

RECAP: Board appears likely to reject terminal expansion plan

[The Riverhead Town Board](#) appears poised to reject United Riverhead Terminals proposed expansion at its Sound Shore Road fuel tank farm followed a nearly four-hour public hearing in which every speaker other than the applicant was opposed to the plan.

“You guys and girls changed my vote and I’m going to vote to deny this permit,” Councilman John Dunleavy told the standing-room only audience following the hearing, a move that got him around of applause.

“Three cheers for John. Hip hip hooray!” someone yelled from the audience.

“I think there is a consensus building on this board that is aligned with Councilman Dunleavy,” Supervisor Sean Walter told URT spokesman Vic Prusinowski. “You guys have a pretty uphill battle.”

“It comes down to who I represent,” Councilman Jim Wooten said after the meeting. “I think the public has been pretty clear. They made a very good argument.”

“After a presentation like that, I don’t know how anyone can support it,” Councilman George Gabrielsen said.

“I want to get all the answers first before I make a decision,” Councilwoman Jodi Giglio said, although she appeared to agree with Mr. Gabrielsen’s comments.

The Town Board is holding the hearing open for written comments until April 30 to allow URT to answer questions and comments made at the hearing.

URT is proposing to change two of the 20 oil storage tanks on the 286-acre Sound Shore Road property from fuel oil storage to gasoline storage, and to build two new 19,000 gallon tanks to store ethanol, which is blended with the gasoline. The two tanks proposed for gasoline storage are 2.8 million and 3.6 million gallons.

Mr. Walter said URT already has state approval to store gasoline and ethanol, but requires the special permit from the town to build the two new tanks.

Asked after the meeting what URT would do if the application is rejected, Mr. Prusinowski said that hasn’t really been discussed. He said they may be able to use an existing tank to store ethanol, or they may have the ethanol blended with the gasoline at another site.

Neighbors who spoke against the plan said the gasoline storage use constitutes a new use and since the property is zoned for residential uses, and the tank farm is allowed to stay because it pre-dates town zoning, the new use should not be allowed.

Chris Kent, an attorney representing the Northville Beach Civic Association, said the application should not be before the Town Board, but rather, should be before the zoning board of appeals since it seeks to allow a use not permitted by zoning.

Other speakers said the change to gasoline storage would result in an increase in large oil tanker trucks coming to and from the facility, and that the gasoline is far more flammable than fuel oil.

Scott Kamm, URT's general manager, said the proposal would only result in an increase of 12 trucks per day. He said the number of trucks coming from the facility has dropped nearly 50 percent since 2009, although it increased from 2013 to 2014. He said the demand for fuel oil has been declining in recent years.

Angela DeVito, the president of the Jamesport-South Jamesport Civic Association, said that the decrease in demand for fuel oil will likely lead URT to convert other tanks to gasoline storage in the future.

Other speakers said the applicants should be required to do an environmental impact study on the proposal.

Mr. Walter said the town may require a limited environment study, and it may also seek to put weight limits on town roads like Twomey Avenue in Calverton, where large oil tankers have been using to get to and from URT.