

Approved June 4, 2013

TOWN OF CORNWALL  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
Cornwall Town Office  
Tuesday, May 21, 2013

**Present:** Bruce Hiland, Judy Watts, Abi Sessions, Ben Wood, Dave Sears  
**Guests:** Vermont Gas representatives: Don Gilbert, Eileen Simonlhardes; Local Citizens: Mary Martin, Sarah Murray, Susan Bechhoefer, Eric Bechhoefer, Judy Werner, Dan Borden, Timothy Fisher, Tim Clemens, Barbara Bosworth, Anne Collins, Elizabeth Karnes Keefe, John Flowers, David Donahue, Katherine Branch, Krissa Bolton, James Bolton, Michael Collier, Wanda Workman, Annie Wilson, Chalis Raymond, Rene Audet, Jim Duclos, Andrew Marks, Donna Marks, Brian Marohnic, Therese Connelly, Jeff Noordsy, Holly Noordsy, Geoffrey Demong, Richard Carpenter, Benjamin Marks, Randy Martin, Beth Ann Aldrich, Brian Kemp, Judith English, Liam English, Bob Burton, Raph Worrick, Sandy Lesault, Bethany Barry

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

Bruce Hiland read the statement that was published with the agenda of tonight's meeting:

*"As always, public comment on whatever subject(s) are invited at the beginning of our meeting as scheduled on the above agenda. At this meeting VTGas executives will be updating the Selectboard and discussing their proposed project with Selectboard members ONLY. A public meeting will be held soon at which VT Gas will present their proposal to Cornwall residents and respond to their questions and comments."*

**GENERAL FUND and HIGHWAY ORDERS**—*signed.*

**MINUTES**

**Minutes May 7, 2013 meeting** – Dave MOVED / Ben SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes with the following highlighted corrections, additions:

- Add **Lew Castle** to the list of attendees
- In David Dodge's report "LFICD has contracted with Weybridge to manage control (**\$10,000/yr**)
- Under correspondence review "**Burton**" appeal
- Correct minor typos

*Motion passed.*

**CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW**

- Notification from Vermont Cares of the bicycle fundraiser June 8

- Request from Conservation Commission for Selectboard signature on paperwork accepting the \$2,000 grant from Vermont Community Foundation.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Mary Martin** - questioned how separate Phase One is from Phase Two. She thinks there is overlapping.

**Bruce Hiland**: Speaking for myself, my understanding is that Phase Two is separate and distinct and will be addressed separately by the PSB. Tonight we will make plans for a public meeting where citizens can ask questions of Vermont Gas directly.

**Andrew Marks** - read a prepared statement addressed to Vermont Gas: "If the companies involved are given permission to run the gas pipeline, I want you to run it, not yards away, but miles away from me, from my family, from my neighbors, and from our town of Cornwall, so as not to diminish or destroy our property values, our health, or safety, our very lives and so as not to diminish or destroy the property values, health, safety, or very lives of those who will reside here after us. "

**Elizabeth Karnes Keefe** –pointed out that there are basically two lines of concerns about the pipeline project – one about fracking and pipelines in general. The other concerned with safety of people, proximity of the transmission line to wells and septic systems. Her main concern is safety, if the project is approved, that the transmission line could go very close to her home.

**Sarah Murray** – stated that the presence in this room tonight speaks to the opposition in Cornwall to this project. Will representatives from Vermont Gas speak to this concern with the Selectboard, or continue to disregard the consensus that we do not want this pipeline in Cornwall?

**Beth Ann Aldrich**: Why put a pipeline through Cornwall when the majority people in Cornwall don't want it?

**Bethany Barry** – (from Leicester) We don't want a pipeline in Leicester, we don't want a transmission line, we don't want a gate station. We don't want a fracked gas pipeline in Addison County. If IP wants cheap gas, they should do it on their own terms, on their side of the lake. We don't want Vermont to be used as a pass through for Canadian fracked gas to go to New York.

**Wanda Workman**: Is IP the internationally traded company? Who is the parent company for Vermont Gas.

(several Cornwall citizens replied, that yes, IP is International Paper and that Gaz Metro and Enbridge own Vermont Gas )

**Mary Martin** asked Bruce Hiland to ask if anyone in the room was here tonight to voice their support of the pipeline project. Bruce asked the question and no one replied.

**TOWN CLERK / TOWN TREASURER'S REPORT** - none

**ROAD COMMISSIONER'S REPORT** - none

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Vermont Gas update** – Don Gilbert, President/CEO of Vermont Gas and Eileen Simonllardes, VP for Supply and Regulatory Affairs, are here to provide information and discuss the pipeline project with the board. Mr. Gilbert introduced Mrs. Simonllardes as the person who is leading the Addison expansion.

**Bruce Hiland** said that he has met twice with Mr. Gilbert, representing the Town as Selectboard Chair, to try to persuade Vermont Gas not to come through Cornwall. These were candid meetings that did not persuade Vermont Gas to take proposed routes through Cornwall off the table. So the next step is for Vermont Gas representatives to come here to address whole board.

**Don Gilbert** said that Bruce Hiland had made it clear in their meetings that Vermont Gas had done a poor job with communication and community relations and that the Town would prefer that the pipeline not go through Cornwall. After making one presentation in November of 2012 to the board, Vermont Gas did not come back to apologize after the actions of survey crews started to create some of the concern in the community. They created a void, a lack of trust. The company wants to make a commitment to do better. Vermont Gas has a good reputation in Chittenden County, and knows it can do better by the citizens of Addison County.

Mr. Gilbert said that Vermont Gas has the franchise to provide natural gas in Vermont. As the franchise holder, they are obligated to expand if there is a demand for their product. He outlined the economic and environmental benefits of natural gas versus propane or oil. The company has recently expanded into Jericho and Hinesburg. Phase One of the Addison expansion would provide service to parts of Middlebury. During Phase One planning, IP approached Vermont Gas about natural gas service to the mill in Ticonderoga, NY. Currently the Ti paper mill burns large quantities of #6 fuel oil. IP and VT Gas reached agreement in October of 2012, which included a 44 million dollar commitment from IP to pay for the expansion costs. The State would like Vermont Gas to expand further south in order to serve Rutland. Bringing the pipeline south of Middlebury as part of Phase Two, would mean they would be able to expand to Rutland in 10 years instead of 25 years, according to their expansion plan.

Mr. Gilbert said that Cornwall is very important to this project and that Vermont Gas want to keep Cornwall safe too. As to what is in this for Cornwall, we are looking at distribution. Maybe 60-70 homes in Cornwall will get natural gas. The Town will receive about 240,000 in tax benefits annually. The project will support the regional economy. Cornwall's Town Plan has a clear set of guidelines regarding transmission lines, and we believe can comply with them.

**Abi Sessions** – asked for clarification about the need for a gate station if Cornwall receives service. She said that some consider gate stations to be a blight on the landscape.

**Don Gilbert** – Yes, you would need a gate station. We would get town input as to where it needs to go, so it will not be a blight.

**Ben Wood** – what are rules about distribution lines? Where are they located?

**Don Gilbert** – Distribution lines are located along the highways to homes being served. They are not usually cross-county, except across land being served.

**Dave Sears** – Please explain the \$240,000 tax benefit – what is that based on?

**Don Gilbert** – It is based on the value of the pipeline for approximately 6 miles in Cornwall. There is depreciation, but it is spread out over time.

**Eileen Simonllardes** – That's about 6 miles at 2 million a mile. Depreciation is not rapid, it is spread out over 70 years. This is only for the transmission line, not the gate station or distribution lines.

**Eileen Simonllardes** – A multi town working group, with representatives from Middlebury, Shoreham, Cornwall, with other towns invited, have been meeting weekly as a sounding board for VT Gas. VT Gas has a proposal that does go through Cornwall that respects the Town Plan. We will show a map at the next meeting of the working group, it will be a 1,000-foot corridor. The group will look for a 50-foot route within that corridor. At this point, it looks like it will affect 8-25 landowners in Cornwall. A mailing to entire town will go out next Tuesday, regarding a public meeting. We looking at June 6 but that needs to be confirmed. We plan to file our proposal for Phase Two with the PSB in the fall of 2013. Regulatory proceedings would take place in 2014. Service to IP would begin in 2015. Service to Cornwall would begin in 2017.

**Abi Sessions** – what happens if one of the land owners do not agree to have the pipeline go through their property?

**Eileen Simonllardes.** – that is why they have a 1,000 corridor. Eminent domain is the last resort. First, we meet with landowners to education them about the process and ask them to sign paperwork giving the company right of entry to

survey the property. If right of entry is not given by the landowner, we would file our proposal anyway for that route. Once the certificate of public good is given by the PSB, then we negotiate details of easement from landowner, including details of the price. Condemnation is the process by which you invoke eminent domain, is only begun with special permission from the PSB, and is used as an absolute last resort. I have never had to deal with this and hope I never will.

**Dave Sears** – seems like you want better communication. I think you have to be more specific than 1,000 feet. What about the loss of value when a pipeline goes through land?

**Eileen Simonlardes** - my personal experience in Milton with a pipeline in my neighborhood says there is no loss of value. People's taxes do not go down as a result of property values decreasing.

**Judy Watts** – In our conversations with Cornwall citizens, we have not found people that are favorable to this project and most feel that the rural character is the core of Cornwall. I would like to ask the citizens here if anyone knows anyone else who is in favor of this project.

**Barney Hodges** – I can't speak for or against this project without first being informed. I think we should be informed, and that has not fully happened yet.

**Judy Watts** – do you expect that the price will hold in relationship to other fuels?

**Don Gilbert** – The price of natural gas is projected to remain low, because of abundance. You are right in framing the question as “the relationship” to other fuels. Vermont has a goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050, and I think this is a transition to that goal.

**Bruce Hiland** – You spoke about “this project” but there are Phase One and Phase Two as distinct from one another.

**Don Gilbert** - On regulatory front, there are two phases, yes. They are two phases of one project, however. IP is also funding Phase One with 20 million dollars.

**Bruce Hiland** – Was the IP contract deal negotiated on the assumption that the pipeline would go through Cornwall?

**Eileen Simonlardes** – A route through Cornwall was part of the cost estimate for the deal with IP.

**Mr. Gilbert and Mrs. Simonlardes** said that Vermont Gas would hold a meeting in Cornwall (June 6, if that date is confirmed) with an open house format with stations where citizens could meet individually with VT gas representatives to get

their questions answered. Prior to that meeting, they would send a letter to everyone in Town that would include the map of the proposed corridor. Abi Sessions said that there needs to be a place where people can speak their minds. Dave Sears said that one meeting is best. Gilbert and Simonlledes do not support having a general discussion at their informational meeting. The board agreed that they would hold a second meeting so that citizens can air and discuss their concerns. Vermont Gas is welcome to come.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***Front Porch Forum*** – Liam English

Town resident Liam English spoke about the fact that Cornwall has no store, no community center other than the church and the Town Hall. An electronic gathering place called the Front Porch Forum has had some success in other Vermont towns in creating a sense of community. This is a place where not only issues like a proposed pipeline can be discussed, but also a place where you can find a babysitter. Postings are monitored so that standards for civility are maintained. Mr. English is working to raise the funds to join. The one time start up cost of \$1,100 and then there is no cost to participants. He is calling people one at a time and looking for broad support, so that there is no need for funds from the Town.

As Mr. English finished speaking, several people had opened their wallets and were waving bills in the air.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm

Respectfully submitted, Sharon Tierra, Clerk of the Selectboard