

Ashford submits comments on waste interpretation

December 21, 2018

Max Borsuk

ASHFORD—Nuclear waste at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center in West Valley could see a new pathway for its disposal. The Ashford Town Board, at its Dec. 12 meeting, approved sending comments to the Department of Energy reinterpreting definitions for nuclear waste.

The Department of Energy conducted a public comment period on the interpretation of nuclear waste as set forth in the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. DOE asked for feedback from stakeholders on the definitions of certain types of waste to possibly help with better management and off-site disposal practices.

The WNYNSC has a lot of greater-than-class C waste at the site, Councilman John Pfeffer said. The waste was generated commercially, which means it doesn't meet the current definition and cannot be shipped off-site for disposal.

"The only waste that can be called greater-than-class C waste is generated as defense waste, so our waste is considered as greater-than-class C-like, which means it has nowhere to go and it needs to have a place to go," Pfeffer said. "Redefining waste types by composition rather than origin ... it then can go to places like [the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant] or Waste Control Specialists."

Comments submitted to the DOE state the Town of Ashford believes the WNYNSC site is not an appropriate long-term storage site of nuclear waste. The town is arguing under reinterpretation, waste would not be allowed to be disposed at the WNYNSC, making the site not suitable for its own nuclear waste.

"If we were to say let's reinterpret that waste from [another plant] needed a disposal pathway, West Valley would never be the disposal pathway for that waste," Pfeffer said. "So if it's not appropriate for their greater-than-class C waste, it's not appropriate for the greater-than-class C waste that's sitting here already."

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In other news:

– Councilwoman Jean Bond reported the annual Christmas tree lighting was well attended by the community and thanked the speakers, groups and everyone involved who helped with the event.

– Highway Superintendent Tim Engels said the town's new 550 is being equipped and will be ready for pickup soon.

– Councilman Richard Bernstein reported National Grid is applying for a grant to replace street lights with LEDs, which would save money within the town's light districts.

The Ashford Town Board's year-end meeting for 2018 will be Thursday, Dec. 27 at 7 p.m. The 2019 organizational meeting will be on Wednesday, Jan. 9 at 7:30 p.m., followed by the regular board meeting, at the Ashford Community Center, 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.