

WEST WINDSOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

Draft Minutes

July 29, 2013

Present: Shannon Harrington, Barbara Truex, Genevieve Lemire, Dick Beatty, Dow Davis, Tom Crapser, Dan Querrey, Steve Querrey, Bob Gray, Glenn Bowman, John McNamara, Heather Hoyns, Tom Kenyon, Mark Atwood, Martha Harrison

1. Call to Order – DRB Chair Shannon Harrington called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM, following a site visit to the Williams & Company Mining property in connection with the public hearing on the agenda for tonight.
2. Changes to the agenda – None
3. **PUBLIC HEARING** – Shannon opened the public hearing on application #2530 by Williams & Co. Mining, Inc. (landowner) and Clean Tech LLC/Queston, Inc. (applicants) for conditional use review to convert the existing talc plant at 5013 Route 44 (parcel #1-36.2) to a wood pellet manufacturing facility. The proposed development may be subject to review under Sections 2.3-6, 3.3, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 4.12, 4.19, 4.22, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 of the West Windsor Zoning Regulations and the West Windsor Flood Hazard Area Regulations. Shannon asked if any board members have a conflict of interest or have had any ex parte communication with the applicants. None of the members had any conflicts or communications. Shannon read the definition of an interested party and informed those present that they have to be sworn in and participate in the proceedings if they want to retain their right to appeal. Shannon swore in all those present. Dan Querrey was present representing Queston, Inc., which will be manufacturing the pellets, and Clean Tech LLC, which will be buying and managing the property. Steve Querrey, Governmental Relations Officer for Queston, was present. Mark Atwood, CEO of Queston and a member of Clean Tech, was also present. Dan, Steve and Mark gave a Power Point presentation with details about the proposed project. Queston has four patents pending that will enable them to produce a wood pellet that burns hotter and cleaner with no acid in the smoke. Dan gave background information for the three members of the Queston management team who were not present: Chief Financial Officer Jay Coleman, Advisor Robert Toppin, and Plant Engineer Jake Wheeler. Dan described production, which includes a steam drying process that will make this the cleanest pellet plant in the country. Mark reviewed the existing and proposed vegetative screening, and the wells and pumps that will provide about 300 gallons per minute of water for fire protection. Mark said the brick building will be the office and lab area. Mark pointed out the log storage area to the east of the plant, which will end where the existing swale is located. Mark noted that the smaller silo on the southeast side of the plant will be removed to allow fire trucks to go behind the building. Barbara asked about the use of the water tower. Dan said the talc plant consumed a lot of water in their process but Queston will only need water for fire protection and they believe the existing wells will provide enough water. Steve said it takes a lot of propane, approximately 6,000 gallons, to keep the water tower from freezing so if Queston is correct and they don't need it, they hope to remove the tower in a couple of years. Dick asked about the location of the wells. Dan noted that two of the wells are in Reading but they're on the property that Clean Tech is buying. Dan said there are also several deeded wells on the abutting property owned by

Imerys but Queston's goal is to not use those. Shannon asked about potable water. Dan said the company will purchase potable water for employees. Mark pointed out the change in the location of the raw materials storage area, which was required by Act 250. Shannon asked if the proposed plan has been reviewed by Act 250. Dan said the re-located log storage area resulted from consultation with Act 250. Shannon asked whether flood hazard review is still necessary. Martha asked if a portion of the log yard will be in the floodplain. Steve said there may be a 2' section in the floodplain. Steve said the site plan does not show the FEMA floodplain. Dan said one corner of the log yard is 50' from the brook. Steve noted that the section of the brook closest to the log yard is the most stable section due to the rip rap protecting the fire hydrant. Dan noted a bridge in that area with abandoned pipes that will be cleaned up so nothing gets jammed up in there. Barbara asked if the berm between the old storage area and the brook is still present. Bob Gray said the berm was restored to its previous elevation and reseeded. Mark pointed out the route that trucks will take to access and exit the log yard. Mark noted that the red pines, which don't offer much screening, will be removed. Mark pointed out the buildings where the manufacturing equipment will be housed and the area where the logs will be staged. Shannon said the proposed fire lane goes over the leach field. Mark said there is a separate leach field for the administration building. Shannon asked if the leach field shown is in use. Mark said he thinks it's actually closer to the building than shown. Shannon asked that the sketch be revised to show the correct location of the leach field. Dan said if a fire truck has to drive over the leach field in an emergency, they would be fine with that. Dick asked about the transportation of the logs from the storage area to the staging area. Dan said the logs will be moved with a front-end loader or a small cherry picker with a splitter attached. Dan said the debarker will be electric but the loader and/or cherry picker will run on diesel. Regarding permits, Mark said they received a jurisdictional opinion from Act 250 indicating that they do not need a land use permit. Mark said there are water supply, storm water, and wastewater permits in place. Mark said the air quality permit has expired so they will be applying for a new air quality permit and keeping contaminants within 10% of the levels allowed by the previous permit. Mark said they will also be applying for a permit from the Department of Public Safety. Dick asked if they anticipate any difficulty in keeping contaminants within 10% of previous limits. Dan said if the system that they've designed works, they will have no problem. If they have to use a conventional system, they will have to put in a precipitator and a scrubber, and they will be close to the limit but will not exceed it. Mark reviewed the proposed schedule for acquiring and improving the facility in 2013; installing equipment and beginning production in 2014; and gradually increasing production from 28,500 tons in 2015 to 41,500 tons in 2017. Mark said the facility should be at maximum production by 2018. Dan reviewed the business parameters shown on slide #37: A propane tank will be reinstalled, with the size and location to be determined. Full capacity will be 200 tons/day. Noise levels will be less than those produced by the talc plant. The electric debarker/chipper will be inside the building to control noise. Minimal changes will be made to the exterior of the building, and will include repairing the siding, painting, and removing the southeast silo and a couple of small outbuildings. The production facility will operate 24 hours a day, five days a week, when it's in full operation in 2018. The log yard will operate 12 hours a day, five days a week, from approximately 6 AM to 6 PM. Trucks may deliver raw materials at other times. Full

production will employ approximately 28 people, with 18 to be hired from the area. Dan said there will be no more than 44 one-way truck trips per day (22 trucks), excluding employee vehicles and customer pick-up trucks, which is the same number of truck trips that occurred when the talc plant was operating. Shannon asked if the trucks will primarily be using Route 106. Steve said the log yard is being set up to encourage that but truckers coming from the east will use Route 44. Barbara asked if they anticipate the bulk of the raw materials to be coming from west of Route 106. Steve said no, but truckers coming from north or south will probably use 106. The majority of material will come from a 50 to 60 mile radius. Tom said the state has removed a lot of ledge along Route 44 and two of the bridges on Route 44 in Brownsville are scheduled to be replaced next year. Tom said Route 44 is also scheduled to be repaved in 2015 or 2016. Tom said the state is also planning to improve the intersection of Route 44 and Shattuck Hill Road, and the intersection of Route 44 and Route 44 A (Back Mountain Road). As a result, Tom said, he has no concern about truck traffic on Route 44. Dow asked about the weight capacity of the roads. Mark said the trucks are 25 ton (50,000 lb.) trucks. Bob said the normal **GVW (gross vehicle weight)** ~~GBW (gross body weight)~~ of a truck on the road is 80,000 lbs. According to Dan, the production process will use minimal water but will emit water vapor. There will be two exhaust points, where the talc plant had 31 exhaust points. John asked if there will be any odor. Dan said the only odor will be the smell of fresh cut pine in the log yard unless they have to use the traditional drying process and then there will be a camp fire smell from burning the bark. John asked how far the emissions would disperse. Dan said that would depend on weather conditions. John noted that paper mills produce a bad smell. Dan said it's the paper mill's digester that produces that smell and that smell will not come from this plant. Mark said the limits that the state has put on the emissions from this plant are more strict than the limitations on any other pellet plant in the country. Mark said this plant will emit 1/10 of the emissions of the wood pellet plant in Rutland. Dan said existing wells will supply the water for the production process and fire protection, and bottled water will be provided for consumption. Barbara asked about vibration issues. Dan said if there is a vibration issue, Mark will fix it. Mark said one of their other companies deals with large vibrating equipment so all of the equipment will be looked at from a vibration standpoint. Dan said they have computer programs that simulate the whole building and every piece of equipment. Heather asked what happens when the plant shuts down and starts up again on Monday morning. Dan said it will take an hour or an hour and a half to start up. Steve said the log yard will be set up so loggers can enter and leave without backing up, weigh the load, and unload it themselves. Dow asked about lighting. Dan said the trucks themselves have lights but the log yard will not be lit. Shannon asked if "peak hour" truck traffic was reviewed with Act 250. Steve said yes. Dick asked about the bark and other "waste" material. Dan said if they have to use the traditional drying process, the bark will be burned but, otherwise, it will be trucked off site to be sold as pine mulch. Dow asked if there will be retail sales on site. Steve said no, but if someone from town wants to come and pick up a load of pellets, they're not going to say no. Dan said they anticipate 2% of the product being sold at the facility. Genevieve asked about the noise associated with trucks unloading. Dan said there will be a motor running for the 20 minutes that it takes the truck to unload. Shannon asked about the hours for unloading. Dan said trucks would be allowed to unload at any time. Steve said the yard is laid out so

the trucks never have to go into reverse with the associated loud beeping noise. Steve said no lighting will be added to the exterior of the building. Dan said most of the lights have sensors, which leads him to believe that they come on with darkness. Steve said employee parking area lighting will be on for safety reasons and other outdoor lighting will be off when it's not needed. Dan shared a photo of a superheated steam dryer and explained how it works. Steve said an advantage of steam drying is that there's no risk of fire or explosion. Mark said the fire protection system will use existing wells, with 250+ gpm capacity, and every stage of the process will be isolated so a fire cannot spread from one area to another. Mark said they will also be using a state of the art spark detection and extinguishing system. Steve said they'll be using low-grade white pine and much of it will come from private land so they'll be providing a market for many of the properties that are in "current use." Steve said the CT River Valley has a heavy concentration of eastern white pine, which is currently being shipped to New York or Maine, so keeping it in Vermont will reduce the costs of transportation. Steve said they will encourage their suppliers to be certified in Best Management Practices. Shannon asked for a motion to continue the hearing until August 13th. Martha asked the DRB if they need any additional information from the applicants. Dow asked if the state requires the plant to comply with commercial building energy standards. Dan said they've consulted with Green Mountain Power and their transformer load will be about half what the previous manufacturer was using. Steve said they have not been told that they need to comply with commercial building energy standards but they have the Efficiency Vermont regulations. Barbara asked which conditional use applies. Dan said they are not a lumber yard because lumber yards have to keep their logs wet. Steve said he thinks wood pellet manufacturing would fall under "enclosed light manufacturing." The DRB noted that the existing building height is grandfathered. Shannon said she'd like to see more information about the leach field relative to the fire lane. Barbara asked if there is enough parking to meet zoning requirements. Dan said yes. Shannon said she'd also like to see the FEMA floodplain on the site plan. Dick said the applicants will have to get approval from the Fire Marshal and the Emergency Management Coordinator to store over 1,000 gallons of propane. Dan said that will fall under the Labor & Industry permit as well. As there were no further questions, **Barbara moved to continue the hearing until August 13, 2013 at 7:00 PM. Dick seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** Dan said any additional questions can be directed to Steven. Genevieve requested a pdf of the Power Point presentation.

4. Minutes – May 14th: **Barbara moved to approve the minutes of May 14th. Genevieve seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
5. Other Business – None
6. Adjourn – **Shannon moved to adjourn at 8:55 PM. Dick seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison