

Proposal to Fight N-Waste Deposits In Lewiston Aired

By JOANN SCELSA

LEWISTON — Town Councilman Alvin Ogg has asked the Town Board to maintain its leadership role in opposition to the location of a nuclear waste repository at the former Lake Ontario Ordinance Works.

Mr. Ogg made the recommendation in "action plan" he distributed to board members this week. Mr. Ogg said the plan was intended as a starting point for the board to provoke thought and discussion and not necessarily to be adopted in its present form.

A meeting scheduled for last Friday to discuss Mr. Ogg's plan and hear recommendations from attorney Benjamin Hewitt has been postponed until 5:15 p.m. Tuesday at Town Hall. Mr. Hewitt is still waiting for information from environmental attorneys in Washington with whom he is consulting.

Mr. Ogg's plan aims to "protect the safety and welfare of the present and future residents of the town and surrounding areas."

To accomplish that, the plan says, the town must prevent further nuclear wastes from being shipped into Lewiston, and push for the decommissioning of the site. It recommends the town utilize all resources at its disposal including local and national media and call upon all levels of government, up to President Reagan and top Canadian officials for assistance.

While the town is exploring legal means to at least tie up the federal government for awhile and block the plans for a repository, a Department of Energy attorney said Friday he hopes to be able to resolve the concerns of the town and residents without litigation.

"Any response from DOE at this time would be premature," Charles Seehorn, an attorney with DOE's legal division in Oak Ridge, Tenn., said. "The people of Lewiston can do anything they want. I hope they don't sue us."

Mr. Seehorn said after a threatened lawsuit by the residents of Weldon Spring, Miss., over a plan to move radioactive material into the community, the Energy Department is entering into "unilateral stipulation" that it will not take "any precipitous action" and will follow all requirements laid down by the National Environmental Policy Act, including public hearings.

"We assured them we were going to let them know what's going on," Mr. Seehorn said.

As to the Energy Department's plans for the ordinance site, Mr. Seehorn said he is not a department spokesman, but added "all we're doing now is making it a little safer."

He said under the federal process, which the Energy Department would have to "strictly comply" with before creating a repository, the department would have to examine the situation as it exists and determine if an environmental impact statement is required. Mr. Seehorn said he would imagine an impact statement would be needed.

He confirmed local reports that Buchtel National Inc., the federal consultant that made the recommendation to turn the site into a repository, has been gathering information and that information "can be used for an environmental impact statement."

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