

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

November 9, 2021

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Council President Eaton at 6:30 p.m. on November 9, 2021.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Emelie Eaton Heidi Sparks
 Bruce McGee Richard Herr
 Scot Stokes
 Richard Klose

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Irv Wilke
 Don Nelson

OTHER STAFF PRESENT: None

Council President Eaton led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Council President Eaton asked the Council to observe a moment of silence.

MINUTES:

- **Approval of Minutes of October 26, 2021.**

Motion by Council Member McGee to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 26, 2021, as presented, seconded by Council Member Sparks. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All six council members present voted aye. Motion carried 6-0.

- **Approval of Special City Council Minutes of October 28, 2021.**

Motion by Council Member Stokes to approve the minutes of the special meeting of October 28, 2021, as presented, seconded by Council Member McGee. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All six council members present voted aye. Motion carried 6-0.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- **Police Department Monthly Report - October 2021.**
- **Fire Department Monthly Report - October 2021.**
- **Building Department Monthly Report - October 2021.**

COUNCIL DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

CONSENT ITEMS:

- **Claims entered through November 5, 2021.**
A complete listing of the claims and their amounts is on file in the Clerk/Treasurer's Office.
- **Approval of Payroll Register for PPE 10/31/2021 totaling \$226,647.29.**
- **Special Council Workshop Minutes of August 30, 2021.**
- **Council Workshop Minutes of September 21, 2021.**

The Council President Eaton asked if there was any separation of consent items. There was none.

Motion by Council Member McGee to approve the consent items as presented, seconded by Council Member Sparks. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All six council members present voted aye. Motion carried 6-0.

CEREMONIAL CALENDAR: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

- Budget/Finance Committee Minutes of September 28, 2021.
- Budget/Finance Committee Minutes of October 12, 2021.
- Budget/Finance Committee Minutes of October 26, 2021.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (THREE-MINUTE LIMIT):

Carol Blades, 1809 DeNittis Lane, good evening President Eaton and Council Members. This morning I visited the Council Chambers as I planned to attend tomorrow night's meeting regarding the easement under the City's Riverside Park. I had never been in here, and I had never addressed a Chamber like this, so I kind of wanted to get my bearings. Brittney was very gracious and kind to me. She showed me the Chamber and showed me the basic protocol. I decided to attend tonight as well because I have two points. The improvements that you all have made at Lions Family Park are just fabulous. They are a nod to good health to people like me, anyone who is willing to go out there and take advantage of it. I thank you for your efforts. I know it was several years of work to do that. My second item is it was my understanding that Laurel had put NorthWestern Energy's gas plan proposal on pause while you called for public input. Which I greatly applaud that you have asked for public input. However, I was notified yesterday that on November 10, tomorrow, you plan to possibly pass the requested easement under Riverside Park. NorthWestern Energy publicly acknowledged it bypassed public input to save money. I thought you all had cried foul. And I thought you were genuinely interested in public input. I have spent many hours researching, drafting, and writing my two-page letter of input to you. I sent it to Brittney this morning, and I am sure she has forwarded it to you. I am also sure that not all of you have had an opportunity to read my letter, let alone to think of the implications or have a dialog as a group about it. There is ample more input coming to you. Please do not ignore our input under pressure from NorthWestern Energy. Please continue to pause this gas plant proposal on all fronts. Please give an honest ear, an open mind, and ample discussion to our points of view that we are submitting. Thank you.

Steve Krum, 249 24th Avenue W., basically I would like to address Council about the proposed zone change by NorthWestern Energy for the methane power plant. I have been reviewing the Laurel Municipal Code to try and figure out how we got to where we are today. One of the issues in the zoning verbiage itself it's focused on residential type zoning where you go blocks and lots. It doesn't really speak to what we are talking about today, the rural lands, the homes, and neighborhoods within the City/County zoning area and the industrial-zoned area close by. But when I read the code, it was obvious that the intent of the code is to protect the health and welfare of those living in the area being considered for the zoning change. I have a few of the codes, and I would like to read them to you to emphasize the intent of the code to protect those already living and working in the area being considered for this zone change. Mr. Krum read LMC 16.04.030 into the record. I believe building a massive plant like they are proposing in that area is a manmade hazard—a Consideration of the impacts on the natural resources and development in harmony with the natural environment. The City Council received letters from the people that live down there about the animals, the eagles, the nesting. That's definitely going to impact that. The protection of the rights of all the documented property owners affected by the proposed subdivisions, including water. Which I don't think the neighborhoods were addressed at all, and the code addresses these neighborhoods. Unless the variance would not adversely affect or injure. The Zoning Commission should not recommend that land-use variances be granted unless the variances would not affect adversely, injure, or result in injustice to others. And I believe that's going to happen. Their property values are going to go down. Their health issues are going to go up. Their lives are going to be totally changed by this huge power plant right across the river from them. Mr. Krum read LMC 17.04.020 and 17.04.030 into the record. Again, put that plant right next to that neighborhood, the neighborhoods up by the rims, the neighborhoods by the Clark's Fork the neighborhoods build down east of Laurel south of the river, they are going to be impacted by this as well. Their health as well. Constant noise is a health issue. Mr. Krum read LMC 17.62.010 into the record. It says you can go beyond the 300 feet because the 300 feet was specifically referring to the blocks with lots. Mr. Krum read LMC 17.62.020 into the record. That's the adjacent neighborhood, and this is not compatible with them at all. The Zoning Commission's actions it is compatible with surrounding land use or otherwise screened and separated from adjacent land in such a way as to minimize adverse effects. This is a big plant. There is no way

they are going to stop all the sound coming off that. Those are massive engines, and the horsepower over there is enormous. Further, the zoning commission may consider and impose modifications or conditions concerning but not limited to the following: noise, vibration, air pollution, and similar environmental influences. That's everything that this plant is going to do to this area. Right here is says, "an application for the official maps should remain on..." I don't want that. So basically, I guess my point is that the Municipal Code, even though it doesn't directly address rural neighborhoods, it seems to be focused on what we do in the subdivisions development where there's blocks and lots and stuff like that. It does address that it says the neighborhoods adjacent to that should address. I have spoke with some of the people involved in looking at this, and I don't believe the DEQ did this neighborhood justice based on reading their report. I don't believe NorthWestern Energy give the full facts and the true issues on the size of this plant. And then, I also reviewed a plant built somewhat smaller than this in Ulysses, KS. But if you Google it on Google Maps, it is 13 miles east of town in a very sparsely populated area. They made sure not to build it next to a neighborhood like this. The closest people are a mile and a half/ two miles away. This plant is going to be noisy, and I would hope to have the Council reconsider or consider voting no on this and or at least giving it a long time to be reviewed by more people as stated by the previous speaker. It was supposed to be delayed. Give us more time and discuss the real issues instead of rushing this through. Thank you.

Aaron Felder, 1434 McMullen Lane, Good Evening Council. I have had a long time to think about some things this evening. I'm going, to be honest with you. Right here, you guys are more powerful than lawyers. You're more powerful than the courtroom that's next door. And your more powerful than the courtrooms in the next town, in Billings. You really are, and we need you. I know we are not in your ward, and I get it. I really do. These people need you. I do. In your oath office, there is word in there called fidelity. Fidelity means faithfulness, loyalty, and support. Support is what I am asking for. I won't be able to attend tomorrow. I have a job when my job calls I got to go. Tomorrow when NorthWestern Energy is in this Chamber, I employer one of you, two of you, all of you to look NorthWestern Energy in the eye and ask them, have you done anything for these Laurelen's on the southside of the river. Have you spoken to them? Have you addressed their concerns? Because by doing that, you stand for us. And help us get the questions we need answered. It's what I'm asking. Please, will somebody stand up and ask that for me tomorrow. Thank you.

Kasey Felder, 1434 McMullen Lane, I live straight across the river from the NorthWestern Energy gas plant site. One I would like the Park Board, we did attend a Park Board meeting last week. I do applaud the City's effort to improve Riverside Park. I think there is a lot of potential there, but to go forward with something like an easement for the gas line that would go to this proposed plant site. Who's going to want to camp at Riverside Park. Who's going to want to enjoy the buildings, enjoy that, and recreate there when you have this noise plant right there and downstream. So again, I would hope you reconsider this easement that is supposed to come up tomorrow night and further down this month the zoning change request. Secondly, I would like to offer up a chance for each of you Council Members to each of you come down to where we live. Please come down McMullen Lane and Theil Road. Please come at my house and tell me I don't have something worth fighting for. Because I tell you I do. There is a reason I bought house that I am, and the land that we have. I employer you to come take a look and tell me it's not worth it. I bet you wouldn't be able to tell me no. Please take this into serious consideration. I fight for myself, but I also fight for my neighbor Carol and all my other neighbors down there that maybe can't make it here, but it's what I am fighting for. Thank you for your time.

Brad Molnar, 1423 Frank Road, during the course of events, I have represented Laurel in the Montana House of Representatives. I now represent Laurel in the Montana Senate and serve on the Energy Committee. In between those two, I spent eight years on the Montana Public Service Commission. During that time, I sat and heard all the arguments for and against the David Gates generating plant, which is raised to what is being done here. I was also called upon several times as an expert. When the [inaudible] built the Fisher coal plant and gas plant up in Great Falls. On the in-between, I volunteered and became a citizen intervener on this case. So for several months, I saw all the questions, I saw all the answers, I saw all the arguments take place. It will now go to the Commission, assuming it gets through the process here. It is not my intention through the entire process to advise anybody on how to vote. I am just simply here to say that I know you have been thrust into a large pool. You have been told about the western grid and the problems that are there. You have been told about our concerns on a national and international basis. These are things I have dealt with professional for probably about ten years. So if someone sends me an email, I don't consider it ex parte communications because I am not going to advocate one way or the other. If anybody has a question, I will answer it forthrightly as I can. If anybody asks me a question that I don't have an answer to, I know where I can get it and get it quickly. Then I will give that to you,

complete with footnotes on where I found it, and you can use it as you see fit. It is my intention tonight to simply offer my services, but if want me to come to a work session, I will, if you want to call me on the phone or send me an email. I have sent an email to everyone offering this. I stand offering my service because it is something I do, and it is part of public service. Thank you.

Shannon Heim, 2829 Alpine View Loop in Helena, I am the Director of Regulatory Counsel at NorthWestern, so we actually are here and appreciate the comments that have been made tonight. I am here to reiterate the partnership we have with the City of Laurel is. This easement is one step of many. I do encourage Council to keep an eye on what is actually in front of you. It is a 500 foot by 40-foot easement. That's it. It's a little bit under the corner of the park. That said, we recognize it's still an important thing for all of us to talk about. We have offered the Council and provided in writing this to your City Attorney; I have copies if you would like them. We have offered to pay \$1,500 annually for use of the easement, and additionally, as soon as we have the easement in hand, we will make a \$15,000 gift to the City of Laurel to use for the Parks. For Riverside Park or any other park as Council sees fit. We think it is important that we move forward together. That this plant is important to us. We think it is incredibly important to the City of Laurel. It represents an incredible economic development opportunity. It provides a way for us to be tied even more closely together. It is also really good for the State of Montana. I know that people say that, and it's hard to see the bigger picture sometimes, but this is really important for us literally to keep the lights on. So we are here asking for the easement. We will be here tomorrow night to talk to you about it in more detail and answer any questions you might have. We look forward to working with you and continuing the partnership. It's not like we are new to town; we have been here for a long time and will be here for a long time after. No matter what happens with the Laurel generating station. I do have; I see that your City Attorney is not here. I do have this easement that was provided to him if you would like it. Totally at your discretion.

Council President Eaton clarified that the easement would be discussed at tomorrow's meeting. The easement has been provided in Council's packet for tomorrow evening.

Council President Eaton read into the record the attached letter from Karen Ehresman of 1620 DeNittis Lane.

Council President Eaton read into the record the attached letter from Melanie Tripp of 1519 McMullen Lane.

Council President Eaton read into the record the attached letter from Oli Tripp of 1519 McMullen Lane.

Council President Eaton read into the record the attached letters from Carol Blades of 1809 DeNittis Lane.

Council President Eaton read into the record the attached letter from Brad Molnar of 1423 Frank Road.

SCHEDULED MATTERS:

- **Resolution No. R21-118: A Resolution Of The City Council Approving A Memorandum Of Understanding Between The City Of Laurel And Local Union Local 303, American Federation Of State, County And Municipal Employees, AFSCME.**

Motion by Council Member Klose to approve Resolution No. R21-120, seconded by Council Member Sparks. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All six council members present voted aye. Motion carried 6-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-119: A Resolution Authorizing A Lease Agreement Between The City Of Laurel And Laurel American Legion Post #123, For The Construction And Use Of City Owned Property For A Parking Lot Near The City's Cemetery.**

Council President Eaton pulled this item from the agenda. She read the attached email from Planning Director Altonaga.

- **Resolution No. R21-120: A Resolution Of The City Council Authorizing The Removal Of Former Mayor, Thomas C. Nelson, From All-City Accounts And Adding Newly Elected Mayor, Dave Waggoner, To All Such Accounts.**

Motion by Council Member Sparks to approve Resolution No. R21-120, seconded by Council Member Klose. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All six council members present voted aye. Motion carried 6-0.

- **Motion To Allow Council Member Sparks To Be Absent From The City Of Laurel For More Than Ten Days. (LMC 2.12.060)**

Motion by Council Member McGee to approve the motion to allow Council Member Sparks to be absent from the City of Laurel for more than ten days (LMC 2.12.060), seconded by Council Member Klose. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All six council members present voted aye. Motion carried 6-0.

- **Appointment of Mayor to fill Vacancy.**

Motion by Council Member McGee to appoint Council Member Stokes to fill the Mayor's Vacancy until January 3rd, and he could return to his seat on Council, seconded by Council Member Herr.

Motion by Council Member Klose to appoint Council President Eaton to fill the Mayor's Vacancy until January 3rd, and she could return to her seat on Council, seconded by Council Member Sparks.

There was no public comment or council discussion on either motion. A ballot vote was taken on the motion. Clerk/Treasurer Langve read off the ballot count. Three votes Stokes; three votes Eaton.

Clerk/Treasurer Langve, I have to say as Staff, we've had enough. Come on. We've already lost our Mayor; give us a break. She's been doing this for three weeks.

Council President Eaton asked for motions for nominations to fill the Mayor's Vacancy.

Motion by Council Member Sparks to appoint Council President Eaton to fill the Mayor's Vacancy until January 3rd, and she could return to her seat on Council, seconded by Council Member Herr.

Council President Eaton asked if there was a second nomination. That was none.

Council President Eaton asked if Council would be in favor of a voice vote on this. Council agreed.

There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All six council members present voted aye. Motion carried 6-0.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA: None.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS (ONE-MINUTE LIMIT):

City Hall will be closed on November 11, 2021, in observation of Veterans Day.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

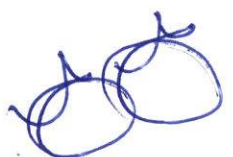
Laurel Senior Center is offering a free meal for Veterans-on-Veterans Day. Please call ahead to ensure a meal is available.

MAYOR UPDATES:

There will be a Special Council meeting tomorrow evening, November 10, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. This agenda will be one item only.

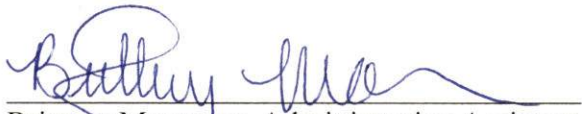
UNSCHEDULED MATTERS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

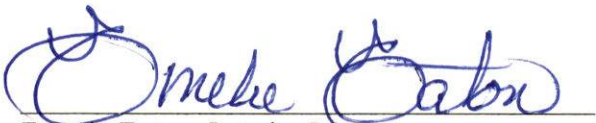


Motion by Council Member Stokes to adjourn the council meeting, seconded by Council Member McGee. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All six council members present voted aye. Motion carried 6-0.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.


Brittney Moorman, Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Mayor and passed by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, this 23rd day of November 2021.


Emelie Eaton, Interim Mayor

Attest:


Bethany Langve, Clerk/Treasurer

Brittney Moorman

From: Karen Ehresman-Oberly <kehresman@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 2, 2021 7:25 PM
To: Brittney Moorman
Subject: Opposing the building of Northwestern Laurel Gas Plant
Attachments: November 1 Letter.docx

Dear Brittney,

Please read the attached letter and present to City COuncil.

\Thank you

--

Karen Ehresman
1620 DeNittis Lane
Laurel, Mt 59044

November 1, 2021

Northwestern Energy's Proposed Laurel Gas Plant

To whom it may Concern:

I am writing this letter to oppose the building of the Methane gas plant in Laurel on the undeveloped land east of the CHS refinery, 300 feet from the Yellowstone River.

The Yellowstone River is a beautiful River with history from the early explorers and fur trappers. The scenery is excellent, there is wildlife and bird viewing. All of these natural areas will be destroyed with the plant that is proposed to be built near the Yellowstone River. The visual impact from the road side as well as the view from the river will be destroyed.

The noise Pollution will affect the residents, the wildlife and the birds. Many times that I have floated the Yellowstone River I have seen Eagles, Owls and Osprey flying in the trees and ducks and geese floating the water. The peacefulness will be destroyed.

Health Hazards, the pollutants are harmful to the human health. We already have sulfur dioxide that exceeds the allowed limits of pollution. Add in the air pollutants from the Gas Plant, making our air quality even worse. Due to methane gas exposure and poisoning, people may suffer from a range of long-term effects including: Cardiovascular, respiratory and neurological problems. Development of epilepsy, **pneumonia**, claustrophobia, heart problems, memory loss and depression.

It is also proven that Methane Gas emit climate harming greenhouse gases, contributing to more Climate Change problems.

Sincerely,

Karen Ehresman

1620 DeNittis Lane

Laurel, Montana 59044

406-690-6640

kehresman@gmail.com

Brittney Moorman

From: Melanie Tripp <melt@comtechmt.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 3, 2021 11:04 PM
To: Brittney Moorman
Subject: Re: Gas Plant Zoning - Please Consider

Hello City Council

Thank you again for taking my comments regarding the proposed gas power plant north of the banks of the Yellowstone River.

In addition to my previous comments I would like to express my concern that Laurel citizens and surrounding county residents are in need of more and proper notice, enough opportunity to speak and additional time to send comments on the proposed gas plant or changing zoning and/or annexation to allow it.

I feel the majority of Laurel residents have no idea there is work being done to move forward with building a gas plant with eighteen 77 foot high stacks in/near Laurel.

Northwesterns gas plant is planned to be placed north of my own backyard and I had no idea of any of this until just last week. I know this is true for many others and that I am not alone.

I believe a large majority of Laurel citizens would be shaking their heads to find out what I recently did. They would frown in consternation for their families and children's health and safety as I am now.

They would have questions. And comments.

If a project of this size continues people may soon look at the skyline of RICE generators overtaking our city and ask themselves, like I am at this moment, if they were even given the time to change things or weigh in.

Perhaps I've missed the boat but it does seem I should've heard more about all of this sooner I do hope more time is given.

Again thank you Council for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Melanie Tripp
1519 McMullen Lane
Laurel, MT 59044
406-208-6548

On Oct 27, 2021, at 1:41 PM, Melanie Tripp <melt@comtechmt.com> wrote:

Hello City Council,

I am writing to you regarding the proposed zone change to allow a gas power plant in Laurel and just a few hundred feet from the Yellowstone River.

My family and I live in Yellowstone County just south of the river on McMullen Lane. Just as any person would be, I am opposed to any change that allows a power plant to be built directly across from our home on the river, directly south of the proposed site and particularly one that is dangerous to the health and well being of my family. I have listened in on council meetings and would echo the concerns you've heard so far from residents in my neighborhood.

I am not a scientist or an expert on gas power plants. I am a long time small business owner, a mom and a grandmother. I can only speak to you as an eye witness and a citizen of Yellowstone County asking your help to represent myself and families in Laurel in standing up to any multi million dollar company looking to change the landscape and quality of our city.

In our home are my husband and myself, our 3 daughters, son-in-law and two very small grandbabies. It's a busy household with many family members and guests visiting daily. We have a hobby farm and a couple dozen farm animals. Our property has an easement to walk to the river and use of the river's beach area. Our family, kids and grandkids have spent many days and hours at the river enjoying wildlife and the beauty it allows while still living close to town. The river and it's surrounding area is the reason any one of us will tell you is THE number 1 reason we love our home.

After 5 years of spending time on the river (directly south of the proposed plant) I can attest the area is bursting and teeming with an incredible amount of wildlife and recreation. Just an hour in the spot where we enjoy will grant you dozens of opportunities to see river wildlife like you've not seen before. This includes but is not limited to blue heron, hawks, bears with cubs, mountain lions, deer, foxes, fish, toads and so much more. These last years we've watched a pair of eagles nesting and raising eaglets just a short distance west of our area and northeast of Riverside Park. Did you know bald eagles will mate for life?

Also from our vantage point we watch many people pass and float by during the low water times of year with their children and dogs. Between Riverside Park and the BLM area, this is a busy area and many of your citizens use this area to fish, recreate and create memories with their children as they swim, splash and play in water and air we hope is clean and safe for them. With all of the humankind in the areas... This is a peaceful and quiet area to enjoy. The only audible sounds are those of the river and nature in the background.

This is a beautiful and picturesque place we are tasked to care for and are absolutely fortunate to have available to us as a city.

Imagine all of the above recreation and river landscape with the addition of noise and air pollution that's been shared the plant will bring. Imagine much of the recreation and wildlife disappearing from our area with the amount of noise and pollution being proposed. People will move and leave that area as it become dilapidated and in disrepair where it will now be the city's responsibility to try to revive a large dying section of properties around the plant. A much more difficult and expensive task to turn the area back to it's glory days once we've begun down that road.

The more I read about the noise and air pollution this plant will generate, the more concerned I become for my family's safety and well-being. A quote from the Missoula Current regarding the DEQ's suit states the plant "would emit nearly a thousand tons per year of air pollution, other than greenhouse gases. This includes particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, and sulfur dioxide."

And (Yellowstone County's) "air is already below normal quality because of sulfur dioxide, which causes respiratory symptoms, aggravates asthma and other negative health effects, according to the EPA."

I can also assume the pollution will have a potential negative impact on water quality. Many of the homes along River Road as well as ours are on wells for drinking water.

With all of the impacts our citizens already experience from industrial plants in Laurel, I cannot help but wonder...

Why are we building yet another plant here in our city?

Why so close to our beloved river area where we've spent so much time and effort to revive and draw locals and tourists to Riverside Park?

Are there not better suited and safer areas to build this plant without such a steep safety impact to the mental and physical health of our humankind in and around the city of Laurel?

Does the plant really need to be in so close of proximity to our schools, businesses, families, and our children in Laurel?

Can we continue to work and do better to create a Laurel that is thriving, beautiful and an impressive community to move to and live in?

Lastly will the addition of this plant assist in building a better, safer and more enjoyable atmosphere for our Laurel businesses, families and all residents?

Upon visiting the City of Laurel's website I found this Mission...

Our Mission

The elected officials, appointed committee members, employees, and volunteers of the City of Laurel are committed to developing and enhancing our community's quality of life while preserving the City's unique character...

With that I will close by sincerely saying...

Thank you City Council Members for serving your city and its citizens. A large portion of my time has been spent volunteering with members of Billings City Council on task forces and legislation. Because of this I have come to understand serving on Council is a very tough job with many often thankless hours of volunteer time.

I would like to Thank you again for your time and for your consideration,
Melanie Tripp

Owner/CFO, COMTECH Audio Theater Security, Billings Private Gym and Koenigstein Eis
Zonta Club of Billings Director and Vice President Zonta Club of Billings Foundation
Co-chair - Yellowstone County Area Human Trafficking Task Force and Red Sand Project Billings

1519 McMullen Lane - Laurel, MT
406-208-6548

Brittney Moorman

From: Oli Tripp <olit@comtechmt.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 4, 2021 9:31 AM
To: Brittney Moorman
Subject: Gas Plant Zoning - Please Consider

Please read into record my letter regarding the proposed re-zoning of the northwestern energy gas power plant

Oli Tripp
1519 McMullen Lane
Laurel, MT 59044

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I will keep my letter short and to the point. I hope to hear a response via a vote against rezoning the proposed northwestern energy site. I do hope that Laurel will maintain the river, the nature and the beauty that is the Yellowstone River Ecosystem and it's recreational opportunities.

First off I understand I am not an expert in this industry. I also understand that with the shut down and closings of coal fired power plants there is a an immediate need for alternative reliable energy sources. One of these being the proposed facility.

1. Can the power plant be located elsewhere away from any residential areas?
2. Is there a strategic reason for the power plant to be located on the Yellowstone River?
3. There are areas all over this region that have nothing around them for miles, could we not asked to have it located there?
4. It is my understanding that the power produced from this size of plant will need to be put on lines and sent to Broadview substation. Would it not make more sense to locate the plant somewhere near or outside of the Broadview substation where there is much more open space?

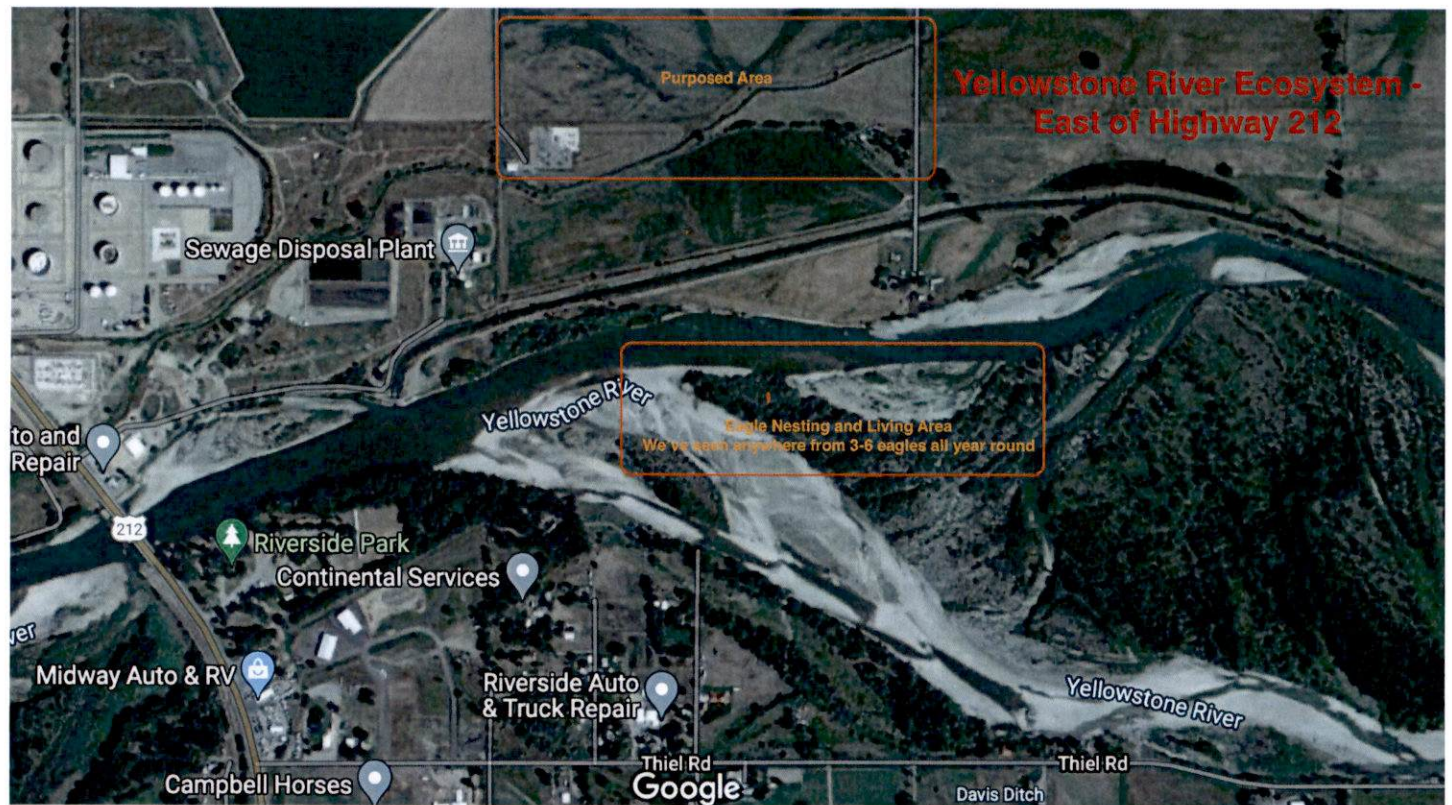
On the Yellowstone River Ecosystem:

1. Why industrialize the Yellowstone River anymore than it already is?
2. There is so much wild life that uses the Yellowstone River as its home, can you guarantee that the wildlife will not move away from the area after this facility is built?
3. There are several eagles that live directly across the main channel of the Yellowstone River, I feel with the increased noise, fuel emissions and proximity of the facility, these eagles will leave the area altogether or have their ecosystem be negatively impacted, what are your feelings about this?
4. Recreational activities on the Yellowstone is at an all time high and never been more popular. This includes fishing, floating, boating, hiking, camping, swimming just to name a few; Your vote to allow the change in zoning will begin a decline and change to the recreation Laurel, Montana offers literally in its back yard. Is this something you will be proud of? Is this new facility something your family, children, grandchildren, generations beyond that are not yet here and the hundreds of families in Laurel would be happy to see in their back yard? Or would they rather have the Yellowstone River and its beauty maintained.

I included in this email several pictures and of all of the wildlife that is at my house on the Yellowstone River. I live due south of the proposed site across the river. I have pictures of just this summer so far of 3 Mountain Lions, 1 Brown Bear, 1 Black bear with 2 bear cubs, multiple deer and wild turkeys. I have included some of these photos. I also included pictures of where several Bald Eagles live and took pictures of where the set of trees are where they nest.

I hope that if this plant is built the wildlife does not disappear as they may be pushed out.

Oli Tripp
COMTECH Audio Theater Security
7535 Entryway Drive
Billings, MT 59101
406-373-8395 work
406-855-8537 cell













Brittney Moorman

From: cblades41@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, November 4, 2021 2:16 PM
To: Brittney Moorman
Subject: NWE proposed gas plant

Dear Brittney,

Please forward this email to all Council members, if you cannot please let me know.

Has NEW checked in the the Montana Historical Preservation Society? I believe by law builders are required to do that. I have seen no evidence of that contact. Sundance Lodge Recreation Area and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail deserve to be studied for impact that plant will have on them.

Secondly, NEW admits bypassing the process for the public, including residents in the area, to have input. They state they bypassed the process to save money on construction costs. That tells me this is a questionable proposal, when bypassing public input is the intent of the company.

The council is, thank goodness, slowing the process and allowing for public input. I suggest my above two points should enter into your decision making. We the people deserve better.

Carol Blades

Sent from Mail for Windows

Brittney Moorman

From: Laurel MT <laurel-mt@municodeweb.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 4, 2021 1:56 PM
To: Brittney Moorman
Subject: Carol Blades

Submitted on Thursday, November 4, 2021 - 1:55pm

Submitted by anonymous user: 72.174.88.25

Submitted values are:

Name Carol Blades

Address 1809 Denittis Ln

Public Comment I have many concerns regarding the proposed Northwestern Energy Gas Plant on the Yellowstone. I just want to share two of them

Email cblades41@gmail.com

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://cityoflaurelmontana.com/node/16092/submission/2361>

Brittney Moorman

From: Carol Blades <cblades41@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 9, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Brittney Moorman
Subject: letter of public input
Attachments: NWEProposed Gas Plant.docx

Hi Britteny,

Attached is my letter of public input on the proposed gas plant. I greatly appreciate your hospitality when I visited your office and your assistance in getting my input to the council members as soon as possible. Keep up your good effort!
Carol Blades

--

"We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed. As in filling a vessel drop by drop, there is at last a drop which makes it run over; so in a series of kindnesses there is at last one which makes the heart run over."

Council President, Emelie Eaton, and the Laurel City Council have paused the proposal for a Northwester Energy gas plant on the banks of the Yellowstone and they have asked for public input. I am extremely appreciative of this opportunity.

For my input, I will be discussing the impact on the residents, the general public and the land from HWY 212, where Theil Road runs East, to the confluence of the Yellowstone River and the Clark's Fork, where two wild and free rivers come together. Please understand there are approximately 30 private residences in this area, a fantastic 400 plus acre public land open year round as well as a portion of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

Most of us recall 2011 when ExxonMobil's Silvertip pipeline spewed an estimated 1500 barrels of crude oil into the Yellowstone River. Many do not recall that just several years earlier ExxonMobil had a ruptured line under the Yellowstone River just below the bridge on HWY 212. Water and other gases and chemicals erupted into the air out of the river like Old Faithful. These facts make it clear that the Yellowstone River is already at risk for environmental catastrophe. The Laurel City Council should not pave the way for another pipeline under the Yellowstone simply to increase their budget.

Beyond the protection of the historic Yellowstone River, pollution of the air and damage to the environment in this area should not be encouraged by the Council. According to the Laurel Outlook October 28, 2021, the Laurel area does not currently meet federal health based standards for sulfur dioxide in the air. If the City Council supports this gas plant proposal, they are in fact clustering together large industrial polluters, which leads to much greater risk of higher toxic emissions. Indeed, it could generate what is called a toxic "hotspot." The gas plant proposal consists of eighteen internal combustion engines. **Each** engine would require a 77 foot tall exhaust stack. As my kids used to say, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure this out. Increased air pollution is a given.

Within this area is Sundance Lodge Recreation Area, 400 acres plus, of Public Land. It is a part of a National System of Public Lands, under the U.S. Department of the Interiors, Bureau of Land Management. It is currently jointly managed by Fish, Wildlife and Parks. In general it runs along the Clark's Fork, beginning near HWY 212 down to the confluence with the Yellowstone River. Within the last few years it has been enlarged to include a stretch of the Yellowstone river bank, a

stone's throw from the proposed gas plant site, to the confluence. This park is used by hundreds of people annually. Trails are semi groomed, park benches are in place as well as picnic tables throughout the area and a public restroom is available. Pollution from this proposed gas plant would besiege this public park area as well as the residential area. This recreation area is also frequented by Bald Eagles, elegant Blue Herons and majestic Sandhill Cranes, which utilize both rivers. Numerous other birds abound. Birdwatchers, photography buffs and children out on school field trips are just a smattering of who I encounter when I frequently walk the 3.6 mile perimeter of the Sundance Lodge Recreation Area.

My question to the City Council is simple. How can clustering industrial polluters by granting NWE's gas plant proposal, possibly benefit this open and free 400 acre public area, the people or the birds or the habitat?

My last input to the Council is to ask them to reflect on honoring the Nez Perce National Historic Trail. In 1958 the Yellowstone Historical Society along with the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, established the Nez Perce National Historic Park 7 miles North of Laurel, a few miles North of the Veteran's Cemetery. It commemorates the "Canyon Creek Battle." The view of the canyon from this park is startling. One can imagine how the canyon had the backs of the Nez Perce.

Throughout Sundance Recreation Area, there are photos and historic writings posted regarding the trek of Chief Joseph and his people down the Clark's Fork, and noting their historic crossing of the Yellowstone River hoping to travel North to Canada and freedom. To be clear the NWE proposed gas plant with eighteen 77 foot tall stacks would be more than highly visible from their crossing site. Hopefully, the City Council will not support defiling this historic site which some consider sacred, by endorsing NWE gas plant proposal.

The fundamental question to the City Council is, do you support the above described area as a viable and worthy portion of the community or do you see it as a 'sacrifice zone', will you undercut all of this to increase your budget? We all know Yellowstone County is expanding West, we see a new hotel going up, a new mini mall in place, a new gym and grocery store on the horizon. There are other tax sources forthcoming. You, as elected leaders, asked for our input. That is

responsible. Now will you read our emails, listen to our comments and discuss in depth the response you have received? Say NO the NWE gas plant proposal.

Brittney Moorman

From: Ward 1B
Sent: Monday, November 8, 2021 1:14 PM
To: Brittney Moorman
Subject: Fwd: laurel gas plant

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy Tablet

----- Original message -----

From: Brad Molnar <brad.molnar@yahoo.com>
Date: 11/7/21 7:38 PM (GMT-07:00)
To: Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>, Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>, Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>, Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>, Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>, Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>, Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>, Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>
Subject: laurel gas plant

Greetings all,

I have been following the attempt to build a gas capacity generation plant in Laurel with interest. It is now caught up in a court action. which was predictable, and a city council allowance or dis-allowance vote on an easement. I have no comment on either nor shall I make one.

Unknown to most I was the first ever Citizen Intervenor and served on the "buy Colstrip for \$1" docket placed before the PSC. Most recently I was the 2nd ever Citizen Intervenor on the question to which you are now part; namely, should the plant be built in Laurel. I assume no others have ever been citizen intervenors because specialized expertise is required and it is a commitment of about 3 hours per day without pay. I do it to offer an unbiased perspective on behalf of rate payers.

Because of my involvement as an intervenor I have seen all of the questions and answers traded between opposing professionals on this project. I believe I have as good a handle on this issue as any. Unlike the other intervenors I was not compensated to push a certain point of view and do not do so at this time. As your senator I also service on the Consumer Council which will take part in the project wherever it is built or from whom the energy is purchased for re-sale. The Consumer Council represents ratepayers on energy issues before the PSC.

If any of you have questions on this construction project and/or the effects of this project please contact me through this email address or call me at 406-794-6092.

I may attend the next meeting and make my offer publicly.

Brad Molnar

Brittney Moorman

From: Laurel City Planner
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Brittney Moorman; Ward 1B; Emelie Eaton (Deaton4626@AOL.com)
Subject: RE: R21-119

Hi All,

I have not received any comments back from the Yellowstone County Departments as of today. I anticipate them coming back to my office very soon. Once I have those comments, I can send them along to the surveyor to update/amend the survey to then resubmit and be recorded.

Regards,
Nick Altonaga, CFM
Planning Director

City of Laurel
PO Box 10
115 W. 1st Street
Laurel, MT 59044
(406) 628-4796 ext. 5302
(406) 628-2241 (fax)



From: Brittney Moorman <bmoorman@laurel.mt.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 11:53 AM
To: Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Emelie Eaton (Deaton4626@AOL.com) <deaton4626@aol.com>
Cc: Laurel City Planner <naltonaga@laurel.mt.gov>
Subject: R21-119

Emelie, you pulled Resolution No. R21-119 from Tuesday's meeting. This is the resolution that was dealing with the parking lot up at the cemetery. When do you want that to go back to Council? I do not know when this will be filed. Nick would have that information. I have cc'd him on this email.

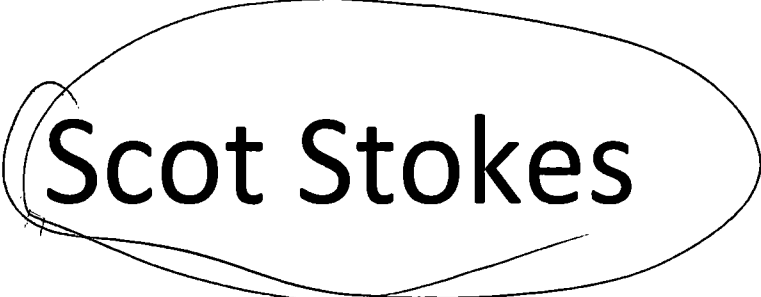
Brittney Moorman
Administrative Assistant
City of Laurel
P.O. Box 10
Laurel, MT 59044

406-628-7431 ext. 5503

406-628-2289 fax

Scot Stokes

Emelie Eaton



Scot Stokes

Emelie Eaton

Scot Stokes_{-NO}

Emelie Eaton_{-YES}

Scot Stokes

Emelie Eaton

Scot Stokes x

Emelie Eaton

Scot Stokes

Emelie Eaton