

Town moves to discourage dump plan

Louis: I won't make landfill my legacy

By Antonio D'Arcangelis

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In response to a private mailing by South Park Enterprises, sent to all New Baltimore town residents proposing a landfill on property east of Route 9W, the town board has passed resolutions that reiterated an existing ban on landfills,

The board also sent a copy of the resolution to the waste management company and all town residents.

After delivering an impassioned reading of the resolution, Town Supervisor Louis made a motion — immediately seconded by new Town Councilman Kevin Kuenster — and asked for a roll call vote on the issue. The resolution was passed unanimously, with almost every board member making additional comments on why the town does not want a dump.

Since almost all of the 40 or so residents were present because they opposed the dump, the regular meeting's public comment period was placed ahead of the committee reports to allow people to speak their minds without staying for the entire meeting.

But after the swift action taken by the board and the comprehensive assault on the pro-

posal, residents simply applauded the board for the resolution reinforcing the ban and thanked board members for protecting the town against unwanted business.

About seven years ago, New Baltimore passed Local Law No. 4 of 1999, known as the "Waste Management Facilities Law," prohibiting the construction or operation of a solid waste management facility in the town. The law also states that the definition of "solid waste management facility" includes, but is not limited to, landfills.

Louis said that in 2002, South Park Enterprises had attempted to site a dump in the town and requested a meeting with the board to discuss the proposal.

"We received correspondence and sent back a letter from the town board in support of the local law banning landfills," said Louis. "They sent another letter directly to the town board in August 2002 asking for a meeting, and the town board unanimously declined the offer to meet."

Louis said his opinions and position supporting the ban have not changed since 2002 and will never change.

"I don't think it is the kind of development we want in the town of New Baltimore," he said.

Louis admitted that some town residents may feel he and other board members are taking a stubborn approach in not meeting with the company, which has offered a yearly \$3 million payment to the town for 20 years for allowing the company to construct the landfill.

"I know it's a lot of money on the table," said Louis. "But I am personally and morally opposed to projects of this nature and I would rather suffer the political consequences of not meeting with the company than destroy my legacy by being the town supervisor who sited a landfill in New Baltimore."

Town Councilwoman Arlene McKeon, who said she was contacted by several town residents over the weekend regarding the South Park Enterprises mailing, reviewed information from the two past years of planning meetings.

She said the survey conducted by the Citizens Planning Advisory Group determined that 87 percent of respondents "stated it was either very important or important for the Town Board to retain current laws banning landfills," language that was added to Monday's resolution.

"The continual message has been to maintain the town's rural character and retain a balance of commerce," said McKeon, adding that that deli-

cate balance would be destroyed by a landfill. "We're excited about other, cleaner businesses, but this is not the type of proposal you want to see."

The resolution also included legislative findings in support of the original adoption of the Waste Management Facilities Law.

"The town's existing community character will be adversely and unalterably impacted by the location and operation of any solid or liquid waste management facilities or waste disposal sites within the town," states the resolution. "Geological science is unable to precisely ascertain the existence and flow of groundwater and map subterranean geology, making it impossible to determine the extent to which solid and liquid waste disposal may or may not be contaminating water."

The resolution also states that waste disposal cannot be measured accurately because of state and federal regulations permitting disposal of residential or small user quantities of hazardous wastes, that future correction of pollution caused by the facilities may be very expensive or impossible to achieve, and that the facilities pose a risk to underground wells, the town's current drinking water source.