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# Natrona County OK on recycling facility angers Mills officials

August 03, 2012 6:00 am • By [JEREMY FUGLEBERG](#) Star-Tribune business editor (8) Comments

Mills officials aren't happy about Natrona County's decision to initially approve plans for a drilling-mud recycling facility just outside the town's borders.

On Tuesday, Mills Mayor Elsie Herbolt sent a letter to the county commissioners asking them to reconsider their June approval of a conditional use permit and zoning change for Anchor Environmental — AAA Services Inc. at a Hanly Acres site.

In the letter, Herbolt provided a number of reasons why the commission should take a second look.

Herbolt and Town Council members doubt the project's technology; are concerned about road use, noxious smells and knowledge of dangerous chemicals; and are worried about the disposal of abandoned trailers and junk on the property.

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town expects to expand at some point, and asked for better communication in the future.

"They need to let people know what they're planning to do beforehand," she said. "Hopefully this will open their eyes and they'll do a better job."

Ed Opella, chairman of the Natrona County Commission, noted the commission did put up signs and provide legal notice, but isn't required to notify Mills since the decision concerned a location in the county, not the town.

The county's conditional use permit is just that — conditional — and tied to the company's success at obtaining a permit for its recycling facility from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality's Solid and Hazardous Waste Division, he said.

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Still, Opella said, he'll be happy to bring up the decision before the commission — probably during its work session next week — to see if anybody wants to reconsider it.

"I can bring it up for reconsideration at our next commission meeting, but I don't think it's going to change anything because a lot is predicated on what the DEQ is going to say," he said.

At a June 5 meeting, the commission approved the zoning change and conditional use permit for the recycling facility project, overriding the recommendation of the county Planning and Zoning Commission. Anchor Environmental wants to build a facility to process oil-soaked mud previously used by operators in drilling oil and natural gas wells.

The facility would remove water and impurities from the mud, separating useful remains for operators and preparing the rest to go to the landfill. Anchor had previously stressed odor concerns would be dealt with by using an indoor process.

Jim Skovgard is the owner of Anchor Environmental. He said on Thursday he hadn't heard Mills officials' concerns before, even at a public meeting in the town, and was "completely surprised" by the letter.

He and his neighbors are working on a road improvement district to maintain the dirt roads around them, he said. He also said many of the town's other concerns would be best addressed during the public comment period of the state environmental permit process.

"The county has certainly made its position clear and if the town of Mills would want to work some assurances into the permit process, they should come forward during the permit process with DEQ," he said.

Herbert, Mills' mayor, said she was pleased Opella would bring up the project before the commission for consideration. She and the Town Council will provide comment to the DEQ as well, she said.

"We're going to send them a copy of what we sent the county, the same letter," she said.

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