

Ashford named involved agency

April 26, 2018

ASHFORD—The Town of Ashford has been approved as an involved agency under the State Environmental Quality Review Act for the Western New York Nuclear Service Center Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

New York State Energy Research and Development Agency West Valley Program Director Paul Bembia made the announcement at the April 18 Ashford Town Board. Being involved as an agency will allow the town to be kept informed of the preparations by NYSERDA during the SEIS process.

Bembia also announced NYSERDA and the Department of Energy are extending the scoping period for the SEIS until May 25. The goal of the scoping process is to get public comments on the proposed scope of the SEIS at the West Valley Nuclear Site. Those interested in providing comments on the scoping can visit seiswestvalleysite.com to see the various ways of commenting.

Councilman William Heim asked about the full cleanup alternative for the site and what it would take to make sure all the waste is safely removed. In order to ensure the waste is removed, Bembia said the site would have to follow standards for the cleanup to allow for unrestricted use of the property, set by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission,

Both Supervisor Charles Davis and Councilman Richard Bernstein expressed that one of their biggest concerns with the nuclear site is the low and high level waste and what would happen if a natural disaster happened. Bernstein acknowledged the high level waste is contained securely, but noted the low level waste could cause major problems if an event were to happen.

“We want that stuff out of here because ... if we had a catastrophic event, it could easily go into the creek and that is not what we want,” Davis said.

There are plans for high level waste to leave West Valley, Bembia said, it’s unclear when that will happen, given there is no high level disposal site in the country.

“That material does have a path to go to the high level repository once that high level repository is constructed,” Bembia said. “[The waste] cannot stay permanently at the site. It’s just that it may be stored there for quite some time because there is no repository today.”

After about a year of work, Ashford Planning Board President Andrea Mellon reported Cattaraugus County has approved the town’s master plan. Davis thanked Mellon, the planning board and everyone involved in getting the master plan done so they can continue moving the town forward.

“This normally takes three to five years,” Davis said. “I thank the planning board, the town board ... it’s a work of art what we put together.”

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ashford Community Center, located at 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.