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Expert says metering station will not affect property values

By SARAH HITE
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A real estate expert retained by Chief Gathering LLC told residents at a zoning hearing July 21 that a natural gas metering station to be built off Hildebrandt Road would not affect property values.

The company presented John J. Coyle III, of Coyle, Lynch and Co. based in Sharon Hill, for testimony in a continued hearing

for its application for special zoning exceptions to build a metering station on a property located about 1,300 feet from the Dallas School District campus.

Coyle testified he was able to review the metering station project and determine whether the proposed structure would accord with the township's zoning ordinance.

He answered questions such as whether the project is compatible with the characterization of the community, whether the

By studying other areas in the state similar to Dallas Township, he (real estate expert John Coyle) estimated the metering station project would not affect any of these categories. He also said the infrastructure of roads in Dallas Township would not be significantly affected by the construction, operation or maintenance of the metering facility.

project would cause devaluation of property and if the project would cause injurious harm to the public interest.

By studying other areas in the

state similar to Dallas Township, he estimated the metering station project would not affect any of these categories. He also said the infrastructure of roads in

Dallas Township would not be significantly affected by the construction, operation or maintenance of the metering facility.

He said he studied Middletown Township and Brookhaven Borough in Delaware County, both of which feature residences, schools, nursing homes and other community structures near the Spectra pipeline.

A hearing will be scheduled in the future to give opposing attorneys and the public a chance to cross examine Coyle.

Prior to hearing Coyle's testimony, Ted Wurfel, vice president of Environmental, Safety and Regulatory Affairs for Chief, was presented as a witness for the zoning hearing board to question.

Solicitor Phil Gelsso asked Wurfel a number of questions relating to the township's zoning ordinance, including whether the project fits into township development plans.

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FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP

Zoning ordinance may be changed

By SARAH HITE
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Officials are working on changing the township zoning ordinance to bring the rural community up to date.

The planning commission met Monday to begin discussions on the drafted document, which is part of a series of updates funded through a \$100,000 grant from the Luzerne County Office of Community Development received by the township in 2009.

Officials recently approved the township's first-ever comprehensive plan. Now they are reviewing a drafted zoning ordinance and plan to make changes to its subdivision and land development law.

The drafted zoning document addresses many issues, including one subject area currently affecting neighboring Dallas Township - natural gas development.

The ordinance addresses natural gas compressor and meter-

FOR MORE INFO

Contact Franklin Township Secretary/Treasurer Rick Melvin at 333-5131 for more information about the drafted zoning ordinance.

ing stations, oil and gas wells, industrial waste water treatment facilities and hydraulic fracturing water withdrawal facilities.

Oil and gas wells and compressor and metering stations would be considered as special exceptions in agricultural and industrial districts. Hydraulic fracturing water withdrawal facilities and industrial waste water treatment plants would be considered as special exceptions within the industrial district.

A special exception would be granted by the township zoning hearing board if certain conditions were met for individual projects.

According to the draft, no areas within the township accept

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THAT CHAMPIONSHIP FEELING



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Back Mountain American team members celebrate a home run and another runner at the beginning of the Section 5 10-11 Little League championship game. For a story and additional pictures on the team, please turn to page 9.

Cows at The Lands at Hillside Farms are tabbed 'excellent'

Cows were classified by U.S. Jersey, part of American Jersey Cattle Association.

"We have one cow that prefers Coca-Cola over Sprite."

Chuck Deome
Farm manager, The Lands at Hillside Farms

By SARAH HITE
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Snuffy, a 4-year-old brown beauty, bats her eyes at The Lands at Hillside Farm barn manager Chuck Deome as she noshes on some fresh hay.

"She's a love bug," said Chuck. "I think she's in love with me today."

Snuffy's got reason to be such a flirt. As one of nine Jersey cows on the farm to be nationally classified as "excellent," she's more confident these days.

The cows were classified by U.S. Jersey, part of the American Jersey Cattle Association, on July 21. Nine of the 35 Jerseys received 90 points out of 100 on the scoring scale, which qualified them as "excellent" - the most cows ever at Hillside to receive the title.

Farm educator Amy Deome said cows are judged on their physical traits, including legs,

feet, udder and stature.

"It's basically how well they work," she said.

Those cattle living at Hillside work well because they have plenty of time to play. Chuck said in spring, summer and fall, the cows are only in the barn twice a day for milking. The rest of their time is spent grazing in the 100-plus acres of pasture, mingling with their farm friends and educating the public.

"We have volunteers as young as 11 years old and they learn how to do everything. Once they learn one thing, they move on to the next stage," Chuck said.

In the winter, the cows are kept inside the dairy barn, but their 4 by 6 1/2 foot hitching areas are large enough for them to move around. If a cow seems to be cramped, Chuck lets them walk around in a pen to keep them active.

The most recent heat wave also affected the cows - farm staff had to keep them inside during daylight hours and position fans to cool off the cattle.

"Even when it's really hot, they get to be outside for 12 hours at night," Chuck said.

Jersey cows are characterized by their light brown coloring and smaller stature compared to other breeds, such as the iconic Holstein or Brown Swiss.

The ladies were prepped for their big day - Amy said the cows were brushed and scrubbed before appraisers came to the farm. "They even got pedicures," she joked, talking about trimming the cows' hooves.

It's easy for the four-person barn staff to keep track of the 110 cattle at the farm - Amy said it's almost like having as many pets.

"If you had 20 cats, you would know all of their names," she said.

The key to personalized care is getting to know the different personalities of all the cows, which are often as big as their thousand-pound bodies.

"We have one cow that prefers Coca-Cola over Sprite," said Chuck.

Chuck said Hillside hasn't seen so many high-ranking cattle in years, and the classification only reinforces the farm's goals.

"It's about healthy cows producing healthy milk in a humane way," he said.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

TOP PHOTO: "Snuffy," a 4-year-old Jersey at The Lands at Hillside Farms, snuggles up to barn manager Chuck Deome.

RIGHT PHOTO: "Snuffy" and eight of her barnmates, have been certified by U.S. Jersey, a national cattle appraisal organization.



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