

Franklin, PA News Herald, March 29, 2007

Zoning appeal hearing for asphalt plant in Barkeyville set April 11

Construction continues at the site of a proposed 25-plus-acre asphalt plant in Barkeyville, but a zoning appeal hearing has been set to determine whether the plant is a legal addition to the borough.

The hearing will take place at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 11, at the Barkeyville Borough Municipal Building.

Glenn O. Hawbaker, Inc., a State College-based firm, was granted a zoning permit to locate the \$4.8 to \$5 million facility in the Barkeyville Borough Industrial Park in December by former borough zoning officer Gary Dovey.

A group of citizens has protested the zoning permit, arguing that the document is illegal and the coal-burning facility does not belong in the borough.

A petition for a restraining order to stop construction until a zoning appeal hearing is carried

out is circulating through the Venango County Court system.

A court hearing was held Friday, March 16, in Venango County Court, where visiting Judge William Morgan, president judge, 37th district, Warren County, granted a 15-day continuance for further briefs to be filed. Morgan said construction could continue until he rules on the case.

Meanwhile, a zoning appeal hearing has been set, and it is unclear whether the ruling to stay construction will be granted before the appeal hearing takes place.

The opposition group has said the plant is in violation of the borough zoning ordinance, which forbids any industry that emits noxious odors or pollutants.

The Oil Region Alliance of Business Industry and Tourism owns the industrial park, and has maintained that the plant is a good

fit for the Barkeyville community and will bring much-needed jobs to the area.

ORA president Randy Seitz has also argued that the opposition group has painted the region in a negative light that could scare off future investors.

Third generation owner Mike Hawbaker has defended his company at a borough council meeting and a Department of Environmental Protection public input hearing.

Hawbaker said he has worked in and around the plants since age 12 with no worries. He also said the Hawbaker company is interested in investing into the communities where it locates, not polluting them and leaving.

The plant cannot open for business without a DEP air quality permit. The public input period for the air quality permit elapsed March 23.