

Lansing Town Gas Drilling Oversight Committee – Summary of Initial Findings October 2011

Committee members: Rachel Bean, Larry Beck (Chair), Tom Butler, Karen Edelstein, Suzanne Hinderliter, Bill Miller, Fred Schwartz

What the committee has been doing:

- 1) Setting up educational resources for the Town's residents
 - a) Arranged a Town Meeting on Gas Drilling and related activities on 16th November including a presentation from Professor Tony Ingraffea of Cornell University
 - b) Set up a webpage: <http://www.lansingtown.com/index.php/drilling-documents>
- 2) Assessing the potential impacts of gas drilling and related activities for Lansing.
- 3) Making an initial assessment of Lansing's current laws and comprehensive plan in their relation to gas drilling. Including discussions with the Town Lawyer and others with expertise in this area.
- 4) Preparing a survey to gauge resident's opinions. The survey will be available outside polling locations on November 8th.

The committee has found that:

- 1) Lansing Town is very much behind other local Towns in ensuring they are prepared for gas drilling.
 - Lansing has both Marcellus and Utica shale, and gas drilling companies have leased ~40% of the land, owned by ~7% of the residents.
 - Lansing Town Board needs to acknowledge that drilling may take place in the Town and be prepared for that. Doing nothing in the hope/expectation that drilling will not take place is not an alternative.
 - Even if gas-drilling activities were not to take place in Lansing Town, increased road use and activities related to gas drilling (e.g. water and gravel use and transportation, gas storage) are very likely to have an impact.
- 2) Since Lansing Town's character is centered on farming, tourism and light industry, we have not had to consider widespread heavy industrial practices, such as gas drilling, within the Town before. The Town is not appropriately prepared for this. We believe the Town should:
 - Urgently update the Town's Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Ordinance and other regulations
 - Introduce Town Road Use laws to address the potential for these practices. Other towns commissioned a Road Impact Study as a central part of this.
- 3) Lansing is not ready to deal with demands on Town resources, and associated financial impacts/tax increases, gas drilling and related activities could have on the Town.
 - a) Increased demand on, and costs of, public safety, emergency and fire services
 - b) Reduction of property/land values and the Town tax base
 - c) Increased costs of road repair from heavy road use (including gravel, water and gas transportation).
- 4) Lansing needs to safeguard its residents against the health and safety risks associated with increased levels of industrial activity. These include, but are not limited to noise, air, and water pollution.
- 5) There is a critical need for the Town to document, inventory, and pass regulations to protect the Town's valuable natural resources (e.g. wetlands, aquifers and significant natural communities) at a level consistent with the standards set by other towns in Tompkins County.