

Opinion: Permit to expand Northville terminal must be denied



The United Riverhead Petroleum Storage Terminal on Sound Shore Road in Northville stores over 160 million gallons of heating oil. It is a “pre-existing, non-conforming use,” meaning that the town has upgraded the zoning for this area and, according to town code, they may continue to exist with the same use. However, the URT is now asking for an expansion of their facility for the mixing and storage of gasoline. The proposed “special permit” application should be denied for a number of important reasons.

First, the proposal is a change in use and therefore must be referred to the ZBA prior to any action on the special permit application by the town board.

Second, the environmental review of the application is seriously flawed. Such activities in a residential zone, the movement throughout our town of larger gasoline tankers on roadways and intersections not designed for large heavy transport, and the need for coordination with emergency response agencies, are each impacts that would trigger, on their own, an Environmental Impact Statement to be prepared before any further decision. And this application contains all of these impacts.

Third, the town’s code requires the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed specially permitted use “will be in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development of the district in which it is located” and that it, “will not be more objectionable to nearby properties than would be the operation of any permitted use not requiring a special permit.” This has not been and cannot be demonstrated.

It has also been wrongly claimed that the issuance of N.Y. state air emissions and storage permits for this proposal would pre-empt the town’s code. But such permits do not pre-empt the town’s authority and responsibility to ensure the safety of its residents and protection of its environment. The hearing on this application has been postponed to March 18 at 7pm. All who can attend should demand denial of this application. Our town code is designed to gradually effect a reduction in the number of pre-existing non-conforming uses, not make them larger and more



hazardous.

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Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation Coalition