

For Release to Media
Friday September 14, 2012

PRESS RELEASE

Hull Opposes Gas Stations on Highway 10 East

The Town of Hull Board of Supervisors formally went on record opposing the planned construction of two gas stations on Highway 10 East. The Hull Board directed Chairperson John Holdridge to send certified letters to Mr. Donald Zietlow CEO of Kwik Trip Gas Station and Mr. Fritz Schierl CEO of Team Schierl, requesting they withdraw their proposals for new gas stations along Highway 10 East. Both gas stations function as convenience stores, sell diesel fuel for semi-trucks and operate 24 hours per day. Hull Board action was taken following extensive discussion in executive session Monday evening September 10th. The Hull Board action identified several major factors in their decision:

1. Threat to Hull and Stevens Point Drinking Water. Both gas stations would be constructed in the Stevens Point and the previously designated Portage County Well Head protection areas. Those areas have been identified as water protection zones because contaminated groundwater would impact Stevens Point municipal wells. Town of Hull private wells would also be impacted. In addition to contaminating groundwater there is a threat to sensitive wetlands from leaks and spills at the gas station planned at Badger Avenue and Highway 10 East. In a written report dated August 30th, 2012 directed to the Stevens Point Plan Commission Jeff Schuler Director of the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department presented the following responses to the siting of the two gas stations:

In terms of the Kwik Trip site Mr. Schuler stated “this gas station presents a significant threat to one of the water supply wells for the city of Stevens Point located near the northeast corner of Iverson Park. The proposed gas station is located, according to time and travel calculations, less than 2 years directly up gradient from the municipal well.”

In terms of the Schierl site Mr. Schuler wrote “there is a heightened concern due to the high potential for groundwater contamination from any gas station property. While the proposed gas stations lie near the outer edge of the wellhead protection Zone B (5year time of travel to the city of Stevens Point municipal wells) and thus requires a conditional use to proceed. It also lies immediately up gradient of many private wells in the Town of Hull.” In addition, he continued, “the groundwater in the vicinity of the proposed gas station is less than 10 feet below the surface. In the wetland part of the property the ground surface is below the water table allowing direct contamination of groundwater by surface contamination.” Mr. Schuler concluded by noting “while groundwater flow is generally east to west in the area, flow may be deflected in other directions by shallow bedrock.”

2. Negative Impact on Neighborhoods. There has been no study of traffic impacts by either stations on adjacent neighborhoods. The Kwik Trip station at Old Highway 18 and Highway 10 is likely to increase traffic substantially on Old Highway 18. The intersection of Highway 10 and Old Highway 18, already congested, will become more so. The traffic at Badger Avenue and Highway 10 East is already a problem. The ice arena and soccer fields north of Highway 10 along Badger Avenue sometime generate heavy traffic. As the first gas station drivers encounter entering the Stevens Point urban area from the east, one can expect a considerable increase of traffic on Badger Avenue.
3. Lack of Open Government. Stevens Point leaders have not communicated with their citizens nor with the Town of Hull government or its citizens. The two proposals for gas stations, along with extensive engineering reports, were presented on Friday August 30th during the Labor Day weekend and acted upon by the Stevens Point Plan Commission on Tuesday, September 4th. No adequate analysis or discussion involving Town of Hull citizens or public officials occurred prior to the Plan Commission voting. The Kwik Trip representative was not permitted to take question from the audience. Due to the lack of transparency in the process, it is hard to tell if Wisconsin's Open meeting law has been broken, but we feel the spirit of the law is being sidestepped: The law reads "The State of Wisconsin recognized the importance of having a public informed about governmental affairs. The state's open meetings law declares that in recognition of the fact that a representative government of the American type is dependent upon an informed electorate, it is declared to be the policy of this state that the public is entitled to the fullest and most complete information regarding the affairs of government as is compatible with the conduct of governmental business." (Wisconsin Open Meeting Law – A Compliance Guide Wisconsin Department of Justice August 2012).

The Stevens Point Common Council is scheduled to act on the constructions of the two gas stations at their meeting on Monday September 17th. The meeting will be held in the Portage County Board room, 2nd floor of the County-City Building at 7 p.m. Citizens wishing to attend the meeting should contact John Moe Stevens Point City Clerk or consult the Stevens Point website or the Stevens Point Journal for the exact time of the meeting.

Please contact the Town of Hull at 715-344-8280 or email townofhull@tn.hull.wi.gov for any additional questions, concerns or comments.