

Lewiston maps plan to stop waste project

Board building data base

By DON DEPERRO
Gazette Staff Writer

LEWISTON — A Washington, D.C., attorney will provide Town Attorney Benjamin Hewitt with information that Hewitt could use in a lawsuit against the federal Department of Energy over the future of the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works.

Attorney Scott Schwartz, experienced in solid and hazardous waste management, said Thursday he will send copies of various federal laws and regulations which may apply to a possible town suit.

The town is mulling legal action against the DOE, which is considering the LOOW site on Pletcher Road for a regional radioactive waste repository.

The DOE operates the 191-acre site, used to store radioactive wastes from the Manhattan Project. The early-1940s venture led to development of the first atomic bomb.

Schwartz said he is forwarding copies of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation and Control Act and other regulations, which may aid the Town Board in its impending fight against the government.

The board has scheduled another special meeting at 8:45 a.m. Saturday to discuss its plans.

The attorney said he is familiar with the ordnance works. He completed a brief summary of the site for board member Joan Gipp in 1980 and has studied numerous documents and federal and town correspondence dealing with the DOE proposal.

Schwartz said DOE officials might be violating as many as five other federal statutes relating to operation of the site. He declined to elaborate.

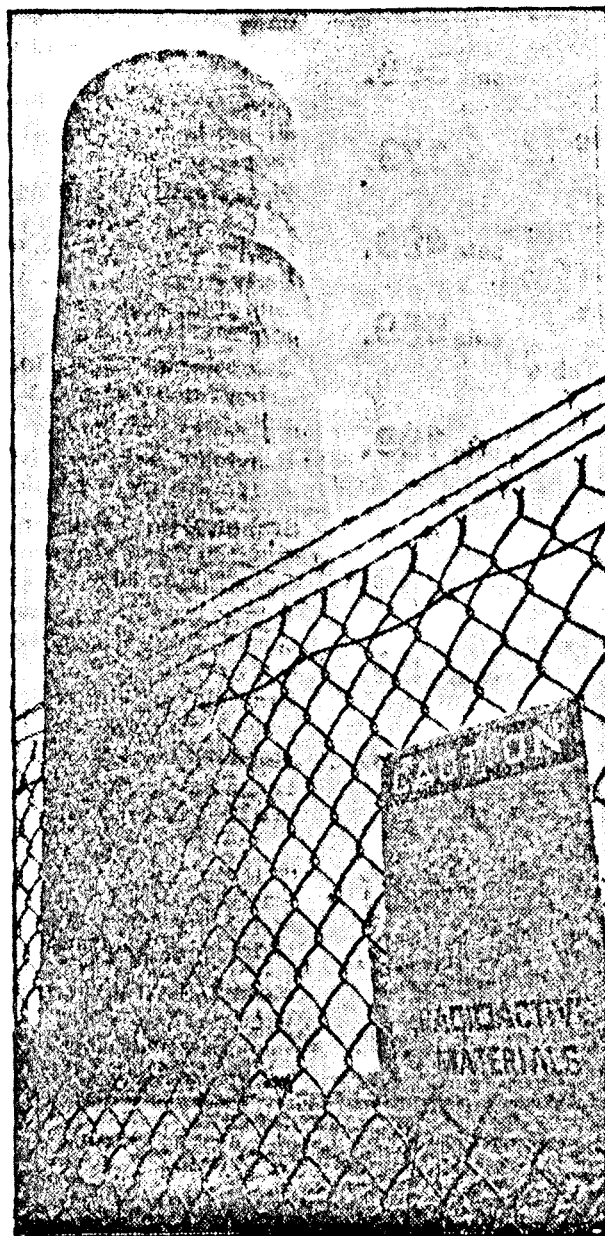
"Most of these regulations deal with present practice," he said. "Some have aspects that can be dealt with now, and others may be part of what the government is studying in the future."

Schwartz said he also has urged Hewitt to contact the state Department of Environmental Conservation to determine whether state codes are being violated as well.

"They'll have to determine how these regulations and statutes apply to the site and then make sure the government plans to comply with them in the future," he said.

In a related move, board member Alvin Ogg said he has completed a course of action for the board. He refused to discuss his plan.

"You've got to start somewhere," Ogg said. "We are unanimous in our stand, we should be unanimous in our approach."



Niagara Gazette

A 165-foot high concrete tower containing radioactive residue marks the location of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works in Lewiston. A federal consultant has recommended the 191-acre site be used for disposal of low-level radioactive wastes.

Residents organize group to fight recommendation

By DON DEPERRO
Gazette Staff Writer

LEWISTON — A group of concerned residents has banded together in an effort to fight a recommendation that the federal government turn the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works into a permanent radioactive waste repository.

The organization held its inaugural meeting Thursday at the Curtis Court home of Mary Clark. Mrs. Clark said the group will first meet publicly at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Town Hall, 1375 Ridge Road.

Steven R. Nathanson, a spokesman for the group, said the residents will work with Town Board members to block proposed federal Department of Energy plans to convert the 191-acre Pletcher Road site into a storage center for radioactive wastes.

"I don't live next door to it and I don't have any children at the school," Nathanson said. "But I want to take a close look at it to combat what the government plans on doing."

Nathanson, an environmental engineer for the Occidental Chemical Corp. in Niagara Falls, said his knowledge of waste disposal will benefit the residents' efforts.

He admitted there is an irony concerning his employment at the company which is connected with one of the most infamous environmentally ravaged areas in the nation — the Love Canal. But Nathanson said that has little influence on his new role.

"A few people in my neighborhood have confronted me with that issue but there is no one more environmentally knowledgeable and concerned than the people who work in this department," he said. "So there's really no contradiction as far as I can see."

On behalf of the town and its residents, Nathanson said he and other group members are preparing to do battle.

"It's not a secret that the town has been misled right from the start on this thing," he said. "We plan to do something about it."

The group has also been promised help from Citizens Against Pollution, another area environmental group.

"We will certainly be willing to work with them," CAP President Danielle DeGoller said.

Her organization has sent messages to various political candidates asking they return with a stand on the LOOW issue.