

Eversource pulls back on gas gate project in Hopkinton

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HOPKINTON — Faced with strong opposition from neighbors and town officials, Eversource has decided not to build a gas gate station on Elm Street.

Neighbors claim the station, which would allow the utility to tap into a nearby high-pressure gas line, would have been a “nightmare” of noise and noxious odors. Selectmen also vowed to fight the project if the company brought the plan before the state Department of Department of Public Utilities.

“During the process, we were made aware of the community’s concerns by residents and local officials, including the office of state Rep. Carolyn Dykema,” wrote JoAnne O’Leary, community relations specialist, in a Feb. 23 letter to the town.

Eversource officials said the station is needed to meet a growing demand for natural gas in Hopkinton and the region. The gas gate station would have allowed the company to tie into the

Tennessee Gas high-pressure gas line.

The infrastructure is still needed and the company will seek short-term solutions, O'Leary wrote.

"Eversource will continue to balance the needs of our customers with the interests of the town and its neighborhoods," O'Leary wrote. "The siting of energy infrastructure is a challenging undertaking given the limit on available land in our region and the need for more electricity and gas to meet residential and business energy and heating needs."

Neighbors spoke out against the station because it will be in the middle of a residential neighborhood, condominium complex, Elmwood Elementary School and a daycare center.

Selectmen Chairman John Coutinho said the decision shows the power the public has by sticking together.

"All the people who wrote in and came to the meetings to speak with us, it worked," he said. "This is where the community activism really worked."

Coutinho hopes the company will come to the town before proposing any other major projects.

"We hope in the future Eversource knows that when we speak we mean business," he said.

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