

Lewiston is in no hurry to set up DOE meeting

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LEWISTON — A federal Department of Energy representative told town officials he wants to meet with them to discuss reported recommendations for the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, but wary officials aren't in a hurry to talk.

Town Clerk Mary Beth Brado said DOE Assistant Manager of Safety and Environment Vincent D'Amico offered Tuesday to bring the recently publicized report to the town and discuss what he said is a "misunderstanding."

The report, revealed Oct. 6 by the Niagara Gazette, said a federal consultant recommended the former LOOW site be turned into a repository for radioactive waste.

Brado said D'Amico told her "no decision has been made whatsoever" regarding the future of the 191-acre site.

The site was used for storage and disposal of radioactive research and production materials from the government's Manhattan Project, the program that led to the development of the first atomic bomb.

"I told this bird that nobody believes a word they say," Brado said to officials and 20 residents at a special meeting Wednesday in Town Hall.

The board has not yet accepted D'Amico's offer. Councilman Joan Gipp said the board "would rather see the report for ourselves and not have it interpreted by the DOE." Gipp accused the energy department of heaping "lie after lie" on the town.

"All they're going to do is come up and tell us the report does not say what it actually does," Gipp said.

At the suggestion of Curtis Court resident Steven R. Nathanson, the board directed Brado to refuse requests for information by report authors, Bechtel National Inc., and the energy department.

At a special meeting Sunday, Brado said a Bechtel engineer requested hundreds of facts about the town for the preparation of a draft environmental impact statement. The statement would be needed if planned work at the site could affect the surrounding environment.

Deputy Town Supervisor Robert E. Lee said the only way Bechtel and energy department officials will be able to obtain more information is by making a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

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Town Board member Alvin Ogg said the board also must determine who was responsible for asking the report be completed.

"We're faced with solving the problem of cleaning up the waste from the first one of these mon-

sters that was built over 40 years ago," Ogg said.

Town Attorney Benjamin Hewitt said he contacted Rep. John J. LaFalce, D-Tonawanda, and Sens. Daniel P. Moynihan, D-N.Y., and Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., in an effort to obtain the report. Board members

previously said their only knowledge of the report was through the copyrighted Gazette story.

Hewitt said he hopes to receive the report Friday.

State Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere, D-Lewiston, said, "Six months

ago they were willing to spend \$11 million to clean it up. Then I read in the paper that they started work on an environmental impact statement. You don't start an impact statement unless you plan on doing something."