

June 2, 2011

Mr. William J. Mueller,
Village President, and
Board of Trustees
Village of Lombard

Subject: PC 11-13; 889 W. St. Charles Road

Dear President and Trustees:

Your Plan Commission transmits for your consideration its recommendation regarding the above-referenced petition. The petitioner requests conditional use approval for a municipal facility (Compressed Natural Gas fueling station) in the CR Conservation Recreation District.

After due notice and as required by law, the Plan Commission conducted a public hearing for this petition on May 16, 2011.

Justin Frederick, Director of Land Management for the DuPage County Forest Preserve, 3S580 Naperville Rd, Wheaton was the first to speak on the petition. He stated that he has two representatives with him to assist on the petition - one from Gas Technology Institute (GTI) and another from Engineering Resource Associates (ERA). Mr. Frederick began by providing a brief overview of the project. He stated that the Forest Preserve District made a commitment to alternative fuel vehicles, which will generate savings and reduce tailpipe emissions. He added that this would not be possible without grants and intergovernmental agreements. He stated that that the Forest Preserve District is requesting the installation of a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station as an addition to their existing fuel station at the Churchill Woods Forest Preserve. He added that the site currently offers propane and E85 ethanol fuel. He then stated that the new CNG fuel station is a small pad site that operates in a similar manner as the existing fuel station. Mr. Frederick stated that they have met with staff. He added that everyone visited the Blackwell Forest Preserve to observe the CNG at that location. Mr. Frederick then turned the discussion over to Tony Lindsay from GTI.

Tony Lindsay, Director of Research and Development for GTI, 1700 S. Mt. Prospect Road, Des Plaines then discussed Compressed Natural Gas. Mr. Lindsay provided a brief background on CNG. He stated that CNG is the same natural gas piped into your home, which is supplied through Nicor Gas. He added that natural gas is methane with a high octane level (130) and makes an excellent fuel

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source. He stated that CNG is non-toxic, not corrosive and doesn't pose a threat to groundwater or soil contamination. He added that it has much lower ozone greenhouse gas emissions than other forms of fuel, such as diesel. He stated that it is distributed throughout the suburbs through an underground piping distribution network. He stated that CNG provides a similar fuel economy as gasoline.

Mr. Lindsay then presented a Power Point presentation on CNG.

Slide #1 provided basic information on natural gas.

Slide #2 described the different vehicles available using natural gas – light, medium and heavy duty. Mr. Lindsay added CNG is a popular fuel for transit and waste hauling.

Slide #3 discussed the benefits and considerations of using CNG. Mr. Lindsay stated that some of the benefits include lower greenhouse gas emissions, lower particulate pollution and lower carcinogens. He added that there is enough natural gas to sustain the U.S. for 200 years. He added that when using CNG, the driving difference has shorter range than gas, but it is comparable in power and speed. He then stated that the U.S. is behind the rest of the world with regard to the number of vehicles using CNG.

Slide #4 discussed the project objectives. Mr. Lindsay stated that \$15 million in 2009 stimulus funding was earmarked for 25 cities selected for funding. He added that this is one of those projects that were funded.

Slide #5 discussed additional project objectives. Mr. Lindsay stated that one objective is to increase the number of alternative fuel vehicles and hybrids, which would include 260 gasoline hybrids, 230 CNG vehicles and 10 heavy duty diesel hybrids. He stated that another objective would be to develop fueling and charging infrastructure to support growth of alternative fuel. He then discussed the combined benefits of the project and used data, relative to the emissions displacement, to discuss the environmental benefits.

Slide #6 outlined the Project Partners with included the City of Chicago taking the lead, as well as the 16 projects. He added that GTI will be providing the infrastructure.

Mr. Frederick spoke again about the overall benefits of the project. He added that this project will help them meet their infrastructure needs for potential intergovernmental agreements to provide a fuel that only costs \$1.40 per gallon. He added that this project will be a cost savings that will also improve air quality.

One stipulation of the report that he addressed condition #3 regarding the sign to be installed near this location. He stated that he does not have the authority (at this point) to authorize the approval of the Village sign. He then mentioned that he will be taking the sign issue to the Forest Preserve Board tomorrow morning (5/17/2011) where he will get direction to see where to take it from there.

Chairperson Ryan asked if anyone was present to speak in favor or against the petition.

Karen Oldfield, 1050 Crescent Blvd., Glen Ellyn, stated that she lives on the north side of Crescent Blvd. and her backyard backs up to Churchill Woods. She added that she is the seventh house on right side of Crescent, west of I-355. She stated that her neighbors contacted her about the Forest Preserve project. She stated that the fuel pumps have been there in past and this sounds like a housekeeping issue. She is concerned about opening Pandora's Box to what kind of vehicles will be brought to the site. She mentioned the intergovernmental agreements and then made reference to the City of Wheaton using the pumps. She stated they would be using a small area of a large parcel, but what if they wanted to further expand the use. She referenced the categories of vehicles and was concerned about the industrial-sized vehicles being brought to the site. She then asked about ingress/egress on St. Charles. She asked how many vehicles would be brought to the site. She added that this could be the start of something bigger and wanted something in writing before she could go along with this. She then stated that this could be very industrial in a Forest Preserve area.

Mr. Frederick stated that the Forest Preserve did look at that issue. He added that the Churchill Fleet Maintenance Facility was constructed in the 1960's and has been the repair facility for all that time. He added that 80 percent of the fleet is stored at Blackwell. He stated that 70-75 vehicles come in and out of Churchill right now, which would actually lessen once the fleet building goes away.

Ms. Oldfield rebutted. She asked if Churchill Woods is the only site where the fuel will be offered.

Mr. Frederick stated that Blackwell, Churchill Woods and the Danada headquarters in Wheaton will all have fueling stations. He added they have an agreement with DuPage County and Wheaton and they will use the facilities in a manner that is most effective and efficient.

Ms. Oldfield asked if the Forest Preserve will have to come back to the public for approval.

Chairperson Ryan stated that this petition is just for the Lombard facility. How they deal with the other sites in the future is up to those other cities.

Ms. Oldfield stated that she is concerned about the pumps and how the Forest Preserve all of a sudden needs approval to operate.

Christopher Stilling, Assistant Community Development Director, stated that the existing fueling station has been operating in this capacity since the 1960's when the property was annexed into the Village. As the existing facility did not receive approval in the past the expansion requires conditional use approval. In the future should they want to do anything different they would have to come back to the Plan Commission for an amendment to the conditional use. This petition is for a 468 square foot pad with a filling station.

Chairperson Ryan then requested the staff report.

The subject property is owned and maintained by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and is known as the Churchill Woods Forest Preserve. A portion of the Churchill Woods Forest Preserve is utilized as a fleet maintenance facility. The petitioner plans to modify their vehicle fueling capabilities of the fleet maintenance facility by adding a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station, which will supplement the existing gasoline fueling facility already located on the premises. The Zoning Ordinance classifies 'municipal facilities' as a conditional use in the underlying CR - Conservation Recreation District. The existing facility did not receive approval in the past; therefore, the expansion of the municipal facility requires conditional use approval.

The District received a U.S. Department of Energy grant to initiate a CNG program in the Chicago area. The overall grant recipient was the City of Chicago, but the plan and program is to locate about 12 such facilities, strategically placed through the metropolitan area and the district, which their large fuel size and operations was identified as a key beneficiary of the effort. The initial focus was to place the facilities for the use and benefit of entities with large pools of vehicles.

The Churchill Woods Forest Preserve is located on West St Charles Road, directly west of I-355. A portion of the Churchill Woods Forest Preserve is utilized as a fleet maintenance facility. The fleet currently utilizes a gasoline fuel pump island, which is located in close proximity to the fleet maintenance building. The existing facilities would be considered legal non-conforming and any expansion to the facility would require conditional use approval.

The petitioner is proposing to create a new fueling pad site for compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling directly south of the existing fuel pump island. The proposed fueling station will contain the proper electrical and mechanical components to provide the petitioner the ability to provide natural gas to their vehicles. The actual service pump for the natural gas will be located within seven (7) feet to the north of the existing fuel station to allow for ease of use. The existing fuel station is to remain on the property. The proposed CNG facility will not include an overhead canopy. The facility will operate similarly to a recently constructed CNG facility in the Blackwell Forest Preserve in Warrenville. The Churchill Woods facility is intended to provide a fueling center for vehicles in eastern DuPage County.

The petitioner has indicated that the proposed use will not increase the fleet's size or level of traffic activity to/from the site. The CNG fueling station will only be made available to Forest Preserve District fleet and any other fleets that enter into a use agreement with the district. As of this date, only DuPage County government has entered into such an agreement. The facility will be open for use on a 24/7 basis (as the current fueling center), it will not be open to the public. Access to the facility will remain unchanged. In discussion regarding this matter, the District did note that the existing District fleet garage is slated to be relocated to Warrenville and the existing garage will be razed in the next few years. However, the fueling center would remain.

The fuel pumps and other appurtenances associated with the proposed fueling station will not exceed eight (8) feet in height. The proposed fueling station meets all other requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

The subject property is approximately 56.52 acres. When combined with the surrounding parcels that make up the Churchill Woods Forest Preserve, the total land area is 254 acres. The proposed fueling station is centrally located within the Forest Preserve property and will therefore be screened from surrounding properties by acres of land. The actual pad site, which would contain the fuel pumps and other appurtenances, would be 468 square feet. As the subject parcel of land is 56.52 acres, the amount of land being improved as part of the proposed project would only be 0.0002% of the total parcel. The CNG fueling center would operate no differently than the existing center, so the impacts on adjacent properties would not be significant. Natural gas fuel would be delivered to the site via an existing gas line within the St. Charles road right of way, thereby minimizing truck deliveries of fuel product.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends open space and recreational uses for the subject property. The current open space and recreational use of the property is compatible with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed use would serve as a supplemental function of the current use. As such, staff believes that the proposed use is also compatible with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

As part of past intergovernmental considerations pertaining to the site, the Village has been seeking approval of an agreement to provide for an entryway sign immediately adjacent to the subject property. The proposed location of the signage would not be impacted by the CNG facility. However, in consideration of this request, the Village requests that as a condition of approval, the District make accommodation for the Village entrance sign to be placed on or abutting the subject property. This can be addressed by providing an approximate 5' by 10' area for the sign along St. Charles Road, through an easement or an intergovernmental agreement. The Village would be responsible for providing and installing the sign itself.

Staff believes the standards have been met and therefore staff recommends approval of the conditional use subject to the conditions noted in the staff report.

Chairperson Ryan then opened the meeting for comments among the Commissioners.

Commissioner Sweester referred to condition #3 listed in the staff report. She questioned whether or not the Forest Preserve still needs to gain some approval in order to place the sign on the property.

Mr. Stilling stated that the Forest District Board meets tomorrow. He stated that by the time the petition goes to the Board of Trustees, they could ask for the condition to be removed or if they agree, then it's a non-issue (if the condition were to remain). If not, they might have to come back through the process. He added that the petition will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees based on what happens at the Forest District Board tomorrow.

On a motion by Commissioner Sweetser and a second by Commissioner Olbrysh, the Plan Commission voted 5 to 0 that the Village Board approve the petition based on the finding that the petition had met the required Standards as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

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Based on the submitted petition and the testimony presented, the proposal does comply with the standards required by the Lombard Zoning Ordinance; and, therefore, I move that the Plan Commission adopt the findings included within the Inter-departmental Review Report as the findings of the Lombard Plan Commission and recommend to the Corporate Authorities approval of PC 11-13, subject to the following conditions:

1. The petitioner shall develop the space in substantial conformance with the site plan, prepared by Engineering Resource Associates, Inc., dated April 12, 2011
2. As part of the approval, the petitioner shall address the comments included within the IDRC Report.
3. As part of the approval for the facility, the petitioner shall provide the ability for the Village to install a Village entry sign to be located on or abutting the subject property.

Respectfully,

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD

Donald Ryan, Chairperson
Lombard Plan Commission

c. Petitioner
Lombard Plan Commission

