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Jefferson residents hear about proposed Dominion station**Natural gas facility would look like a medium-sized barn and office**

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Residents of Jefferson intend to form a committee and study a proposal to locate natural gas compressor station in the town.

Jennifer Booth, who lives in Copperfield, near where Dominion is looking to locate the station, said about 200 people turned out Wednesday night for an open house about the proposal.

"It was an excellent turnout considering the short notice," Booth said.

She learned about the meeting because it was scheduled at Valley Elementary School, but she's critical that more notice wasn't provided.

"Dominion didn't notify the residents," she said. "I took it upon myself to tell as many people as I could, did some fliers and a lot of it was word of mouth."

Dominion, a Virginia-based firm, said it needs a compressor station in the area to pump natural gas from storage facilities in Pennsylvania to Virginia.

The company initially looked at a site outside of Middletown, where it ran into intense opposition based on the station's impact on nearby South Mountain Battlefield, noise and air pollution, and fears of more industrial development at the site. That plant was estimated to cost \$55 million.

Middletown residents formed a committee to study the proposal, which Jefferson residents may also do. The Middletown group won support of the county commissioners who opposed that site. U.S. Rep. Roscoe Bartlett's office sent a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission asking that an intense study be done of the site and all input be considered. FERC will make the final decision on where the station will be located.

Robert Fulton, Dominion's manager of media and community relations, said the company is still looking at the Middletown site, as well as the one in Jefferson. Dominion already has a natural gas measuring and regulating station at the intersection of Md. 180 and Md. 340.

"We have an option on the land adjacent to the Jefferson location that would be needed to put the compressor station," Fulton said.

He said the station would look like "a medium-sized barn and an office."

Fulton said Dominion is continuing to look at alternative sites.

"It wouldn't be appropriate to talk about those now," he said. "We're still talking with the land owners. Some of those may not be in Frederick County."

Thursday's open house was not designed as an on-the-record meeting to glean official input from residents, but they did have a chance to see the plans and talk to representatives of Dominion and FERC.

"Certainly people expressed concern, I expected that," Fulton said. "But you need to have a dialogue and people can understand (the proposal)."

Booth said residents she has spoken with worry about the impact of the station on the community, their property values, the resulting noise and air pollution, and affect on working farms near the site and wetlands.

"It also could set the stage for more industrial development," she said.

"The county commissioners have voted to help protect agricultural land and Dominion is in direct opposition of that if they build on ag land," Booth said.

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She anticipates future meetings on the proposal, but at this point has no definite dates.

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