

BROOKHAVEN

Town postpones vote on 2nd plant

BY CARL MACGOWAN

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The Brookhaven Town Board will wait at least two weeks before voting on a plan for a 600-megawatt gas-fired power plant in Yaphank that opponents say may not be required to meet Long Island's energy needs.

Supervisor Edward P. Romaine said Tuesday during a 2½-hour public hearing at Brookhaven Town Hall that town attorneys will compile a "findings" report on issues related to the proposal before the town board votes.

He did not say when the board will vote on the project. Town officials will accept written comments about the plan for 15 days, Romaine said.

Caithness Long Island, which built a 350-megawatt plant near Zorn Boulevard in Yaphank in 2009, wants to build a second plant on the same property.



Artist's rendering of proposed Caithness II gas-fired power plant.

Caithness officials cited state and federal studies showing a need for new, energy-efficient power plants to replace aging facilities on Long Island and upstate New York.

Caithness president Ross Ain said the proposed plant, to be called Caithness II, would produce \$75 million in savings for Long Island Power Authority

ratepayers and would serve as a backup for solar and wind energy facilities.

"We need to have more flexible fossil-fuel plants," he said at the hearing. "This plant will be a critical element in LIPA's toolbox."

Questioned by Romaine, Ain acknowledged that LIPA officials are not seeking bids for

new power plants. Ain said Caithness II would sell power to the New York Independent System Operator, or ISO, which manages the state's wholesale energy markets.

Most speakers at the hearing questioned the need for the new plant and said they worried about its impact on air and groundwater quality.

"If we continue to ignore the environment we live in, we will not have an island," said Jeff Kagan of the Affiliated Brookhaven Civic Organization.

The town board in 2014 had approved a special permit for a previous proposal for a 750-megawatt Caithness II plant in Yaphank. That plant was never built because PSEG Long Island, which manages the energy grid for LIPA, said it was not needed.

However, Caithness is asking Brookhaven to modify the 2014 permit to allow use of new tech-

nology that the company said would make the new plant smaller and more efficient.

Caithness II received support from some residents and officials of the Longwood board of education and Gordon Heights Fire Department, who said the community would benefit from payments in lieu of taxes generated by the plant. Ain said those payments would be "north of \$10 million a year."

Coram Civic Association vice president Christopher Reilly said the plant was "an absolute necessity," citing the potential for lower energy bills. His comment was applauded by dozens of people in the audience.

Romaine acknowledged that Caithness could build the new plant based on the permit approved four years ago.

"Caithness has the authority to build Caithness II," Romaine said. "They could build the plant now — right now."



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Cathy B. • Bus • Looking out for NYC.



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Rolf G. • Long Island Rail Road • Looking out for NYC.

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