

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING  
FEBRUARY 1, 2016**

**ATTENDANCE:** M. Evette Brantley, Co-Chair; Milta Feliciano, Co-Chair;  
Council President Thomas McCarthy; Jeannette Herron,  
Michelle Lyons (5:52); Aidee Nieves (6:00 p.m.)

**OTHERS:** Council Member Jack O. Banta, Council Member Denese Taylor-  
Moye; Council Member Kathryn Bukovsky, Rev. John Olsen, Council  
Member Anthony Paoletto, Council Member Nessah Smith, Council  
Member Scott Burns.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Member Brantley called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m. A quorum was present.

**Item #46-15 Resolution Concerning Community Environmental Benefits Agreement with PSEG Power Connecticut LLC.**

Rev. Carl McCluster, the Senior pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, at 477 Broad Street in Bridgeport, came forward to address the Committee. He said that the church was located across the street from the PSEG facility.

Rev. McCluster said that there were two different views, the information presented tonight concerns about the environment and the truth. The NRZs and two administrations have been involved with this issue in the past.

He said that there were claims about children being sick in the South End and he has lived in the South End for 22 years and raised his family there. His children are currently in college and pursuing various interests. Rev. McCluster said that only about 2% of the environmental pollution comes from all the power plants combined, but the continual objection is that power plants are killing our children. He went on to say that he wished he would hear someone in Bridgeport state that they cared enough about air pollution from I-95.

In conclusion, Rev. McCluster asked that the Council Members carefully read the agreement between PSEG and the City.

Ms. Beth Lazar of Main Street, Bridgeport, came forward and read the following statement into the record:

I'm against coal and natural gas plants because they contribute to global warming, are dirty, dangerous and even deadly. I'm against the Community Environmental Benefits Agreement with PSEG plans to operate the Bridgeport Coal Plant until 2021. They plan to build a natural gas

plant now with an opening in 2019 and running indefinitely. This means for a period of two years, (2019-2021) PSEG will have both a coal and a gas plant running in Bridgeport.

There has been a lot of public discussion about the dangers of coal -- how it causes asthma related premature and hospitalization along with global warming due to coal and fine particulate emissions. Natural is just as dangerous to people's health and our climate.

Leaks of methane, the principal component of natural gas is far more potent at heating the atmosphere than carbon dioxide. Leaking gas is also bad for human health. Recently in a town near Los Angeles, California, there was a major gas leak. The whole town had to evacuate. If that happened in Bridgeport, to where would Bridgeport evacuate?

Closer to home, in Middletown, CT a few years ago, five people were killed and at least 12 were injured in a gas explosion at the new, under construction gas power plant. People within a 10 mile radius reported their houses shaking.

Natural gas is obtained through a process called fracking. They drill a deep well and inject millions of gallons of toxic fluid – a mix of water, sand and harsh chemicals at high pressure to fracture rock to extract the natural gas that lies deep underneath. Fracking pollutes the water we drink and the air we breathe.

New York State has a moratorium on fracking. There is a global movement against the use of fossil fuels such as coal and gas in order to stop global warming. PSEG creates electricity using solar power in New Jersey, why not here in Bridgeport instead of coal and gas?

Say no to fossil fuels. Shut down the coal plant now. Block the building of a natural gas plant. Two million dollars is pennies for PSEG and nowhere near the worth of the health and safety of Bridgeport residents.

*Council Member Michelle Lyons joined the meeting at 5:42 p.m.*

Ms. Lela Florel of Chopsey Hill Road came forward to speak about the corporation's need to make a profit. That's what they do and that is why they are in business. The residents simply want to live and breathe without getting sick. She said that the politicians don't care about the environment but the environment is the thing that makes it possible for all life to survive. What is good for the environment is good for all people. The plant polluted the air for decades and the residents now considered normal for children to struggle to breathe, grab an inhaler and visit the hospital. Ms. Florel mentioned a recent major gas leak in California that required the evacuation of an entire town. She said that she hope everyone would think about this.

Mr. J. D. Smith of Chopsey Hill Road came forward and said that he had read the benefits agreement and pointed out that it contains a major injury clause. He said that the corporation would control the terms and mentioned the recent major gas explosion in California. He asked that the vote be delaying until all the parties have been heard. He mentioned some comments of Richard Foley who had studied the item carefully and asked that these be considered also.

Mr. Brendan Williams of Atlantic Street, Bridgeport, came forward and said that he lives across the street from the plant. He said that the green energy agreements shouldn't be taken up by non Bridgeport companies. He said that the work force initiative needs to be from Bridgeport.

Mr. Williams added there should be as much transparency as possible with the Environmental Task Force. There are a number of residents who are paying attention to this issue. There needs to be more transparency in this issue.

Mr. Alex Krespo of Granfield Avenue came forward to address the Committee He said that the title said that this was supposed to be a Community Benefit Agreement, not a PSEG Benefit Agreement. He said that if the agreement had already been signed, there was nothing to be done. He asked how every day residents would participate in the task force. Mr. Krespo also asked how this would benefit the residents. Asthma leads to complications and lung disease.

Generations of residents have grown up with this. The American Lung Association has said that Bridgeport has the most polluted air in the entire state. This needs to be considered.

Mr. Charles Coviello of Waterman Street in Bridgeport came forward and said he was opposed to the plan. He had lived on Gregory Street and often found a thick dark film on his car windows almost every day. The children are dealing with this pollution. He said that 7 million dollars was not enough to deal with the effect on the children. He then yielded his additional time to Mr. Foley.

*Ms. Aidee Nieves joined the meeting at 6:00 p.m.*

Ms. Jaysa Miller of Poplar Street in Bridgeport came forward and spoke about the danger of asthma and how her friend has to deal with asthma. Going to gym class is a problem. Asthma is a problem for the children in Bridgeport. PSEG is part of this problem. She asked the Council Members to put themselves in her shoes before they vote.

Mr. Chris Taylor of Fourth Street in the Upper East End in Bridgeport said that it was February 1st and it was 62 degrees outside. He reminded everyone that that regardless of whether or not the Personal Benefits Agreement was signed or not, PSEG had a statutory right to use the land and would operate. He said that he did not think that 7 million was enough of a benefit to the community and did not support the use of coal or natural gas. He said that the Board of Education should reap some of the benefits for the students who have difficulty breathing. PSEG has the money, but the residents have the community power and there should be some kind of agreement that would benefit everyone.

Council Member Brantley called the next speaker, Mr. Robert Foley. There was no response. She called for him two more times with no response. Ms. Florel said that she knew what was in the written statement Mr. Foley would have read. Council Member Brantley said that she would call the next speaker and come back to Mr. Foley if time permitted.

Mr. Jarvis Ruther of Deacon St. came forward to address the Committee. He said that he was speaking on behalf of the young people of the State. He said that The American Lung Association had announced that Fairfield County was the most polluted county in the State. Mr.

Rucker said that a 10 year old girl in Bridgeport had died quite suddenly of asthma. He added that President Obama had stated that he intended to work on an initiative about this issue. Bridgeport should be investing their resources into renewable energy. He asked why a natural disaster must occur before the laws are changed. Switching to natural gas is not an option. We must stop using fossil fuel.

Ms. Joyce Acebo Raguskus of Eastern Parkway, Bridgeport thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak about this issue. She said that she would like to echo everything Ms. Lazar already said. She did not support this item Ms. Acebo Raguskus referred to an article published in Scientific American that addressed the Co2 issue. The plant is the last of the coal burning dinosaurs and natural gas has methane is much more potent. PSEG had announced that their solar plant in New Jersey had made a major difference in the pollution levels. She wondered why it was not being done in Bridgeport. She asked the chairman to consider alternatives that helped people stay healthy.

Mr. Jorge Cruz came forward to speak about the coal plant. He said that a number of community members have he would be as respectful as possible. He spoke about how his mother's anniversary was celebrated by taking a photo of the family at her grave. He said that he would not want to see anyone else suffer like his mother and his brother did. He asked PSEG to just make Bridgeport more livable. 7 million dollars will not bring his mother back.

Elder Gloria Brown came forward and said that she had done her own research on this. She suggested that this item be tabled to give the community a chance to come together about this. 15 people died in California gas leak. The residents need to come together to talk about this and consider what it is doing with global warming. People went down to New Jersey and Mr. Rizio sent his representative to the site rather than coming himself. She said that they should come and listen to what the community has to say. The community needs to come together and stop this because it is a disaster for everyone.

Mr. David Rafael Hermoso of Ellsworth Street said that he was speaking as a resident of Bridgeport and an employee of a renewable solar power company. There are people who have numerous generations living here in Bridgeport. The people of the community, particularly, the South Side, will feel the affect the PSEG plant. The agreement is actually going to gag the City about this issue. The City should hold PSEG accountable and transparent on the environmental issues. There is a concerned community and 15% of the students have asthma or other related lung issues from the air pollution. He asked how the 2 million for the community fund and 5 million for the [inaudible] would be delegated properly and would benefit the residents.

Ms. Diane Black of Brooks Street came forward and said that this issue should be voted down. The devil is in the details and in the past this has been disastrous. She said that there should be special provisions in the contract for women, minorities and others. She said that there were environmental activists that had strong objections to this project.

Ms. Mary Ann Provey of Flanders Street came forward and said that Connecticut has a poor record on issues like this. The plant is located one mile from Roosevelt School. The residents don't want it. Please listen to the people. We want a plant that produces clean energy. The

Middletown explosion in 2010 injured over 50 people. The community does not want this for its people.

Mr. Ben Martin of Ward Street came forward to speak about 350 Connecticut that is trying to stop the use fossil fuels in Connecticut. He said that most of the comments have already been made. If the citizens of Bridgeport don't want this project, then they shouldn't approve it. If this agreement is really supposed to be for the community, the community says no. The community has clearly indicated they don't want this. The future will be in renewable energy and will not have dirty air. Let's enact something where the people get their own energy from their own homes. Listen to the community

Ms. Florel came forward to speak of Mr. Foley's comments. Council Member Brantley said that unless Ms. Florel had a written copy of Mr. Foley's statements, she could not speak in his place.

*Council Member Brantley closed the public hearing at 6:24 p.m.*

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services