business at Pease, but is concerned with the environmental impacts of the project.

This project has not gone to the PDA Board of Directors yet, so our PDA Reps have not spoken about the wishes of Newington residents yet. The Board thinks that it is important that Pease hears Newington's concerns every step of the way.

Emily Savinelli asked if other Towns have also expressed their concerns about this project. E. Weinrieb said that he has heard nothing from Greenland.

H. Grandy said that Rye and Durham have been involved.

Resident Meghann Wayss said that there has been a lot of testing, over the last couple of years, of the water going into the bay and the oysters in the bay that have high PFAs. M. Wayss expressed her concern about the lack of control about future projects that impact the water in Newington and the water that runs into the bay, it will only get worse.

Discussion ensued about the PDA Reps and how they will vote at future meetings, Greenland appointed the shared PDA Rep 2 years ago, Newington will appoint the next one in 2024. Newington's Rep's term will expire in 2024.

D. Truslow would like two more questions included. The first would be to have soil samples done and commit to monitoring the ground water for contaminants and make a plan before the project is approved.

Newington residents are encouraged to contact their State legislators about this issue. M. Roy will post their emails and addresses and the questions that need to be included in the emails or letters that need to be answered by the PDA Board of Directors.

B. Blonigen asked M. Roy to contact Wood Engineers about the freshest data from their well testing.

H. Grandy asked that the Selectmen get a wetlands expert to give their opinion on how this project would impact the health of the wetlands in general.

B. Arsenault pointed out that when private citizen's have a project that disturbs wetlands, it is very difficult to get anything approved, but when a PDA project is going to disturb over 10,000 square feet of wetlands, the approval sails right through.

The PDA needs to stop increasing the risks for the public's health and safety. The PDA needs to find a different site for this project that doesn't impact the public's health.

B. Blonigen thanked everyone for coming to this meeting and participating in the process.

Adjournment: B. Arsenault moved to adjourn at 7:38pm. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted, Eleanor Boy, Recorder