

**Meeting, Citizens Working Committee on Hydrofracking (the Committee)
Monday, February 4, 2013, 7:00 PM, Rush Town Pavilion**

Committee Members Present: Carol Barnett, Ted Barnett, Kathy Hankins, Beth Hoak, Jordan Kleiman, Bob Powers, Marianne Rizzo; Town Board Liaison Bill Riepe

Board Members Present:

Town Board: Bill Riepe, Dan Woolaver

Conservation Board: Pat Kraus, Julia Lederman, Sue Woolaver

Planning Board: John Morelli

Zoning Board of Appeals: Bob Weiler

Other Rush Residents Present: Tom DiGiacomo, Teresa Fischetti, John & Jan Funkhauser, Christopher Giordano, Paul & Delphine Hoak, Lou Ingersoll, Al McCombs, Jeanne Morelli, Robert Nesbitt, Al & Louann Owens, Steve Patchen (spelling?), Pete Wierzba. There were many others present (we counted 42), but not everyone signed in.

Mendon Residents Present: Rob Maurer, Joe Rosenshein

The Committee met on 2/4/13 (a frigid night) from 7:00 PM till about 8:30 PM.

The committee members introduced themselves, and Jordan Kleiman delivered a brief introduction to the Report and Recommendations of the Committee, which had been delivered to the Town Board on 1/21/13 and presented with remarks at the Town Board meeting the following Wednesday, 1/23/13. After Dr. Kleiman's remarks, the Committee showed the video of its 10/20/12 field trip to Pennsylvania.

There followed a period of open and vigorous discussion about the video and the issues it raises.

One person asked why the Committee had used a guide for its trip, asking if this may have resulted in a bias in the information brought back. Committee members responded that they had limited time, on a weekend, and needed the help of someone who could, in a brief period of time, show them highlights of the fracking process; that they did speak to other persons in addition to the guide; and that the videorecording, in particular, is by nature unbiased, as the sights and sounds of fracking cannot be (or at any rate have not been) altered.

The same person wondered why, if things are as bad as portrayed, there have not been accounts of widespread damage in Pennsylvania where the activity has been going on for some time. Committee members responded that its research indicated that there is an inherent tendency towards underreporting,

because (1) persons affected by fracking damage have no incentive to report it, as their property values will plummet and (2) their only chance of minimal recompense is to receive water or other services from the gas companies, who will make that help contingent upon a gag order, thus making it possible for the gas company to say "there are no reported instances" of well water contamination, etc.

Another person said that he had heard that several government agencies had declared hydrofracking to be safe. The remark was not supported by a source, and Jordan Kleiman said he had heard of no such news release. Members of the Committee discussed the ways in which statements that hydrofracking is "safe" are deceptive. For example, the industry routinely states that fracking has been done for 60 years. In actuality, high-volume slick water (chemicals added) hydrofracking with horizontal drilling and multi-well pads--the mix of technologies that is commonly referred to as "fracking" today--has been done for under 10 years, making us "guinea pigs" as the harmful effects of this process unfold. Gas and oil industry representatives will state that "hydrofracking is safe," meaning that the narrow process of fracturing the shale layer a mile underground--hydrofracking *per se*--is safe (it was noted that actually it is impossible to monitor whether this is safe), thus excluding the rest of the process of developing shale gas, which carries such risks as air pollution from diesel, surface spills of chemical-laced water, and failure of well casings on the mile-long pipeline to the shale layer. Committee members also noted that the gas and oil industry will state that the dangerous chemicals it uses are "not hazardous," as those chemicals have been excluded from the category of "hazardous" only when used for hydrofracking, because of waivers and exemptions in a number of federal environmental laws. For all of these reasons, it was noted that declarations that hydrofracking is "safe" are highly suspect.

Several persons were dismayed at the prospect that hydrofracking could come to our community and expressed a desire to move away from Rush should that become a real possibility. Most of the participants voiced their concerns about what gas drilling could do to our town, about the risks to our small, rural community, and about the threat to our health, wellness, and sense of well-being.

The meeting ended at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Barnett for the Committee