

**MINUTES  
CITY OF LAUREL  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2021**

A Council Workshop was held in Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Eaton at 6:30 p.m. on November 16, 2021.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bruce McGee              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heidi Sparks |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scot Stokes   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Herr |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Klose | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Irv Wilke    |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Don Nelson              |

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Bethany Langve, Clerk/Treasurer

**Public Input:**

Steve Krum, 249 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue W., I would just like to clarify something. We are trying to understand how to do this properly when to talk when not to talk. We know that the vote is not tonight; we know that this is just a working meeting and that we don't want to lose any opportunity to reemphasize what we want to at the meeting. We came last night; my son-in-law and I ... we spoke with Richard and Heidi after the meeting. That's why we came to run into a Council Person and talk to them and clarify what you just read. Is it true tonight what we read on a specific resolution we cant bring up again during the meeting next Tuesday? We were under the understanding it was only applied to public on non-agenda items.

It was clarified that the public can come whenever there is a public comment, and they can say whatever they want. You can say it as many times as you would want; you can say the same things as many times as you want.

Mr. Krum asked if they could speak again on the same topic if they want to add to it or emphasize it something like that.

Correct.

Mr. Krum questioned if the public comment would be written down twice.

It was clarified that each public comment is recorded into the record.

Mr. Krum stated he was afraid if he spoke here, he wouldn't be able to speak then on the same topic.

It was clarified that he would be able to speak at both.

## **General Items**

1. LARC Update

Leif Welhaven, LW Consulting, briefly reviewed the attached PowerPoint.

## **Executive Review**

2. Resolution - Resolution Of Intent To Annex Contiguous City-Owned Properties Into The City Of Laurel, Yellowstone County.

Mayor Eaton stated a memo from the Planning Director was in Council's packet; see attached. The list of properties has been updated. Some properties have been added.

3. Resolution - A Resolution Of The City Council To Adopt Criteria For Awarding And/Or Approving Grants For The Laurel Urban Renewal Agency (LURA) Board And City Council.

Mayor Eaton stated the resolution has suggestions taken from the PowerPoint by Janet Cornish of allowable projects.

The Planning Director also wrote a memo in regards to this agenda item; see attached.

4. Resolution No. R21-109: A Resolution Approving Zone Changes For Property Owned By Northwestern Corporation D/B/A Northwestern Energy Located Near Lindy Lane Within The City Of Laurel's Zoning Jurisdiction.

The Planning Director also wrote a memo in regards to this agenda item; see attached.

Aaron Felder, 1434 McMullen Lane, I kind of think I owe this Council an apology and some people here and the Mayor and the City people who work here on your fallen Mayor. So my condolences to you and to the people here in this City and to the Council on your loss. There has been some question raised; I know the last time we spoke about this about the decibels at 65. So I wanted to, if I could please, play an engine running. And I have a meter here that will gauge the 65 decibels. Can I do that for you that way? You have an understanding of what 65 decibels really sounds like.

Mayor Eaton granted permission to play an engine running. The sound made it to approximately 60 decibels.

Mr. Felder stated, so it's a constant noise 24/7, that's the point of this. And when sound hits the water, it travels even further. I thank you for your time. I see NorthWestern Energy is not here this evening. I don't know why, but I think you guys for your time. I appreciate each and every one of you. It is, you got a lot on your plate, and you got to deal with a lot with the meetings we've been coming to on other agenda. It's quite respectfulness of you to do what you're doing. I really do thank you all. Thank you.



Carol Blades, 1809 DeNittis Lane, read the attached letter into the record.

Carah Ronan, 1721 Nicholas Lane, read the attached letter into the record.

Greg Childs, Theil Road, I just have two points, both pretty brief. The first one, I fear I am probably preaching to the Pope. I think Council Members understand that the purpose, one of the purposes of zoning laws, is to protect property values. And obviously, that plant going in across the river is going to be very detrimental to property values. So keep that in mind. The other one is that I read in the paper today by some professor of environmental studies with one of those credentials that's four lines long. I've learned to kind of skip through that and kind of get right down to the meat of it. He says that methane leak, now this is not emissions from the stack, this is a methane leak. And we know that pipelines leak. Is 86 times more harmful per ton than is produced by coal, 86x if that pipeline should, or a valve simply leaks. In your votes on the various zoning laws and permits, please keep those two items in mind. Thank you.

Steve Krum, 249 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue W., I don't really have anything written up, but I did want to start by asking the Council to consider having the Mayor appoint a special committee to actually truly dig in deep to this issue before taking a vote next week. Postponing that vote at the very least. I'd rather you vote no because I am an opponent against the plant. But at the very least, have the Mayor appoint a special committee with a Council Member or two, whoever wants to be on it. People from the neighborhood. People from the surround area and the community. The different wards who are also interested in this plant. And do some research on this, because what I found when I keep going through the paperwork. And many of the folks who have spoke already is a key thing in the City codes, which are our laws; they are our laws. Is that the health and welfare of the community is always first. Always comes first. And when you go through the DEQ report, which I spent a day doing that. It seemed very odd that a lot of the information was somewhat misleading. And I don't know if it was intentional, but it was somewhat misleading. Some of the facts were that they said the City of Laurel is 2 miles from the plant location. When in fact, it is a little over half a mile. Because if you drive on a road, I don't even think it is 2 miles. So your not a whole lot farther than what this neighborhood is that's sitting right next to it on the river. They reference the CHS refinery, saying we're no noisier than they are. I've working in the refinery. I've been around it most of my working life. And yes, they are noisy, but they're also spread out. They are not a concentrated source in a small area like this plant is going to be. This plant is going to have a lot of horsepower there. It's going to have a lot of stacks; it's going to have a lot of emissions; it's going to have a lot of intake air noise, exhaust air noise. It's going to have turbines making noise. It's going to have fans making noise. And when you look at the report, and one of the people already brought it up, this is an estimate that they are going to have as far as decibels as far as going out into the City, go out to these guys, going north, south, east and west. And so as you get through the report, you find there's more and more issues like that. But when you look at the permitting process that the City of Laurel should go through. Like I said, they speak to the health and welfare of the people of this community, but they also speak for the health and welfare of the environment. And in the DEQ report, they are not evening going to mention the Yellowstone River as being down there and the ecosystem which is there. Which is our pride and joy, right. That's what we're here for. We're at the confluence of the Clark's Fork and the Yellowstone. This is a special place. And we really want that there? I mean, think about it. This noise is going to be constant and in the report. Which is one true thing it's going to run 24



hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. And it's not going to be just a constant noise; it's going to be noise going up; it's going to be noise going down. As they load and unload these, so that makes getting used to it if it's not changing, but it's not going to do that either. So along with the Yellowstone River, you don't even see in the DEQ report, I have a whole bunch of notes in here about it, but I just figured I don't have time to go over all of it. But you also see in the DEQ report they don't even mention this neighborhood till the end. Oh yeah, and there's a neighborhood about 2,300 feet to the south. Those are the people they should have been talking about at the very beginning of this report. And the thing about the DEQ report, Where'd they get their information from? NorthWestern Energy. And it says right in there that's who provided the DEQ with the information that this permit was authorized...permitted by was the information they got provided from NorthWestern Energy. The information was skewed, somewhat misleading. And really didn't address the issue like it should be. So that's why I'm asking that, at the very least, put together a committee to review this thing like it should be because normally, you guys rely heavily on the City/County Planning Board, right. They were mislead, too; if you compare their notes to the notes in the DEQ there not the same either. They did not say there's going to be 65 decibels this way, this way, this way, this way, that way. In the City/County Planning Board meeting, they said, oh, it's going to be quiet; we are going to take and focus all the noise at the refinery. You don't do that; they're not going to do that; they never were going to do that. So I think even the City/County Planning Board misled a bit as well as well as City Officials that's been dealing with them. So I think it would be truly right for the community for our best chance at doing this right for 30 years to at least put together a committee and really sit down and get all the facts because a constant noise in Riverside is going to be even more for these people because even Riverside is further away. Comparing it to CHS refinery on the southeast corner, that's a quiet part of the refinery. They're not noisy down there. That humdrum that they are talking about is going to be new in Riverside too. I mean, sure, you get an occasional noise there, but not like that. Best yet, because of the pollution, that is a fact that unburnt natural gas methane is way worse than burnt natural gas methane. If you look at all the reports, it is a huge multiplication exponentially worse when it doesn't burn and escapes to the atmosphere. I worked at a plant, again valves leak, gaskets leak, its very common so you do your best to keep them tight but there always going to leak some. Everything is always going to leak some. I mean, they work at it and work at it, so but I ask that you vote no because of the pollution aspect of it as well. Because I think I don't have the expertise to read that part of it, but that's probably being tweaked a bit to what's really going to be happening there. These people live very close to 18 stacks concentrated in one area, and one breeze in the wrong direction can lay that pollution right on top of them. They're that close to that, so. Please vote no, or at the very least, Mayor, please create a committee. Just don't pass this resolution. Thank you.

Melanie Tripp, 1519 McMullen Lane, my place is new here, so I'll keep it very brief. I am not a scientist, I don't know anything about a methane gas plant, but I would say that this issue is incredibly new to me. I have just recently found out about it on our street, and I am extremely concerned. I feel like I have a lot of questions and that I feel like I wasn't asked or given the information that I should have been given. My entire family lives on McMullen Lane; it's a beautiful place. You'll hear a lot of people in here talk about it passionately because it is an incredible, incredible place. I would invite you and welcome you to come down to the river. To where my family and I take photographs every year right in front of the place, the skyline right where the methane gas plant is proposed to be. I don't suppose that it will be the same kind of



photograph if they build that. I live there with my husband, my three daughters, my son-in-law, and my two grandkids. My first thought, of course, was I don't want this in my backyard. And I have a pretty good feeling that you all would say the same. My home isn't in City limits, I know that, but when I vote, when I vote for mill levy's it's for the Laurel School District. And all three of my kids have and do go to Laurel School District. My daughter is a teacher, so I fully support how we need to get money for schools and roads and things like that. However, I don't think that NorthWestern Energy and their power plant is the answer for that. And I don't believe that they have our best interest or anybody in this room's best interest at heart. I am not bought out that easily by NorthWestern Energy. I understand that they are the business, and they try to run things the best that they can and have rules that they must follow, but all I'm hearing from all of this is that it's going to be a lot of pollution and a lot of noise. And I truly hope somebody can convince me otherwise, but I think that the consequences of building this gas power plant, they are probably not worthwhile. The information I'm getting just gets me, makes me want to think I have more questions. And I wonder, just like Steve I wonder is there any way we can put together something that's a little bit more comprehensive so that some of us can understand the real tradeoffs of putting the power plant with 18 77-foot stacks in the middle of our beautiful City. Where you got the alternative, things like the LARC that are going to provide a legacy for our future, just like Leif had said. I guess when all is said and done; if we do build it, we have to remember that's it; there's no take-backs. This is what's going to be there and left for us, for our families, and for our kid's futures. So, I really do ask you to please deeply consider whether or not the zoning is appropriate for the methane gas plant. Thank you.

Kasey Felder, 1434 McMullen Lane, read the attached statement. She had her daughter read a portion of her statement.

Steven Lance, I live on Lance Lane, off of Theil Road across from the proposed site. Just thinking about the noises around our place. I don't know if you have ever listened to the river when it's flooding. It's a deafening sound if you're fairly close. You add that this whatever it's going to be to the environment that we have around here now. And I believe none of us are going to want to live here. And I am only the second-generation person who has live on Lance Lane. I have a grandson who live there also. So I'm just going to tell ya, please vote no. Thank you.

Terry Krum, 1311 E. Railroad, and as I've said before, I have lived in Laurel all my life in and out of town. One question I'll ask, and I'll keep this real short, why would we work in this community as hard as we have for as many years on both side of the issue with industry to try to reduce the emissions. Then we turn around and bring it right back in. We give up all the gains that we took many, many years to get. So I would ask you to consider very carefully what we are putting back into our air. Thank you.

John Wyant, 2208 Theil Road, I live with all these people, probably the furthest away. Every day I know when it's noon because you can hear the refinery noon whistle go off. Every morning you can see the flair going to the south, and then it changes and goes to the east, and it goes over us. I can also hear the highway, the interstate, and that's further away that what this methane power plant is supposed to be. We can also hear the railroad trains leaving, coming, switching. All I have to say is, please vote it down. Thank you.

Mayor Eaton read the attached letter from Jeffrey Smith of 350 Montana into the record.

Mayor Eaton read the attached letter from Calvin Lance of 1422 Lance Lane into the record.

Mayor Eaton read the attached letter from Gregory Childs of Laurel into the record.

Mayor Eaton read the attached letter from Carol Blades of 1809 DeNittis Lane into the record.

Mayor Eaton read the attached letter from Joan Marrin of Billings into the record.

Mayor Eaton stated she does have the power to appoint a temporary special committee. She asked if there were any Council Members interested in servicing on this committee.

Council Member Sparks stated I've done my own research outside of this chamber; I had last week off, not last week. I had a day off last week and spent the majority of the day researching this on my own. I feel like I am personally educated enough on this, and there's been enough opposition. I will say right now I will be voting against this as well. We represent the citizens. The citizens have continued to come into the chamber and speak against this plant. So for that, I will be voting against it, personally. But if you do appoint a committee, I would be very interested in serving on that as well.

Council Member Wilke stated he would like to be a part of this committee. He would like to educate himself so he can make an intelligent decision. He is on the fence, and he is kind of leaning one way more than the other after all public comments.

Council Member Stokes would like to be on this committee as well.

It was questioned if it would be Council's preference to put off the vote and study this issue further. Council agreed with that statement. The public hearing will not be occurring in leu of a fact-finding committee that has been formed. The Mayor asked if there were any members of the public interested in serving on this committee. Those present who would like to serve on this committee were asked to write their names and contact information down on a piece of paper.

Council asked if they would need to vote to table this item pending the findings of the special committee. It was clarified that it was simply being pulled from the agenda. It is within the Mayor's purview to create a committee like this. However, the Mayor will need time to contact all these people and set up this committee.

Carol Blades, 1809 DeNittis Lane, I want to give you an example of what it's like to live out here. In April or May, most of us are outside; we're farmers, gardeners, horse people. We can't wait till spring gets here and we are all outside. All the men get on their tractors and drive around; that's kind of the spring ritual. But what touches my heart the most is I am outside in April or May, and I hear the sandhill cranes. I hear them coming. If you have ever heard a sandhill crane. And it touches my heart, and I am on my cellphone. Darrin there here, they're back; it's spring. That's what living out there is about. We are not a bunch of grumpy people. We love nature and the beauty there. Thank you.



Steve Krum asked to show Mayor Eaton something. He showed her LMC 2.8.250.

Greg Childs, does not the Council need to determine if they are going to delay this vote?

It was clarified that they can leave it on the agenda and allow Council to table the item.

Aaron Felder, thank you for listening. That's all, thank you.

Kasey Felder, I just want to mention this because it goes along with what Ms. Carol said. I was outside the middle of the week last week. My dog is... needs to go to the bathroom a lot. So I was out in the middle of the night, and we're talking 12:30, and it is quiet, and I can hear owls like at least three bouncing off the tree echoing around. So again, that is where we live. That is the kind of neighborhood that we are dealing with and what we don't want to lose. So again, thank you for tabling this future... further consideration. Thank you.

Mayor Eaton had been asked to thank Mr. Felder for his kind words about the Mayor. Staff is still very upset about this, and it is an emotional/hot button issue. While Staff does try to remain with a professional appearance, it is touching to still hear comments like that. Thank you.

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

Council Member Klose stated he would be in and out of town taking care of a cousin who is blind and unable to drive. He just wanted to make sure should he surpass ten days away from the City, he had permission to do so.

### **Council Issues**

6. Discussion On Changing The Ordinance Regarding Attendance By Council. (LMC 2.12.060)

Mayor Eaton stated that there had been a Council Member that has been two more weeks than he has been in attendance. There have been many comments by various Council Members of this person's absence. That Council Member is still receiving pay for filling that seat. Council referred to 2.12.060; see attached.

Council noted that if they are unable to attend a meeting, they should call in before the meeting with a valid reason not to be in attendance. Council noted that as of late, there had been very close votes that Council Members need to be present for. This Ward is not being served properly. Council also noted that they knew what they were signing up for when they ran for Council. It is not fair to the citizens or the City at large to not participate.

Mayor Eaton stated, based on the comments from various Council Members, that a formal notification will be made to the Council Member in question regarding their attendance at Council. Once that seat is vacant, they will post publicly and appoint someone to the position. The appointed person will serve until the next open election.

## **Other Items**

### **Review of Draft Council Agendas**

7. Draft Council Agenda for November 23, 2021.

### **Attendance at Upcoming Council Meeting**

#### **Announcements**

KLJ will be holding a public meeting on the S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street project Thursday, November 18, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Senior Center.

A Council Member stated they recently had gone to breakfast and spoken with someone regarding the next refinery turnaround. This Council Member was told that there would be a turnaround in 2023, and they planned on bringing in 6000 workers in for 43 days.

Council thanked the Mayor for appointing a special committee to help clear up questions regarding the power plant.

A Council Member noted that Saturday, a long-time resident and great community member Don Hedges passed away. He was a fireman for 30 years. His funeral will be Thursday, November 18, 2021, at the Methodist Church.

The council workshop adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brittney Moorman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brittney Moorman  
Administrative Assistant

**NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of the Council for the listed workshop agenda items.**

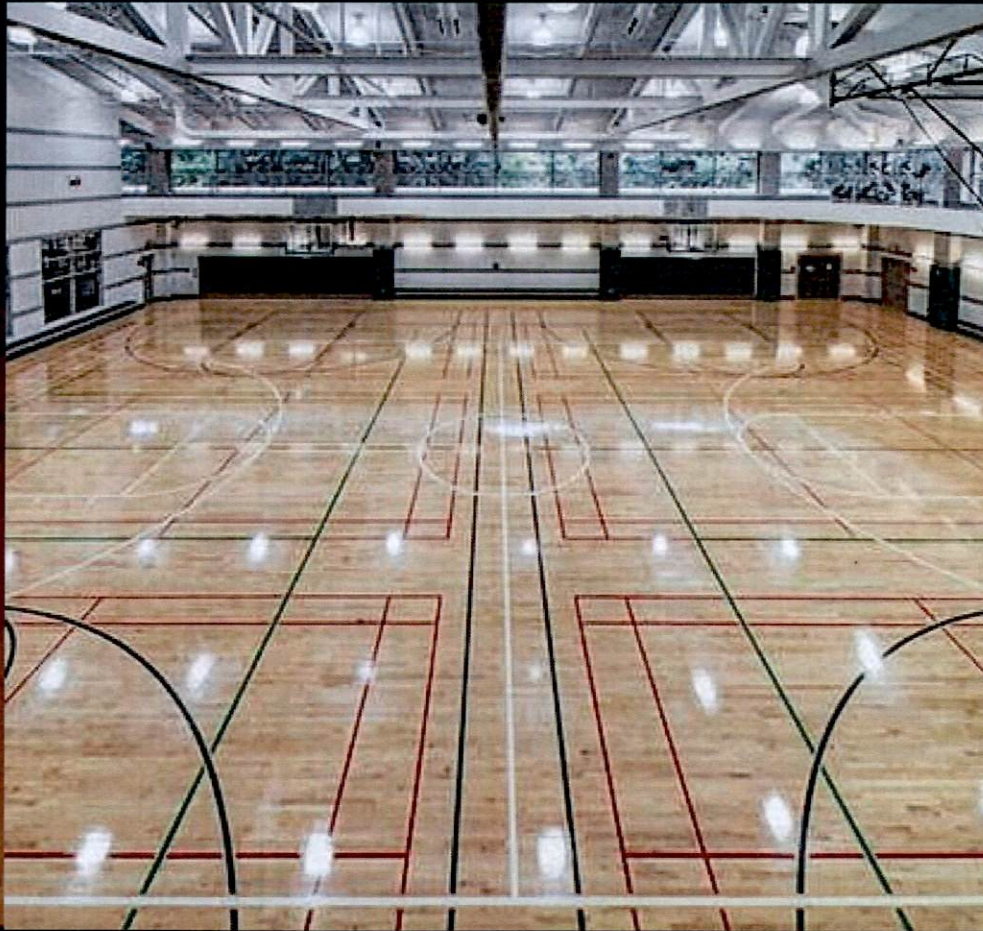


# Laurel Activities Recreation Complex

Phase One Coming to Laurel







# The Project So Far

## A Brief History





## Laurel Swimming Pool

- End of life, 60 plus years old



## Riverside Hall

- Needs repair & updates \*in work



## Old Middle School Gym

- In need of major repairs



**How & Why  
We  
Got Started**





# GOALS ACCOMPLISHED THUS FAR

- Community Awareness
- Grass Roots Fundraising
- Create Non-Profit Corporation
- Feasibility Study
- Site Selection
- Site Layout Drawings
- Change Name & Branding





# RE-BRAND & RE-FRESH BEGINS NOW

- New Logo
- New Ideas
- New & Existing Leadership
- New Focus
- Looking for your Input
- Looking for your Participation
- Looking for your Investment





# RECENT LOGO CONTEST ENTRIES





**The Winning Entry**  
**Holly Schwarm – Woods Power Grip**



# The Winner

## Holly Schwarm – Woods Power Grip





# Future Home of LARC

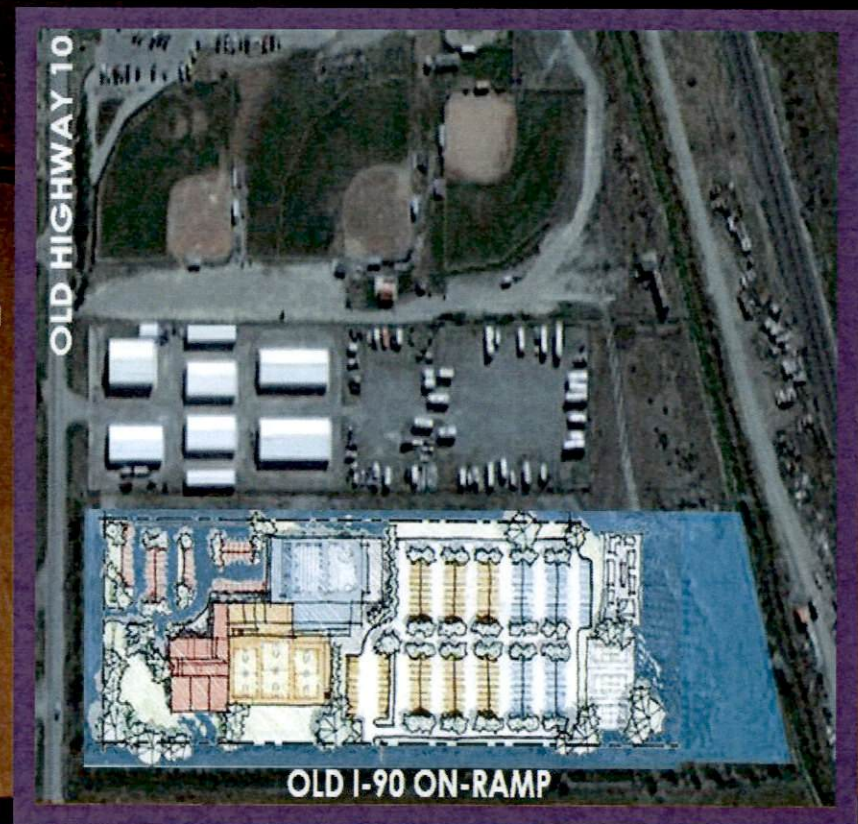
- Land Donated by Woods Power Grip
- 10 Acres
- Some Utilities Located Across the Street
- City working on TIF to bring more Utilities in
- LARC Facility
  - 8 Acre Footprint
  - Site Signs coming plus Yard Signs





# Future Home of LARC

- Land Donated by Woods Power Grip
- 10 Acres
- Some Utilities Located Across the Street
- City working on TIF to bring more Utilities in
- LARC Facility
  - 8 Acre Footprint
  - Site Signs coming plus Yard Signs





# Laurel Community Pride

- All things Laurel
- Laurel Activities
- Laurel Recreation
- Laurel Complex
  - Laurel Pride
  - Laurel Owned
  - Laurel Operated
  - Laurel's Future





# Laurel Activities

- Community Activities
  - Craft Fairs
  - Farmers Market
  - Event Center
  - Wedding & Reception Venue
  - Class & Family Reunions
  - Meeting Space
  - Concession Area
  - Etc.





# Recreation In the Gymnasium

- **Gymnasium/Multi-Use Facility**

- Indoor Soccer (Futsal)
- Basketball
- Martial Arts
- Baseball Training & Batting Cages
- Fitness Classes
- Weight Facility
- Dance Classes
- Wrestling
- Tournament Venue
- Team Practice & Game Facility
- Climbing Wall
- Future Aquatic Center
- Etc.





# Laurel Complex

- This will be a Local, County, Regional Complex
- How do we get Funding & Participation for this Project
  - Donations
  - Sponsors
  - Grants
  - Fundraisers
  - Board Members
  - Committee Members
  - Volunteers
  - Wall of Contributors (Gold, Silver, Bronze Levels)





# FUTURE ON-SITE EVENTS & IDEAS

- Trunk or Treat
- Fall Fest
- Halloween Events
- Summer Carnivals
- Food Truck Battles
- Walk a Thon's
- Run for LARC
- Fourth of July Float and Activities
- Etc.





# How can you get Involved?

- Invite us to Speak at your Event or Business
- Come to a Board Meeting
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of Month @ 6:30 pm @ Laurel Main St. Perk
- LARC Information
  - Website: <https://www.laurelarc.org/>
  - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/laurelarcmontana>
- Contact Information
  - Gabe Bush – Board President 406.208.1945
  - Leif Welhaven – LARC Consultant 406.855.6595







**June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**West of Wood's Powr-Grip**

Along West Main Street, by the old highway on-ramp

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Looking For  
**Food Vendors**  
**Craft Vendors**  
**& Sponsors**

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**Mail you contact info to**

P.O. Box 1086, Laurel, MT 59044

— or —

Message our Facebook Page: Laurel FoodFest

— or —

Email: Wave@LaurelARC.org



## Phase 1

### GYMNASIUM

The first phase of our building will be the gymnasium. It is thought that this is the most urgent need to the community.

LARC will have 2-3 full-size basketball courts. This will allow for tournaments to be hosted in Laurel as well as room for other activities like craft fairs and trade shows.

Seating will be movable seating to allow adjustable audience numbers and multi event nights.

There will also be a running track and fitness area on the second floor overlooking the courts.

## Phase 2

### COMMUNITY CENTER

LARC will be able to host a wide verity of community events. We will be build a large capacity event room that will be dividable. There will be a full-service kitchen available for event catering.

For small groups including non-profits, we will have several meeting room available. These rooms will include everything a organization will need to host a meeting including after-hour access.

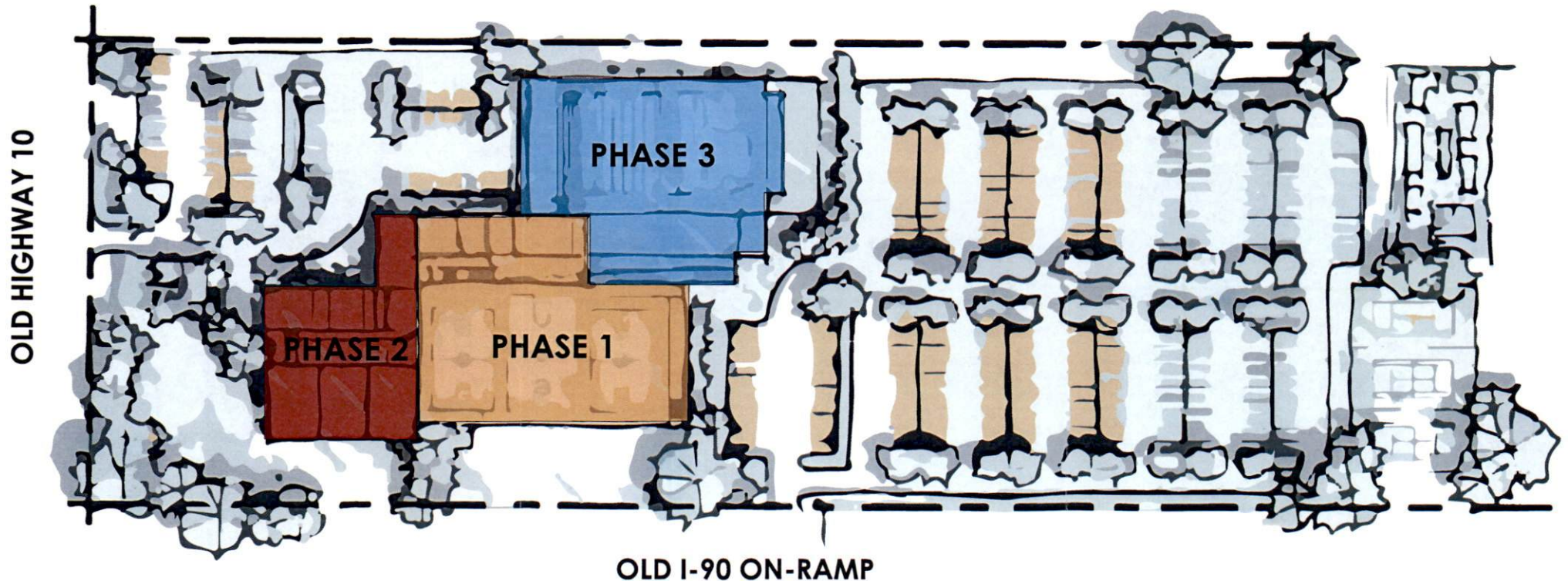
## Phase 3

### ATHLETIC POOL

Our main goal is to build a competition style pool. But that is not all that we will build.

The main pool will be a 6 lane competition pool. This will be for all the schools in the surrounding area. This would allow our schools to offer swimming as a after-school activity.

Along side the main pool will be wellness and fun pools with a Party Room. This will bring in more usage to the aquatic part of the building and allow the pools to be used every day of the week.







LARC's original mission is to bring a competition level aquatic pool to the Laurel area. Providing services and fulfilling the need for aquatic sports. It would be open for the public and school nearby school systems to use.

It has now grown to include a multi-use gymnasium and community center. Encompassing all athletic and community needs.

We are currently looking for more board members. We meet every Second Monday at Main Street Perks, 111 E Main St., Laurel. Our meetings are open to the public to attend.

**Find us on Facebook.**

**[facebook.com/laurelarcmontana](https://facebook.com/laurelarcmontana)**



**Laurel Activities Recreation Complex**

**More information available at:**  
**[www.laurelarc.org](http://www.laurelarc.org)**

**Questions or comments?**  
**Email: [wave@laurelarc.org](mailto:wave@laurelarc.org)**



*For the future of Laurel*  
**Three Phases**  
**to bring**  
**Health**  
**Community**  
**Athletics**  
*to Laurel, Montana*



CITY HALL  
115 W. 1<sup>ST</sup> ST.  
PLANNING: 628-4796  
WATER OFC.: 628-7431  
COURT: 628-1964  
FAX 628-2241

# City Of Laurel

P.O. Box 10  
Laurel, Montana 59044



Office of the City Planner

November 16, 2021

Regarding the Resolution of Intent for the Annexation of Contiguous Government Land

Mayor and City Council,

I am unable to attend the meeting this evening due to illness, but this letter will provide some detail on the accompanying legal descriptions that were provided with the resolution detailing the annexation of government land contiguous to the Municipal City Limits of Laurel.

The list of legal descriptions includes the city-owned property contiguous with, and immediately adjacent to the city limits of Laurel. The Annexation of these properties not only clears up the jurisdiction in which city property falls under, but also allows for the City to expand its zoning jurisdiction outwards. Extra-territorial zoning extends 1-mile outside the municipal city limits. This is important for long range planning activities as well as planned provision of public services and basic land-use management.

Please let me know if there are any questions or comments about the properties in question or the process that this will take. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Regards,

Nicholas Altonaga, CFM

Planning Director



CITY HALL  
115 W. 1<sup>ST</sup> ST.  
PLANNING: 628-4796  
WATER OFC.: 628-7431  
COURT: 628-1964  
FAX 628-2241

# City Of Laurel

P.O. Box 10  
Laurel, Montana 59044



Office of the City Planner

November 16, 2021

Regarding the Resolution containing Criteria for the Approval of Grants through the Laurel Urban  
Renewal Agency (LURA)

Mayor and City Council,

I have reviewed the Resolution that adopts criteria for the awarding of grants through the LURA Board. I have some comments on the matter that I would like to be considered by the Council prior to the adoption of any criteria. I suggest the following updated criteria and verbiage should be used in place of that presented on the current draft of the resolution.

“NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, that the LURA Board and City Council shall apply the following criteria when reviewing LURA grants to applicants under the previously established grant programs and shall award a grant if it:

1. Supports blight removal projects and programs.
2. Stabilizes or renovates public historic buildings.
3. Constructs or connects public infrastructure.
4. Improves area streetscapes and/or green spaces.
5. Mitigates unsafe decay.
6. Improves accessibility to public infrastructure.
7. Funds a study, plan, or promotes something for the public benefit.”

I also suggest that a grant application should be awarded if it is found to comply with at least two (2) of the criteria above. As a note, I removed the items regarding retiring public debt and establishing a loan program as it would not be the purview of an applicant to do either of those actions.

I need to stress that resolutions such as this should be discussed with the LURA Board in order to have all the parties who review and manage the grant program and TIF District are adequately engaged in updating and amending the governing rules. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Regards,

Nicholas Altonaga, CFM

Planning Director



CITY HALL  
115 W. 1<sup>ST</sup> ST.  
PLANNING: 628-4796  
WATER OFC.: 628-7431  
COURT: 628-1964  
FAX 628-2241

# City Of Laurel

P.O. Box 10  
Laurel, Montana 59044



Office of the City Planner

November 16, 2021

Regarding the Zone Change Request for Northwestern Energy Parcels legally described as: Parcel 1, COS 1239 and Parcel 2, COS 1677.

Mayor and City Council,

I am unable to attend the meeting this evening due to illness, but I have prepared this letter to provide a summary of the review process for the Zone Change Request made by Northwestern Energy for their property legally described as Parcel 1, COS 1239 and Parcel 2, COS 1677. This letter summarizes the process as well as the details contained in the staff report dated September 29, 2021, that accompanies the agenda item.

Northwestern Energy (the applicant) seeks to change the zoning designation of the parcels legally described above to be fully within the Heavy Industrial (HI) zoning district. Approval of the zone change request would add the Heavy Industrial designation to those two parcels as well as amend the Laurel City-County Zoning Jurisdiction map.

## **Summary of review Timeline:**

- May 18, 2021 – Zone Change Application and information on required documents provided to Applicant's engineers for the preparation of an application.
- August 16, 2021 – Zone Change Application received by Planning Department.
- September 15, 2021 – Laurel City-County Planning held a public hearing on the Zone Change Request and subsequently voted to recommend the approval of the zone change request with the notes made by City Staff.
- October 12, 2021 – Zone Change request tabled in front of Laurel City Council
- November 23, 2021 – Zone Change Request to be presented at a public hearing in front of Laurel City Council.

## **Staff Findings:**

1. The application submitted on August 16, 2021, contained all the necessary items to move forward in the review process
2. The applicant is requesting a zone change to Heavy Industrial (HI).
3. The Applicant has stated their goal of installing a power generation station that will generate 175 megawatts from natural gas in order to reinforce the current power system.
4. The Parcels in question are already partially zoned as Heavy Industrial (HI)



5. The surrounding area to the immediate West is zoned Heavy Industrial (HI) and is used for those purposes by CHS Inc. as a petroleum refinery and by the City of Laurel as a Sewer Treatment Facility and Water Treatment Facility.
6. The Current use of Parcel 1 as a public utility service installation is allowable within the Heavy Industrial (HI) zoning classification.
7. The proposed use of Parcel 2 as a public utility service installation is allowable within the Heavy Industrial (HI) zoning classification.

**Recommendations (Made by Planning Board on September 15, 2021):**

The Laurel Yellowstone County City-County Planning Board recommends the approval of the zone change request and grant action on the application not to exceed thirty (30) days for:

- Parcel 1 COS 1239, and
- Parcel 2, COS 1677

Along with this zone change it should be noted that:

1. The Parcels in question shall be fully included with the Laurel Zoning Jurisdiction upon amendment of the Zoning District Map
2. The parcels in question shall have their zoning classifications changed to be fully within the Heavy Industrial (HI) zoning district.
3. The Parcels in question shall have no use on them which are deemed not allowable within the Heavy Industrial (HI) zoning district.
4. Any future change of zoning for said parcels shall follow the same process as this approval.

This zone change request has created conversations about the jurisdiction and governing body applicable to this request. It is the opinion of the Planning Director that if the request is deemed to require further review and public comment by the Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners, the documentation and notes applicable to this request should be forwarded to their offices immediately. The public process should continue quickly in order to allow a satisfactory decision to be made. Please contact my office if there are any questions or comments about the details of this letter or the supplementary materials.

Regards,

Nicholas Altonaga, CFM



Planning Director



My name is Carol Blades

My address is 1809 DeNittis Lane

The entire controversy over the NWE methane gas plant proposal at this point boils down to one thing- money. Everyone knows there are numerous other sites where this plant could be built that would not be adjacent to vibrant communities of people. Council members need to ask themselves, am I personally willing to sacrifice 30 plus families, their property values, their homes that have been in place for years? Am I personally willing to destroy the natural sound of the environment, and the beautiful skyline? Am I personally willing to dump tones of methane gas into the air? Am I personally willing to live next to this facility?

Councilwoman Sparks and Councilman Stokes have had the courage to say No to these questions. I suspect using both their intellect and their moral compass, they have demonstrated their commitment to taxpayers and citizens lives, over fattening the City Councils budget.

NWE is attempting to manipulate you. November 9<sup>th</sup> they went so far as to offer \$15,000 to you at the City Council meeting, if you would pass their proposal immediately. There is more to governing than money, much more.

The council asked for public input. Please take time to think thru the facts. The noise level emitted by this plant will not be like us politely talking in this room as NWE rep claimed last week. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality estimated that the noise level would be 65 A-weighted decibels 600 feet north and south of the facility and would cause steady noise audible from Riverside Park.

Council members, stand up for what is right. There is far more to a healthy city than a fat budget.



November 16, 2021

My name is Carah Ronan and I live at 1721 Nicholas Lane.

The abundance of natural resources creates an extremely fertile environment for Montana's largest industry- Agriculture. Montana is the national leader in the production of certified organic wheat, dry peas, lentils and flax and ranks no. 2 in the U.S. for its honey and pollination industry. Altogether, the agriculture industry brings an average of \$5.2 billion to the economy annually. If you ask a Montanan, you may hear that our best export is our children. Why is it that we are losing such a valuable resource, our children the future of Montana and the up and coming generation. In large part it is due to big business being put first and Montana's farmers being left behind. There has been a push to change this. Senator Jon Tester is the U.S. Senate's only working farmer and knows that agriculture is the backbone of Montana's Economy. Gov. Greg Gianforte has spoken on one of his signature economic policies, house bill 303, that quote, "Small Business is the backbone of Montana's economy". Note that neither Tester or Gianforte mention big business being the backbone of Montana's economy. On October 27, 2021, the Economic Transformation, Stabilization and workforce Development ARPA (American rescue plan act) commission voted unanimously to allocate \$7.5 million in ARPA funds to strengthen and diversify Montana's industry through targeted investments in value added agriculture projects across the state. Locally, Yellowstone Valley Electric Coop returns profits to the ag community.

I'd like to take a minute to get back to the bees, so that this group may have information on how the rezoning of this valuable land by building a plant may effect the no. 2 agricultural export here in Montana. Bees are already in trouble and adding a methane power plant would only add to their demise. It has been found that transient exposure to EMF reduces a bee's ability to learn, reduces their memory retention, affects flight and foraging behavior all of which could potentially reduce their ability to pollinate. Pollination is key to all Montana crops. In layman's terms, no bees, no pollination, no crops. No crops, no money. No money, well I think we all know what it means when there is no money. Why is Laurel wanting to rezone our most valuable resource, our agricultural land for heavy industry? I urge you to vote no on the rezoning. Thank you

CONSIDER THIS  
WHEN CONSIDERING

\*AS A RULE OF THUMB- THE FORAGING AREA AROUND A HIVE EXTENDS FOR 2 MILES, THOUGH BEES HAVE BEEN OBSERVED FORAGING TWICE TO THREE TIMES THIS DISTANCE FROM THE HIVE

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PART  
OF LAUREL'S  
PLAN IS  
RIVERSIDE PARK

RIVERSIDE MAN  
CONSIDER WHAT  
IMPACT THE  
NOISE WOULD HAVE  
ON EVENTS AT  
THAT HALL- I HAVEN'T  
WOULD WANT TO  
ATTEND A WEDDING  
THERE



Thank you for your service to the City of Laurel and the opportunity to offer testimony tonight.

Today I ask you to listen to your local residents tonight and think long and hard about this zoning change. When it is time to vote I would ask you to defer or deny NorthWestern Energy's zoning change request for the methane gas power plant.

I grew up in Laurel. I've been here for most of my life. My family and I moved south of the river in 2011 so our child could play in the dirt with a country upbringing like my own. After personally going door to door to many of the houses along Thiel Road, I was surprised many of my neighbors were unaware that this plant is still going forward. We have generations of family history on this land, too much to convey here in 3 minutes. But this proposed plant would destroy what we have - what we consider a slice of paradise. There is a huge lack of information being shared, and what is shared has been very deceiving. This process has been too convenient for NorthWestern Energy, and at the expense of our community.

Another concern is for the Yellowstone River. Why build so close to the river? 2021 was an outstanding year for boat launches for Riverside Park, which is great for our local community and economy. Please tell me: Who is going to want to camp at Riverside Park with the power plant for a neighbor?

The river is a major corridor for wildlife. We have moose, black bears, mountain lion, deer, beaver, fox, coyotes, birds of all kinds including nesting bald eagles. We have the Sundance Lodge Recreation Area nearby that is owned by the Bureau of Land Management, with the goal "to protect and preserve the remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, and other values along the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48."

Noise and light pollution also must be considered. NorthWestern believes residents will have secondary impacts. I am almost front row to the proposed plant, I am not a secondary impact. There will be direct negative impacts to my property and family. We've been operating a grape vineyard since 2014, and are on the path to start a winery here with the goal of listing our vineyard with the state of Montana's tourism office. Most days, we are fortunate to not smell the wastewater treatment plant or the CHS Refinery - when we do, it's not pleasant. Our proximity to NorthWestern's proposed methane pollution is alarming, and we won't be able to avoid it. It will impact us.

I hope you will consider and prioritize the needs of those of us who already live near the river - some of us have been here for generations. There is a lot at stake for us - and all of us downwind, now and long into the future. Your decision on November 23<sup>rd</sup> will have a profound effect not only on our local area, but our community and this valley.

Thank you again for your time and valuable consideration to defer or deny the zoning change request sought by NorthWestern Energy that you will vote on next week.



## Brittney Moorman

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**From:** Laurel City Planner  
**Sent:** Friday, November 12, 2021 8:10 AM  
**To:** Bethany Langve  
**Cc:** Brittney Moorman  
**Subject:** FW: Comment for the Public Hearing on NorthWestern's Easement  
**Attachments:** Why is NorthWestern Energy Going in the Wrong Direction.docx; Montana-Grid-Lab-Executive-Summary(5).pdf

Hi Bethany,

Forwarded below is an email containing public comment regarding the NW Energy Easement and NW Energy Zone Change. Please let me know if you have any questions about this.

Regards,  
Nick Altonaga, CFM  
Planning Director

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



**From:** Jeffrey J. Smith <yswolfohl@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 10, 2021 4:58 PM  
**To:** Laurel City Planner <naltonaga@laurel.mt.gov>  
**Subject:** Comment for the Public Hearing on NorthWestern's Easement

Dear Laurel City Council,

We understand that you have established a public hearing on November 23, 2021, to consider NorthWestern Energy's easement.

350 Montana urges you to reject the NorthWestern's zoning change and the plant itself.



Attached please find our public comment on NorthWestern's methane pipeline and gas peaker plant. Also attached is an executive summary of a study we commissioned earlier this year, "Affordable and Reliable Decarbonization Pathways for Montana."

Let me know that you received these documents and entered them in the public record.

Jeff Smith, co-chair  
350 Montana



P.O. Box 7006  
Missoula, MT 59807  
[www.350montana.org](http://www.350montana.org)

November 10, 2021

Laurel City Council  
c/o Planning Department Office  
115 West 1st Street  
Laurel, MT 59044

Dear City Councilors,

350 Montana would like to offer a few comments on NorthWestern Energy's application for an easement through Riverside Park for a pipeline to carry methane to the power generating plant the company has proposed to build on the north side of the Yellowstone River. We are a statewide affiliate of the international organization, [350.org](http://350.org), and our mission is to reduce the greenhouse gases like methane that are heating our planet.

It's clear that we are in a climate emergency, an all-hands-on-deck moment. It is a moment when every decision to choose a greenhouse gas producing technology instead of a clean energy technology will contribute devastating impacts on the world we leave for our children and grandchildren.

We urge you to vote against this easement for the following reasons.

350 Montana opposes NorthWestern's plan in Laurel because it will accelerate the increasingly damaging megafires we're seeing in Montana, it will accelerate the steep collapse of our cold-water fisheries we are witnessing, and severely impact our number one industry, agriculture. And to top it off, fewer jobs are created and sustained by building the gas plant rather than pivoting to building new clean, renewable energy projects now (wind, solar, battery).



NorthWestern's executives know this. During his under-oath deposition last month in a 350 Montana's lawsuit, NorthWestern Energy's vice-president John Hines admitted that humans are causing global warming and that, for the first time last year, NorthWestern's hydro-dams "performed less than planned because of the drought."

Also:

- He admitted that NorthWestern's share of Colstrip-3 and -4 produces 1.5 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> a year,
- He admitted that the "Big Four" owners of Colstrip's want to shutter the plant by 2025 because of global warming concerns, but NorthWestern wants to keep the plant emitting carbon at that level until at least 2042,
- He admitted that methane is warming our climate, but NorthWestern hasn't bothered to calculate how much methane the Laurel generator will spew, and
- He admitted that his company's current procurement plan doesn't even mention climate change, much less evaluate the climate impacts of its policies.

For the record, methane is more than 80 times more powerful than CO<sub>2</sub> in trapping greenhouse gases. The UN's Climate Panel reported last summer that the world's number one priority should be eliminating methane pollution.

Independent studies have shown that Montana can generate all the electricity it needs using clean, renewable energy. Building a clean energy infrastructure will allow Montana communities to take advantage of some \$60-billion-a-year in new federal funding to transition the grid to clean energy. This transition will provide rural communities a new and stable source of tax revenue, save ratepayers money, bring Montana thousands of new, good-paying jobs, and comply with the Northwest Power Planning Council's 2021 plan (for Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana), a forward-looking plan that concluded the region can meet all of its power needs through 2030 through conservation and energy efficiency.

The cost of natural gas has doubled this year and will continue to rise. At the same time, the costs of solar technologies have declined by over 89 percent in the last 10 years, and wind costs have declined 70 percent. This is the future.

It sure seems NWE, by building this gas plant (and proposing others in Montana), is benefitting only themselves while putting Laurel residents, workers, and all ratepayers at risk. By building the plant they can advance bonuses for their executives, increase stockholder's payouts, and slow the eventual transition to clean renewables.

You and I and our children and grandchildren will bear ALL the burdens and the costs.

Congress is implementing new federal policy that would make the United States' electrical grid 90 percent carbon-free by 2035. That means expensive generators like the Laurel gas plant will

become stranded assets. In other words, NorthWestern's ratepayers will be paying for this plant even after it is idled by less expensive wind and solar.

NorthWestern is rushing this plant not because of supply chain issues but because federal policy will soon close the door on outmoded technologies like this gas peaker plant. The recent infrastructure bill passed by Congress and the impending Build Back Better Act will make more than a half-trillion-dollar investment in mitigating climate change. Gas plants won't make the cut.

The Edison Electric Institute, a trade group that NorthWestern follows, is praising federal funding for the transition, saying it will make "significant investments in the critical energy infrastructure and new carbon-free technologies our industry needs to deliver a 100-percent clean energy future."

NorthWestern is an outlier. Representatives of the world's governments are meeting in Scotland right now to agree to a world-wide plan to keep our planet's temperatures within a livable range. Every new fossil fuel generator like the one NorthWestern wants to build tallies on the wrong side of the score card.

It's time for this company to stop treating our climate as a public relations problem and start investing its ratepayers' money to help solve the biggest existential crisis we have ever faced. As members of the Laurel City Council, you can make a big difference.

Please oppose this easement. Thank you.

We've attached the executive summary of a modeling study we commissioned earlier this year, "Affordable and Reliable Decarbonization Pathways for Montana."

Sincerely,

**The 350 Montana Leadership Team:**

Carla Abrams, Patty Ames, Bill Geer, Dave Harmon, Marta Meengs, Craig Menteer, Jim Parker, Jeff Smith, Brad Stacey, Laxmi Von Hoffman, Beth Taylor Wilson, and John Woodland






## THIS IS THE YEAR MONTANA DECIDES HOW TO REPLACE COAL

Few decisions weigh as heavily on the minds of Montana's consumers and policymakers than decisions about how we will generate electricity. After nearly 40 years of service, Montana's coal plants at the mouth of southeastern coal mines are increasingly costly, polluting, and unreliable. As Montana prepares to retire these mammoth thermal generators, there is little consensus on what comes next.

This decision comes only once in a generation, and the steps we take today will have profound impacts on Montana's economy, people, and environment. These decisions will affect how much Montanans pay for electricity each month, the technology and transportation we use every day, the technology we use to power our homes and vehicles, job growth and employment prospects, and whether we hold onto our burgeoning business as an energy powerhouse. Our decision must also take into account whether Montana is doing its part to meet the world's expectations to reduce greenhouse gases.

### **CLEAN ENERGY PATHWAYS FOR MONTANA**

Montana's electricity generation is controlled by the state's major investor-owned utility, NorthWestern Energy, and regulated by an elected Public Service Commission. Both have been slow to embrace the rapidly falling cost of clean energy resources and the potential to save consumers money through decarbonization. In order to evaluate the benefits and tradeoffs of Montana's energy transition, 350 Montana retained Vibrant Clean Energy, a national leader in power systems modeling.



■ Download the full report  
at [www.350montana.org](http://www.350montana.org)



The new study, “Affordable and Reliable Decarbonization Pathways for Montana,” shows that Montana can retire its Colstrip coal plants, never build another natural gas plant, and still meet people’s energy needs through clean, renewable energy, while reducing consumer electricity bills and boosting the state’s economy. The study shows that:

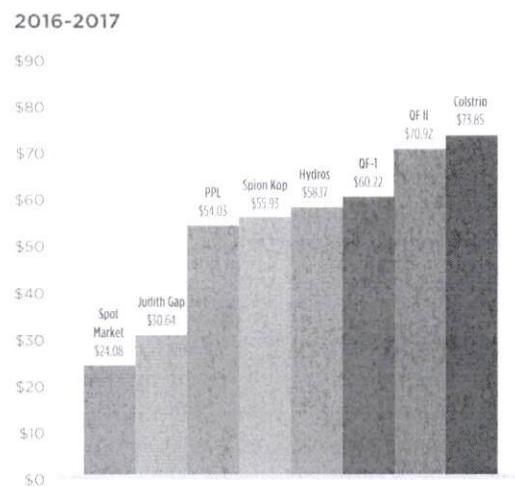
- **Electricity Costs Would Go Down:** If Montana retires its existing coal generation by 2030 and replaces it with low-cost renewable energy while electrifying the rest of its economy, electricity rates would decrease by approximately 40 percent by 2050, and Montana would save \$32.7 billion across its economy compared with keeping the coal plants.
- **Clean Energy Jobs Would Double:** Jobs in the clean energy sector would nearly double, driven mainly by both the distributed (rooftop) solar (DPV) and the utility-solar (UPV) industries, while the energy storage industry and the wind industry make up the next largest contributions.
- **Cleaner and Healthier Communities:** Decarbonizing Montana’s energy sector would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 180 million metric tons over business-as-usual.
- **Clean Transportation and Buildings Provide Significant Savings:** If electrification of buildings, transportation, and industry are pursued in combination with a clean electricity

grid, the report shows residential customers would reduce household spending on electricity and transportation costs by nearly 50% by 2050.

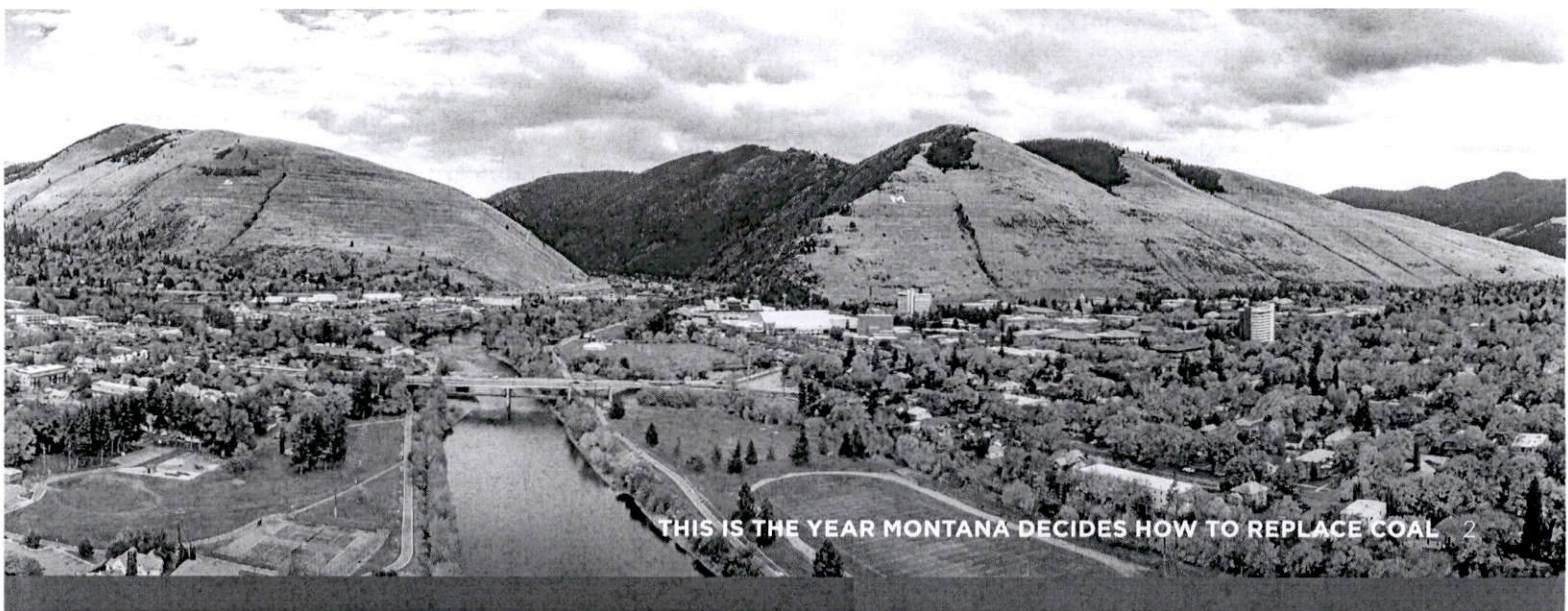
## INCREASINGLY UNECONOMIC COAL

Montana elected officials and regulators are willfully blind to coal’s full costs. Many existing analyses claim that coal is increasingly uncompetitive, such as a recent report from Energy Innovation that suggests that 80% of the nation’s coal fleet is uneconomic when compared to local wind and solar plants. Right now, according to the Montana Consumer Counsel, coal is the most expensive electricity in Montana ratepayers’ monthly bills (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** *Selected NorthWestern electricity average unit prices*



Source: Montana Consumer Counsel: 2017 Residential Electricity Prices of NorthWestern Energy. Issued June 20, 2017.





Meanwhile, Montana runs the risk of losing domestic energy prowess in the transition to clean energy. While Montana's neighbors once relied on the state for its abundant coal resources, those neighbors are increasingly embracing cheap, clean, and reliable renewable energy. Our report suggests Montana can remain a net-energy exporter, providing increased investment and keeping bills low, through a dramatic expansion in in-state renewable energy generation.

More broadly, the United States has committed to building a clean electricity system by 2035. To get there, the United States will need to build 750 gigawatts of solar and wind power and spend some \$60 billion a year for the next 15 years, mostly in rural communities like those in Montana where the wind and solar resources proliferate.<sup>1</sup> Montana is poised for increasing investments in local land leases, construction, manufacturing, local tax revenues, and jobs for operation and maintenance of solar, wind, and battery storage projects.

## IS BUSINESS-AS-USUAL WORKING?

350 Montana asked Vibrant Clean Energy to compare the costs of five clean energy pathways for Montana:

1. **Business-as-Usual:** Assumes current state and federal policy, as well as modest load growth commensurate with historical assumptions.
2. **Keep Coal:** In-state coal generation remains online through 2040.
3. **100% by 2035 (RPS100):** Requires that Montana achieve 100% clean electricity generation by 2035 while the rest of the Western United States maintains business-as-usual operations.
4. **100% by 2035 Exporter (RPS100Export):** Requires that Montana achieve 100% clean electricity generation by 2035 and continues

<sup>1</sup> The National Renewable Energy Laboratory says Montana's wind potential ranks in the top five states. According to a report, "Seeds of Opportunity" by the Rocky Mountain Institute, wind and solar are the new cash crops in rural America and will double capacity by 2030. Local manufacturing of wind components is particularly promising because turbines and towers are difficult to transport.

to export more electricity than it uses for in-state demand.

### 5. **Deep Decarbonization (RPS100Elec):**

Requires that Montana achieve 100% clean electricity generation by 2035 while the building, transportation, and industrial sectors electrify.

The results are startling. Because Montana is blessed with world-class hydroelectric generation, plus exceptional wind and solar resources, Montana can meet all its future needs, including peak loads in summer and winter, with clean energy. This transition can expand employment and increase energy exports to fill an almost insatiable regional energy demand via surplus clean energy.

As our region retires fossil fuel plants and replaces them with variable renewable energy (VRE) generation, it will save billions of dollars. If we keep Colstrip going, on the other hand, it will cost Montana ratepayers more than a \$1 billion by 2040. Our report states that "coal generation is the main impediment to achieving lower system costs and retail rates for customers in Montana."<sup>2</sup>

In short, Montana's unending reliance on coal is costing ratepayers in the form of expensive monthly energy bills, dirty air, dwindling economic competitiveness, and disappearing employment prospects. If Montana continues to burn coal or switches to expensive natural gas, Montana ratepayers will pay higher systemwide electricity costs and thus higher monthly bills. Montanans will not capture the employment opportunities of a booming clean energy economy, while neighboring states continue to invest in wind and solar. And the effects of climate change, from disastrous forest fires to punishing droughts, will continue to impact our states farms, rivers, and beautiful public lands, decimating farmer, tourism, and recreation income.

<sup>2</sup> Even with massive market manipulations, our "Keep Coal" scenario retires coal in 2040, resulting in an immediate drop in costs from \$2.12 billion in 2040 to \$1.3 billion in 2045 (Report, p.28).



## ACCELERATING MONTANA'S CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Montana can achieve a carbon-free electricity system by 2035 and create a thriving clean electricity export market that lowers ratepayer bills.

Montanans can achieve the greatest savings through one scenario, **Deep Decarbonization**, that not only achieves 100% clean electricity by 2035, but that transitions the state's building, transportation, and industrial sectors to efficient, zero-carbon systems by 2050. The **Deep Decarbonization** scenario decreases household electricity spending by 40 percent. Cumulatively, Montana stands to save more than \$30 billion by 2050 across its economy as compared to keeping its coal-fired generators. This pathway also creates the most jobs.

The business-as-usual and keep coal scenarios show limited prospects for creating new jobs, while the three carbon-free scenarios result in increasing employment opportunities as the grid expands to accommodate more wind, solar, and battery storage. The **Deep Decarbonization** scenario, which moves Montana's entire economy to carbon-free technologies, more than doubles jobs in the wind, rooftop solar, utility-scale solar, and storage industries (Figure 2).



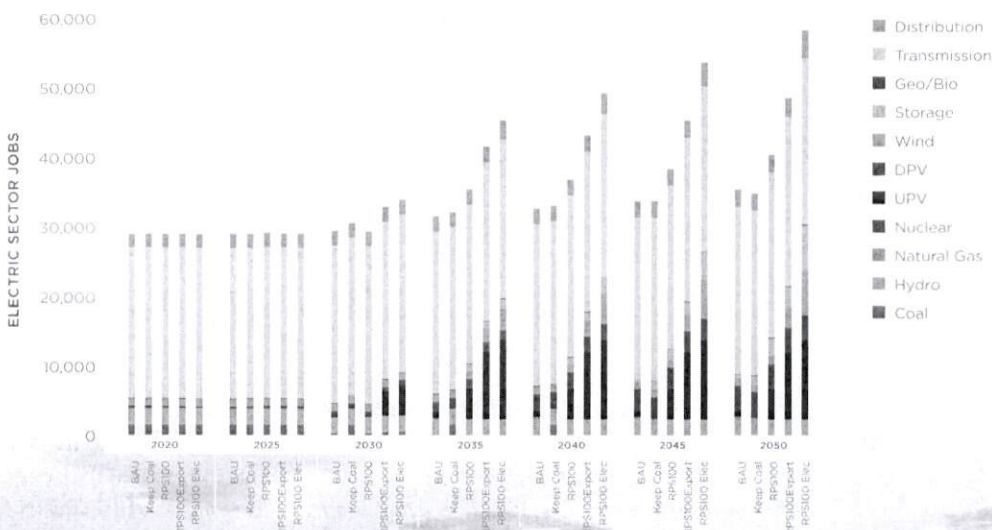
VibrantCleanEnergy.com



GridLab.org



■ Download the full report at [www.350montana.org](http://www.350montana.org)



THIS IS THE YEAR MONTANA DECIDES HOW TO REPLACE COAL



**Brittney Moorman**

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**From:** Calvin Lance <callance14@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 11, 2021 10:10 AM  
**To:** Brittney Moorman; bobbegeroge1@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** NWE Gas Plant

Dear Council Members,

My name is Calvin Lance and I live at 1422 Lance Lane, south of Laurel.

My brother Stephen, who lives at 1442 Lance Lane and I attended the City Council meeting held on Wednesday November 10th in chambers.

Although we did not stand up and comment, we are compelled to express ourselves now, in the wake of a meeting filled with dissension and protest.

First of all, we are pleased the council could not come to quorum Resolution No. R21-121. That result will allow more of us to be heard and express our concerns.

We have seen a lot of progress over the years living South of Laurel. As far back as a new bridge over Hwy 212, new overpass south of us and most recently the expanse of Cenex Refinery adding a substation to the east of their plant. Progress that, as residents have had nothing to say about it. They just kind of happened.

Over the past few months we have witnessed the excavation for and laying of pipelines under Thiel Road to Riverside Park. No one even had time to object to this "progress". In fact, even though we share a zip code with Laurel residents, South of I-90 we have no

representation. That is one reason why we are standing up against building the methane plant. No one ever asked for our opinion or to voice our concerns. Evidenced by the way NWE has pushed this through all the way to Riverside Park before we stood up and said "Hold Your Horses", lends to certainty, that once they build the plant, what's going to keep them from industrial creep and deciding in a few short years that 18 engines is not enough and build another 18 for the demand. Who's to say? And once again, we will have nothing to say about it.

No one knows better than those of us who spend our time 24/7, south of the proposed location, how the wind turbulence is blowing from the West down the Yellowstone River. We live in a vortex. The wind blows in circles. This might seem insignificant, but what it means is the emission from the stacks will not dissipate and rise into the atmosphere, it is going to stay low and circle around to our homes and in the air we breathe.

I am also concerned about Acid Rain. I realize burning methane is supposed to be 50% cleaner and more efficient. But, that still leaves emissions that will settle in the fields. My neighbors to the east, the Felders, have invested a personal fortune in time and money in a cutting edge vineyard growing weather resistant grapes for wine. It is an attractive operation I see each day when I leave my house. I am concerned for them, because even 50% less emission still means there is 50% more than there was before. Their buyers could lose interest when they see smoke coming from the stacks so close to the product. People are finicky that way.

NWE has invested time and money for this venture. But, relatively speaking, so have the residents south of the river long before NWE did the same. We were here first and have spent lifetimes worth of money and effort to make this place on Lane & McMullen Lanes and Thiel Road our future, sans power plants.



We are residents and farmers. Young and old. Friends and family. Taxpayers. A close knit group who does not want this plant moving in so close we could throw a rock at it. And we will, throw a rock at it.

Sincerely,

Calvin Lance

--

Calvin Lance  
1422 Lance Lane  
Laurel, MT 59044  
406-698-1114, cell

GREGORY CHILDS  
LAUREL MT

(Letter to Editor)

Much has been written about the proposed Power Plant along the Yellowstone River south of Laurel. Indeed the impact for all residences along Thiel Road will be significant.

I wish to address another important repercussion the plant's development will produce and that is; The degradation of air quality and global warming we are all aware of. The pollutants a methane plant can produce is astonishing. A methane leak is twenty times more harmful to our air and warming than even coal burning. That affects far more people than the residences along the river.

Many are aware of the watered-down results of the Glasgow COP-26 two week Climate Summit. Shameful. Hopefully small towns like Laurel can minutely compensate for COP-26's stumble and deny the zoning requests necessary to build this polluting, noisy plant.

Please attend the City Council Chambers (Nov 23 6:30PM) and encourage the Council Members to protect the Residents and do something for our environment.

Greg Childs  
Laurel  
Nov 15 2021



## **Brittney Moorman**

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**From:** Carol Blades <cblades41@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 15, 2021 10:02 AM  
**To:** Ward 3B; Ward 1A  
**Cc:** Brittney Moorman  
**Subject:** True service to The PEOPLE

Dear Councilman Stokes and Councilwoman Sparks:

It appears to me that NWE has targeted the Laurel City Council as a highly vulnerable governing group to their manipulation. You two, at this point, appear to be the only two members that are not so easily exploited. It is a fact, if not common sense, that there are numerous sites where this plant could be placed that would not impact so profoundly a long standing middle class community of 30 families, the home owners, directly on the South side of the Yellowstone River. NWE has somehow convinced multiple members of the council to believe that the fate of Montana citizens and the rare possibility of an energy crisis lies in their hands. That is absurd and profoundly naive for council members to believe. NWE did their homework when they targeted this council to do their bidding. Gullible would be a defining description for most of them.

There is only one other possible reason for the these Councilman to support this bidding of NWE and that is greed, they want the tax dollars so badly they have created a 'sacrifice zone,' all 30 families so heavily impacted in order to fatten their budget.

Thank you for voting no on the easement and please continue to hold your ground, voting no on the annexation. In the long run you will be proven very wise and to be true servants to the people.

Carol Blades  
Laurel, Mt.

"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."

**Brittney Moorman**

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**From:** joan marrin <joanmarrin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 16, 2021 6:18 PM  
**To:** Brittney Moorman  
**Subject:** I am sending my message to the Laurel City Council members

Hello Britteny,

I would like to ask you to email my message to each of the eight City Council members, and also read it directly into the record. Here is my message:

I am a resident in the city of Billings, and I want to express my thoughts regarding the proposed methane gas plant. I have spoken with a number of friends and neighbors about this issue, and it is of grave concern to us. The idea of putting one more pipeline under the Yellowstone River is unthinkable, since this source of our freshwater is already vulnerable to other oil or gas leaks.

Please think beyond the immediate desire to raise revenue. Think about the long run and how this plant will not be a permanent source of revenue. The proposed gas plant can be quite harmful to the health of the citizens. It is hard to trust the motives of Northwestern Energy since they have not reached out to communicate with the residents. Trying to rush a vote of approval right before the Thanksgiving holiday strikes me as an underhanded way to push through a plan that does not have popular support. I am grateful that Heidi Sparks and Scott Stokes stood strong for the people of Laurel in not approving the proposed gas plant.

Sincerely,  
Joan Marrin Smith, Billings, MT



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## **2.12.060 Vacancy of office—Cause.**

An office becomes vacant on the happening of any of the following events before the expiration of the term of the incumbent:

- A. The death of the incumbent;
- B. A determination pursuant to Title 53, Chapter 21, Part 1, that he is mentally ill;
- C. His resignation;
- D. His removal from office;
- E. His absence from the city continuously for ten days without the consent of the council;
- F. His open neglect or refusal to discharge his duties;
- G. His ceasing to be a resident of the city, or in the case of an alderman, his ceasing to be a resident of his ward;
- H. His ceasing to discharge the duty of his office for a period of three consecutive months, except when prevented by illness or when absent from the city by permission of the governing body;
- I. His conviction of a felony or of any offense involving moral turpitude or a violation of his official duties;
- J. His refusal or neglect to file his official bond within the time prescribed;
- K. The decision of a competent tribunal declaring void his election or appointment.

(Prior code § 2.04.050)