

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

November 10, 2021

A special meeting of the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Eaton at 7:00 p.m. on November 10, 2021.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bruce McGee	Heidi Sparks
Scot Stokes	Richard Herr
Richard Klose	

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Irv Wilke
Don Eaton

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

Bethany Langve, Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor Eaton led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

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

MINUTES: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

COUNCIL DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:

Council Member Stokes stated he had been contacted by three members of the legislature, Berry Usher, Larry Bruster, Doug Kary, regarding this issue. They wanted to know where Council stood on this, what had to be done, and also disclosed that before he was even told about tonight's meeting that there would be another vote on it.

Council Member McGee stated received a phone call from Larry Bean, who had concerns over future emissions of this gas plant.

Council Member McGee stated he also received an email from Jim Irwin, CHS, and Carry Smith in favor of this easement.

Council Member McGee stated he also had a conversation with Lisa Perry about whether this item was on Tuesday night's agenda. He informed her that it was on the Special Council agenda for this evening.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

CONSENT ITEMS: None.

CEREMONIAL CALENDAR: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: None.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (THREE-MINUTE LIMIT):

Mayor Eaton read into the record a public comment from Kasey Felder of 1434 McMullen Lane.

Mayor Eaton read into the record a public comment from Aaron Felder of 1434 McMullen Lane.

Mayor Eaton read into the record a public comment from Molly Schwend of 1840 Scarlet Sage Lane.

SCHEDULED MATTERS:

- **Resolution No. R21-121: A Resolution Of The City Council Authorizing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Underground Gas Pipeline Easement For Northwestern Corporation D/B/A Northwest Energy For The Purpose Of Constructing, Operating, And Maintaining An Underground Pipeline To Be Installed And Located Under The City's Riverside Park.**

Motion by Council Member McGee to approve Resolution No. R21-121, seconded by Council Member Klose.

Barbra Ann Sprauge Emineth, 501 Alder Ave, read the attached statement.

Kasey Felder, 1434 McMullen Lane, read the attached statement.

Steve Krum, 249 24th Avenue W., I keep going over the facts and over the facts on this issue. And I keep finding new things. And one of the issues with the pipeline coming through is that it is going to supply the plant. I bet you, if you ask 95% of the people in this room, are you opposed to NorthWestern building a power plant. No. But are you opposed to them building it here. Yes. This is not where it belongs. The noise at this plant is going to be quite significant. So going through some more paperwork. I was going through the DEQ paperwork today. One of the things I found were the noise level estimates I found for the plant are estimates. They are not guaranteed figures. It is 65 decibels all the way around the plant, 600 feet or 555 feet or whatever. All the way around the plant. All over the plant. It's going everywhere, and it's just going to keep coming out, and it's not going to stop. Another fact that I found on the DEQ sheet that was interesting is they stated the plants going to be two miles from Laurel. It's not two miles from Laurel. Kasey's is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, and many of these houses. Her house is less than a half a mile away. Many of these other house in here are just slightly farther than that or the same. The City of Laurel is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away. If you drive on a road, it's 2 miles. But you guys are straight across the highway from it, but the City of Laurel when you go to a basketball game, or you go to a football game when you're out walking your dog in the park. Your going to hear that plant just like everybody else is. This isn't going to be good for the community. This is not where it's supposed to be built. So if you bring the pipeline in, it's just one more step to building this plant. And Id also say one of the things I found is that the City/County Zoning meeting the information that was given to the City/County Zoning meetings said the plant would be quiet and all the noise would be focused on the refinery. They can't do that, they're not going to do that, and that's not what they told the DEQ. So that's not right either. The one other thing I found through the notes I was reading is. Is that when you guys delayed the original resolutions, 108 and 109 when you tabled them. One of the comments from NorthWestern was, and I quote, "forcing someone to do something is not in the spirit of public negotiations discourse." Rushing this plant through is not in the interest of public negotiations and discourse. And that's what's going on here. They are going to hurry up and get this thing built, bypassing time that should be spent looking at details like how noisy is this plant. How noisy really is this plant. Giving you time to spend somebody out to a plant, existing plant, that is already running and operating the same equipment. This is going to be very, very noisy equipment. We really should look at all this before we ever vote on it and go ahead and build this plant. Build it out in the badlands on the other side of Belfry. Build it out on the badlands on the other side of Bridger. Wherever the pipelines coming through. Because the pipelines are already out there, it's coming up here from Wyoming. There's vacant, sparsely, or no populated areas that this plant could be built. Not here. This is not where it belongs. So I ask you to vote no on the easement because that's the beginning of this plant. Thank you.

Carol Blades, 1809 DeNittis Lane, read the attached statement.

Cara Ronan, 1721 Nicholas Lane, I am fourth generation to live and farm the land on the Yellowstone River. My great grandfather homesteaded here and settled on the North shores of the Yellowstone River. My grandmother Juanita Ronan was born on that property 87 years ago. This land is where the electric plant in Laurel now sits. There's an unsettling history of big business moving into our communities with little regard for those it displaces. Some couple this under the guise of progress or growth. And the current proposed power plant that NorthWestern Energy has planned to put on the same banks of the Yellowstone River is the same banks as where my grandmother and great grandparents grew up. I feel is being pushed forward in the same exact way. I ask that this Council consider that the state of our agriculture, and thus those of us that live on the south banks of the Yellowstone River. The growers, the producers, and the farmers reflect our future



as a community. Our farms here in Laurel produce raw materials, which are important in trade both locally and internationally. They provide revenue, work, and jobs for the County. They drive technology and development here in this County. Yet, in the consideration of this plant, many of us on the south side of the banks of the Yellowstone River within the affected zones of the proposed plant are not being considered. I ask who represents us? Who represents the best interest of those of us that will be directly affected by the building of this plant. There's no representatives sitting here today that best reflects our wants and needs on the south end of the Yellowstone River. I directly oppose, together with my grandmother, who couldn't be here tonight, the building of this plant. I would like to ask and make sure NorthWestern Energy can hear me. Can you guys all hear me, ok? It has been said that you guys represent the best of what's good in this community. Then why is it that not one of you have been out to visit any of our properties on the south end of Laurel? To speak with us about what it means to build this plant in our community. Not one of you. As far as regards to the earlier comments. So that it is also known to NorthWestern people who may or may not live in this community, Scarlet Sage Lane is 3.8 miles away from the proposed site as the crow flies. Where I live is less than a half a mile. Why is that people who live north of Yard Office Lane that have representation here tonight and live north towards the regional airport have more consideration and more say and, more importantly, more representation at this meeting tonight than me. As I speak to family and friends around Laurel, within the City limits, that are represented by you guys directly. They are under the assumption that this power plant is not even on the table. That it's not being built. I highly urge you to step back and take your time and respectfully has your constituents and the people you represent here in this community and outside of the community what is happening. Instead of it being pushed so far and so fast forward without us being considered. Thank you.

Terry Krum, 1311 E. Railroad Street, read the attached statement.

Jenny Harbine, I'm a lawyer for national non-profit law firm. We have an office based here in Montana. We represent organizations and individuals who are impacted by projects such as this energy project proposed by NorthWestern Energy. NorthWestern is asking the City for a pipeline easement through Riverside Park to bring fuel to its proposed gas plant north of the river. The City's consideration of the pipeline inextricably entwined with the City's consideration of the rezoning request. Both are required to allow NorthWestern to build the pipeline, and I urge the Council to consider both of these issue together. And in evaluating whether or not to take the actions that NorthWestern is asking you to take. I urge you to elevate in your considerations the community welfare. You don't have to approve a pipeline under Riverside Park. You don't have to rezone the property north of the park for a gas plant. What this Council does have to do, and I am talking about a legal obligation, not a moral one, although it very well could be both. What this Council has to do is consider the impacts on the local community. On Laurel's natural resources. On the environment and on the residents that are here tonight. It would be both; I realize that the only issue on the Council's agenda tonight is, of course, this pipeline easement, not the rezoning which you will consider later this month. But it would be both improper and really unnecessary for this Council to prejudge its future decision on zoning by granting an easement underneath the park. And I would say to the extent that this Council is entertaining declining the zoning request, which I certainly hope you are, it would be extremely unfortunate allow NorthWestern to construct a pipeline under Riverside Park, a pipeline to nowhere. As the prior commenter addressed, I want to briefly address this issue about maybe the lights going out. If this Council doesn't approve an easement and rezoning request. There is nothing that say NorthWestern has to build this plant and in this location to keep the lights on in the State of Montana. NorthWestern has before a number of different alternatives to build out its electric generating capacity if it needs to do so. In fact, it was vetting those alternatives before the Public Service Commission, who are the experts. Who are the ones to decide whether or not this plant in this location is in the best interest in Montana? NorthWestern pulled the plug on that proceeding before those experts could make that determination of whether this is a plant that is necessary. I urge this Council to view those statements with skepticism, and in any event, it's not the Council's role, as I am sure you all know to set the State's energy policy. It is your role and your obligation to promote the community's welfare and act in the community's interests. And I urge you to vote no on the easement. Thank you.

Charles Van Sickland, 2001 Theil Road, I have a degree in geology and have worked for several engineering firms in the local area. We've lived in Laurel for 30-years. We lived in town. We moved to Thiel Road because of its quiet. We were also pleased to find out that also with the quiet, there is a special zoning district that's going to be impacted the most. That's the area south of the proposed plant. It seems to be a worthless piece of paper that says we this area is dedicated to quiet enjoying the land and not having strip malls or supermarkets moving into the area. This easement under the Riverside Park. What kind of park is it if it has more pipelines under it than it has functioning bathrooms? It seems to me that that's going to be the first step for changing Laurel's



outlook and its skyline and the type of people that are ever going to want to live here. I would like you, folks, to vote against the easement. Thank you.

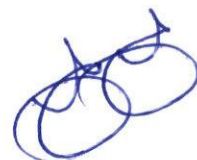
Oli Tripp, 1519 McMullen Lane, I guess I just urge your guys to vote no on the easement giving that this is a meeting about the easement through the park. With that being said, I didn't write anything up; I am just kind of winging it here. There's a need for reliable power. I don't think it needs to be here in Laurel or near Laurel or near the banks of the Yellowstone River. That's my take, and that's a lot of these peoples take behind me. There's lots of places it could go where it could have five to ten miles with nobody around it. It could still produce power and get all the power to the grid that they need. That's my thought. I guess lastly, real quick; I feel like if a vote goes forward here and if you guys vote for the easement, that pretty much sets in stone what we expect to see later on for the vote of the rezoning. And if that's the case, I think most of us just feel like we've been steamrolled right through this time and not been given a proper chance. Thank you.

Steve Simonson, 5342 Cabernet Lane Billings, I'm here tonight to represent Big Sky Economic Development. We support the easement underneath the park. I want to go on record on that. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.

Shannon Heim, Attorney for NorthWestern Energy, I do have a copy of the CHS letter I do believe Commissioner Stokes referred to that wasn't read into the record. I don't know if you want me to read it into the record. We just got a courtesy copy of it, but it seems that everything else has been read in already.

Mayor Eaton clarified she could read it into the record if she would like, or she could submit it to be included into the record.

Ms. Heim stated we could submit it; it was my understanding that all Council Members have already received it. It was my understanding it would be read into the record. That's fine. I do appreciate the opportunity to speak. I do hear the comments and the concerns that have been expressed tonight. We do care; we have been here for months, we will be here for months more in this room, listening to concerns and making sure those concerns are answered. There have been a wide variety of issues and concerns that have been identified. And for each of these concerns, there is a time and a place. And tonight's issue is only the easement. There's been a lot put on your plate and a lot of pressure put on this vote that isn't particularly appropriate or fair to the Council or the Commission. There are a lot of expert opinions and a lot of evidence that has been presented in a lot of different forms regarding this plant. The issue tonight is the easement and only the easement. And we believe it is absolutely in the public interest and in the interest of the City of Laurel, particular to grant that. I do want to address a few of the very specific comments that have been made just to make sure we are on the same page and that they have been rebutted to some extend. The issue of noise has been raise. I understand there is concern noise; whenever you have any amount of commercial or industrial development, you're going to have a concern about noise. We knew that from the outside, and so the design of this plant very specifically took that into account, and the decibel level is incredibly low. It is incredibly low; this is a very quiet facility; 65 decibels is basically this room when someone is speaking at the microphone. It is not that loud. And so, I would urge the Commission not to take those concerns to heart without looking at evidence and being particularly careful about that. But again, I don't think this is the forum for that conversation. When you look at water pollution again, I would urge you to look at the experts who are looking at easements that will specifically rely, or affect any amount of water of the river. We at NorthWestern Energy have been incredibly diligent at correcting the environment. We spend a lot of money; we spend a lot of time in doing that. There were concerns about the boring process itself. Whether or not the City is taking on specific liability, I would urge you to take the advice that has already been provided to you by your City Attorney and by the Zoning Commission that any particular liability regarding the easement belongs with NorthWestern Energy, not the City. That is always how it is. There is no legal liability that will flow to you. There have been a lot of concerns about this issue being in a rush. That NorthWestern is pushing that somehow we are unfairly, we are asking you to make a decision on this one easement. I could d not disagree with that assertion more strongly; we've been discussing this plant publicly since March. We've been talking to the City of Laurel about this easement and about this plant since the Spring. The easement, in this Chamber, as I am sure all of you are painfully aware for months. So this is not a new issue to you, and it has been fully vetted. Zoning is not part of the discussion tonight; we believe we will be back. We know we will be back. Building anything of this magnitude will require us to require us to exercise our partnership and go through these issues one by one. We will be back. We believe that the partnership that we have built in the past and are continuing to build with the City of Laurel is important, and we will continue to have these important conversations. Tonight's conversation, though, is about the easement. We've



heard a lot of comments tonight about this plant probably is important, but don't put it here. I would urge you to focus on the fact that.. on the comments, I made last night and I heard people say that they were concerned. That the comments I offered last night were not fair and rubbed them the wrong way. The only intent behind those comments was the offer some amount of insight into our motivation. We went through an extensive RFP process. We did start going through the process at the Commission, at the Public Service Commission. Still, it's important to note that that process was the weather or not NorthWestern Energy could add that plant today, have preapproval to add it to our rate base. That was the only conversation on the table. So, I would urge you to rely on the expert discussions and decisions that have been made. That are the bigger picture decisions and focus on what's in front of you and the benefit of this plant and of this process and of the project to the City of Laurel. We urge you to please pass this, pass this resolution, and to allow us the easement. Thank you.

Zach Biddier, 1721 Nicholas Lane, my question to Council Members and anyone in this room. If you are willing to vote in favor of this easement and the plant, are you willing to live where I live? Consider if you were living at my home what would your opinion be then? To those here from NorthWestern Energy, since your not worried about the sound, why not move the beautiful, robust community on the banks of your beloved project. More or less, which of you from NorthWestern Energy have recently spent any time or enjoyed Sportsmen's Park [Riverside Park] where the proposed easement is. I urge the Council Members to vote no in the matter of the easement. Thank you.

Melissa Nootz, Campaign and Advocacy Director for the Montana Environmental Information Center 428 N. Yellowstone Street in Livingston, Montana, I am here today representing MEIC's members in Laurel and all those who live downwind and downstreet of the proposed pipeline and the methane gas plant. I am also a City Commissioner in my own town upstream on the Yellowstone River. Although I am not here tonight as a Commissioner. We work hard to protect our part of the river so that we and everyone downstream of us can enjoy these waters and what they offer our communities. Before my family lived in Livingston, Anaconda was our home. I have had the great privilege of working with people in Anaconda and Butte for about a decade. Elevating our concerns about how industry has impacted health, our communities, and the land and the water we call home. Last night a representative from NorthWestern Energy talked about how you should keep your eye on what's in front of you with this vote. And if this is just one vote in a long process to create NorthWestern's methane gas power plant. I agree you should keep your eyes on what's in front of you. And by that, I mean the generations of Montanans and the land and the water that will be impacted by your vote tonight. An easement might sound like a little thing, but we all know how it goes. Little by little, a little becomes a lot. NorthWestern also said last night that it might be hard for us Montanans to see the big picture. For me and a lot of Montanans, it's not hard at all to see the big picture here. We have story after story of places in Montana where industry has come to town, offered the community some money for land or parks. The industry eventually goes broke or realizes they can make more profit somewhere else. So they leave town, they shuffle around their liabilities, and leave an enormous toxic mess for others to clean up. This is familiar for those of us who know this history of the Cooper Kings. What really surprised me last night was hearing NorthWestern Energy offer you all money last night if you vote to allow their pipeline easement through your park. And I have to say, having voted on local infrastructure projects regularly for my own community over the last three years, \$15,000 will get used up very quickly. And it is really unlikely that it will ever come close to covering up clean-up or mitigation costs. And the potential cost to your community and your park. I hope you keep these lessons in mind when you vote tonight and consider what's actually at risk here on the banks of the Yellowstone River. With these incremental steps to NorthWestern's plans. Laurel and the Yellowstone River are worth far more than \$15,000. Please vote no. Thanks again for listening.

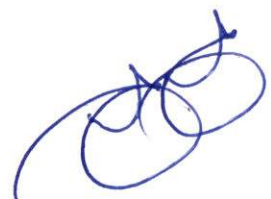
There was no Council discussion.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion. Council Members Herr, Klose, and McGee voted aye. Council Members Sparks and Stokes voted nay. Motion failed 3-2.

Mayor Eaton clarified since she was appointed Mayor at last night's meeting, the majority vote of Council is now 4. Since there were only three votes in the affirmative, this motion has failed.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA: None.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS (ONE-MINUTE LIMIT): None.



COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Council thanked Veterans for their service.

A Council Member also noted that today was the Marines' birthday.

MAYOR UPDATES:

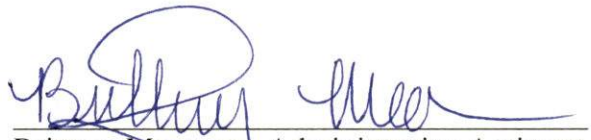
Mayor Eaton clarified that Council Member McGee has serviced as Council Vice-Chair. He is now considered the chair of the Council. She will now only be voting to break a tie.

UNSCHEDULED MATTERS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Council Member Sparks 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 five Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 5-0.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 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, Mayor

Attest:


Bethany Langve, Clerk/Treasurer



Brittney Moorman

From: Kasey Krum Felder <kmkfelder@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 9, 2021 10:02 PM
To: Laurel City Planner
Cc: Ward 1B; Bethany Langve; Brittney Moorman
Subject: Proposed Laurel gas plant

Hi Nick,

Thank you for your time. As residents who live on the south side of the river near the proposed build site for the methane plant, we strongly urge you to reconsider your recommendations for zoning of the involved parcels.

-What are the two or more major transportation routes from the proposed site per code 17.12.170?

-There is potential for major environmental impact (stack gas). Why were we not notified? We are very close! Code 17-68-030. Has anyone studied air flow in the area? How does the river affect the air flow?

-Code 17.68.040 B, 4 letters g & h give the zoning commission the ability to impose modifications due to noise, vibration, air pollution and similar environment influences. We will have to deal with all those things daily where we are located if this plant gets built. We should have been notified so we could have a say in these matters.

This plant does not belong by the river or near a residential area.

Highlighted sections of the code are below.

17.12.170 - Heavy industrial (HI) district.

[SHARE LINK TO SECTIONPRINT SECTIONDOWNLOAD \(DOCX\) OF SECTIONEMAIL SECTION](#)

A district intended to accommodate manufacturing, processing, fabrication, and assembly of materials and products. Areas designated as heavy industry should have access to two or more major transportation routes, and such sites should have adjacent space for parking and loading facilities.

17.68.030 - Evaluation responsibility—Consultation—Notification.

[SHARE LINK TO SECTIONPRINT SECTIONDOWNLOAD \(DOCX\) OF SECTIONEMAIL SECTION](#)

The planning director, upon receiving an application for a special review of an area or a particular place of property shall do the following:

- A.
Consult with other departments of the city or county to fully evaluate the impact of any special review upon public facilities and services including, but not limited to schools, drainage, traffic and related facilities;
- B.
Study each application with reference to its appropriateness and effect on existing and proposed land use, and references to the comprehensive plan;
- C.
Advertise twice in a newspaper of general circulation in the jurisdictional of the Laurel-Yellowstone city-county planning board at least fifteen days in advance of the time and place of the public hearing;
- D.
Notify, by mail, the applicant or his authorized agent at least five days prior to the date of the public hearing of the time and place of such hearing;

E.

Notify, by mail, all property owners within three hundred feet of the exterior boundaries of the property subject to the special review of the time, date, place of the public hearing and the existing and proposed classification. Further, he may notify property owners within a radius of more than three hundred feet if he determines that the proposed use of the property would have a substantial environmental impact on surrounding land uses;

F.

After the public hearing and as part of the public record, the planning director shall report his findings, conclusions and recommendations to the zoning commission.

17.68.040 - Zoning commission action.

[SHARE LINK TO SECTION PRINT SECTION DOWNLOAD \(DOCX\) OF SECTION EMAIL SECTION](#)

A.

After presentation to the zoning commission of the request for special review by the applicant, the zoning commission shall make a recommendation to the city council to:

1.

Grant the application for special review;

2.

Deny the application;

3.

Delay action on the application for a period not to exceed thirty days; or

4.

Grant the application subject to conditions and recommendations and give the reasons therefor.

B.

Before approving a special review use, the zoning commission shall find that the contemplated use(s):

1.

Complies with all requirements of this section;

2.

Is consistent with the objectives and purposes of this title and the Laurel comprehensive planning process;

3.

Is compatible with surrounding land use or is otherwise screened and separated from adjacent land in such a way as to minimize adverse effects;

4.

Further the zoning commission shall consider and may impose modifications or conditions concerning, but not limited to the following:

a.

Street and road capacity,

b.

Ingress and egress to adjoining streets,

Off-street parking,

c.

Fencing, screening and landscaping,

d.

Building bulk and location,

e.

Usable open space,

f.

Signs and lighting,

g.

Noise, vibration, air pollution and similar environmental influences.

h.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Kasey & Aaron Felder
1434 McMullen Ln
Laurel

Brittney Moorman

From: Aaron Felder <ajfelder@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 9, 2021 10:16 PM
To: Ward 1B; Bethany Langve; Brittney Moorman
Cc: Ward 1A; Ward 2A; Ward 2B; Ward 3A; Ward 3B; Ward 4A; Ward 4B
Subject: Public testimony for meeting 11/10/21
Attachments: AFelder public testimony 11-10-21.docx

Please find attached a document I would like read into the public record during the special city council meeting on 11/10/21.

Thank you,
Aaron Felder

Greetings City Council members,

Please accept this letter as my comment regarding resolution R21-121 (the pipeline easement for NorthWestern Energy through Riverside Park). My apologies for not being here this evening.

My name is Aaron Felder, I live at 1434 McMullen Lane in Laurel. I oppose this pipeline being bored into the ground under the Yellowstone River. This pipeline will feed the proposed NorthWestern Energy Laurel generating station. Last night (11/9/21), I asked for a council member to ask NorthWestern Energy one question. That question was to see if NorthWestern Energy had taken any time to reach out to the people on the south side of the river near the proposed build site. If you have not had time to do this, please stop at this point in my letter and go ahead and ask them.... If no council member will stand up for the people that call Laurel home on the south side of the river, will Mayor Eaton do so?

Considering the new agreement, without the financial part, why is there no exit strategy? What happens if there is legislation that causes a shift away from methane plants (similar to what's happened in Colstrip & coal plants). Will NorthWestern continue to pay the annual fee for the easement if the plant is not in operation? Or will they seek legal counsel to get out of their contract which will cost the city money? The city attorney should negotiate for city like he would negotiate for his family.

As you read this letter, I assume all the chairs in the council chamber are full. They are full of people that know what it is like to work so hard for something they call their own. They surely will not want to put their heads down on their pillows at night knowing that what they have worked so hard for will be discounted because of this proposed gas plant in Laurel.

I'm sure my neighbors along Thiel Road share the same thoughts and feelings about what life will be like in the future if this plant gets constructed.

Please vote no on resolution R21-121.

Sincerely,
Aaron Felder

Brittney Moorman

From: molly schwend <mschwend5@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 10, 2021 4:45 PM
To: Brittney Moorman
Subject: Resolution No. R21-121- Please read into public record

Dear Council Members,

As a citizen of Laurel, I am writing in concern to the NorthWestern Energy Gas Plant and Laurel's need to move forward with this. My concern is the longer this project is delayed the more costs the Montana customers will pay. As an engineer and someone who has worked my entire career in the energy sector, I am well aware of the push for wind and solar. I am not against those forms of energy, but I also know they can not rely upon in a lot of the Montana conditions. Coal and Natural gas plants are what will be the baseload energy source we need to keep our lights on, heaters in the winter, and air conditioning in the summer.

Other than keeping our power prices down and our grid reliable, the benefits to our community are huge. NWE's NorthWestern's \$275M investment in Laurel brings a host of economic and community benefits including annual property taxes of approximately \$5 Million, 200-300 jobs during construction, and ten full-time family-wage jobs. For the state of Montana, we are protecting our energy future, preventing blackouts like Texas and California, and providing tax revenue. Let us continue to be leaders in the energy world, creating enough power to be an exporter of power instead of a state that must pay the large costs to import.

NorthWestern Energy has always been good to the communities we live in sponsoring most of the events around the state, and many here in Laurel. They are working hard to make this a community buy-in project. It is your job as City Council to make sure you are doing what is in the best interest of the town, and I can not see how this has been delayed as long as it has. Vote yes, on Resolution No. R21-121: A Resolution Of The City Council Authorizing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Underground Gas Pipeline Easement For Northwestern Corporation D/B/A Northwest Energy For The Purpose Of Constructing, Operating, And Maintaining An Underground Pipeline To Be Installed And Located Under The City's Riverside Park. Further construction delays are a disservice to the Laurel community and Montana.

Thank you for your time.

Molly Schwend
1840 Scarlet Sage Ln
Laurel MT

\$15,000.00
GIFT

1st Generation

Report # 1111
less than 4 miles out of town!

65
Dec.

To Council -

My father was enlisted in the A.F. for about 24 years and we lived all over the world. I think people who haven't traveled may think a foreign country is way different than living in ours and I would disagree. There are much more similarities than differences.

The reason I've shared this with you is because Laurel Montana is ^{still} a very special place to live. Someone who moved here from out of state told me it reminded her of Mayberry RFD.

Laurel is ~~turning~~ at a fork in the road by even considering granting an easement thru Riverside Park, which in time could be a good camp ground. improvements have already begun.

But if the noise levels from this plant are constantly in the air how nice is that gonna be? It is too close to town and you will also be telling the citizens that our health doesn't matter.

is recovering from a flood + oil leak into the river a few hrs

EASEMENT

Thank you for your service to the City of Laurel and the opportunity to speak with you again tonight. In case I haven't mentioned, our family frequents the city parks, spends money at local businesses, and participates in city wide events. Laurel is our home.

Today I ask you to defer or deny NorthWestern Energy's easement request for the pipeline under Riverside Park and the Yellowstone River. I understand that NWE has "sweetened" the deal for the easement.

This decision tonight is related to the proposed methane plant. The pipeline will come out on the parcels where NWE wants to build the plant.

The City of Laurel's FB page & website states that the City of Laurel, Montana is a vibrant and growing community located along the **scenic Yellowstone River**. Our community touts being on the banks of the **majestic Yellowstone River**. So why even consider tainting that scenic, majestic river with a power plant or the gas line to feed it.

Thank you again for your time and valuable consideration to defer or deny the easement request sought by Northwestern Energy.

Kasey Felder
1434 McMullen Ln
Laurel MT 59044

My name is Carol Blades

My address is 1809 DeNittis Lane

Madam President and council members

Northwestern Energy is betting you want the taxes so badly, that you would sacrifice 30 residences, two wild and free rivers, a huge public recreation area and a historical and cultural site.

Last night after residents pleaded for your help, a Northwestern Energy rep got up and said if you pass the proposal we will give you a gift of fifteen thousand dollars.

They showed their true colors in that one statement. Please do not sacrifice us for tax money and financial gifts.

My name is Terry Krum, I live at 1311 E. Railroad Street, and I have lived with my family in and around Laurel all my life. I have owned property and or a home in Laurel at various times. I have worked for various business's in and around Laurel, and my work as a railway mechanic allowed me to work in and around all the Major Energy Companies in our area. I would like to say that I was treated very well when in these facilities, and when I worked in and around Corette Power Plant, the people I got to meet and work with were very professional and very pleasant to work with.

First- I would ask the council once more to consider all the possible events that may occur when drilling, boring, trenching in and near Riverside Park. I do have concerns for the local groundwater, local wells and soil, with the south side of the river in that area considered a flood plain. It was stated that the bedrock would be penetrated , I'm guessing twice, once on each side of the river, and that there would be no disturbance of any ground soil of the areas where old landfills are located. Is there any legal responsibility for the City of Laurel, if something else is found in the process? I am looking back at the previous pipeline incidents that happened near the Park, all the mess and cleanup that followed, and then the costs. The 40 foot strip of land in question, if the easement is granted, will become a strip of land to grow grass and probably not used for much more in the foreseeable future, possibly no trees either if tree roots are considered a problem. Would this become a water path at times of High Water? Not that this area of question is being heavily used, but future options by the City become limited.

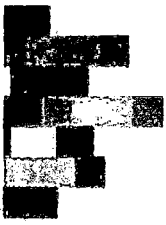
Second- I do question the speed at which the Site Approval is being pursued, we seem to allow more time for public input when SAY-if we were changing hunting license and park entrance fees, or where to locate mariuajuana shops. The amount of factual information of all the possible effects long and short term being published locally was very limited. I personally feel the DEQ report DID NOT show concern for those located closest to the facility, or the true LONG TERM effects on all the people located in the larger surrounding area.

IN MY OPINION -THIS IS A MAJOR FACILITY SITING, it will have long term effects on Laurel residents,and those in the surrounding area, some more so than others. The Laurel City Council has power and influence in many steps of this process, but that does become increasingly smaller if this process advances. It is very important that information, questions, or problems be settled before it becomes contentious and expensive to deal with.

THIS VOTE IS ABOUT LAUREL for the next 30 years, effects on all the PEOPLE that make it up..both in and around the city And should NOT come to (as stated last night) PASS THIS AND KEEP THE LIGHTS ON.....like its all on Laurel shoulders!

I would ask the Council to Please Vote No on the Easement.

Thank You



To:
Honorable Laurel City Council Members,

Date:
11/9/2021

We write today to urge your support for the Laurel Generating Station project proposed by NorthWestern Energy. This Generating Station will be a critical asset to reduce Montana's energy supply shortage and maintain the integrity of the State's electric grid. The 175 MW plant will be capable of producing energy for extended durations during extreme weather, as well as fast-ramping to meet unexpected shifts in electricity demand. Equally important, the plant was selected as the lowest cost resource to reliably serve customers through an independent third-party selection process. The Laurel Plant will also have a positive economic impact for the Laurel community. It will provide 200-300 jobs during construction and about 10 permanent family wage jobs.

The future of the Laurel Plant is of particular concern to CHS given its proximity to our facility. We depend on NorthWestern's transmission system to move purchased power to our facilities. A disruption in service such as a blackout or brownout would create tremendous economic and operational consequences.

CHS understands construction on the Laurel Generating Station has been indefinitely delayed due to a pending easement before the Council. We ask the council to expedite its deliberations regarding the easement so the project can move forward. Anything less is a disservice the community of Laurel and the State of Montana.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Greg Brown
VP Pipelines & Terminals
Energy RPT - Laurel

Jim Irwin
VP Refining
Energy RPT - Laurel