

Rhonda

Remarks to New London/Springfield Water Precinct

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

My name is Cotton Cleveland, 159 Birch Acres, New London. My husband John Garvey and I are town people paying for water coming from the NL Springfield Water Precinct. Additionally, I am President/Chief Administrator for The Cleveland Company, Inc. which owns the 20 acres comprising the land called "Colby Point" at 195 Main Street, Springfield. The current owners are myself, my mother Hilary Cleveland and my 3 siblings, David Cleveland, Lincoln Cleveland and Susan Cleveland-Knowles.

To the NL Water Precinct Commissioners: Thank you for inviting me here to learn more about this important subject and to make a few remarks today

I would like to address the three topics of Leadership, Wells at Colby Point and Water Conservation.

Wells at Colby Point: Regarding The Cleveland Company, I am obligated to check with the owners on any policy matters, such as new wells on Colby Point. We have not been approached by the Water Precinct regarding this option. However, given that our parents Jim and Hilary Cleveland gladly participated in helping to fulfill a great community need in the 1960's by agreeing to having 6 wells drilled on their special land; AND, if there is an urgent and compelling need for water, I am sure that the family would give this question thoughtful consideration.

The original wells were installed in such a way as to minimally disturb the fragile land on Colby Point. In fact, when you walk on the Point, it is difficult to see where the well caps and electric charging tubes have been placed. If The Cleveland company were

seriously approached with a request for more wells, we would need assurances that modern well digging would have the least possible impact on the landscape and we would want to consult with the Society for the Protection of NH Forests which holds the conservation easement on this property.

Water Conservation/Clean Water: The family feels strongly that the Precinct, the Town and all citizens should be practicing rigorous water conservation. If asked to support a new well or wells under Colby Point, we would need detailed agreed-upon assurances that the Precinct, the Towns of New London and Springfield, the Dept of Environmental Services and all businesses and residences are committed to practicing water conservation going forward. This would include agreements with Twin Pines, New London Place and any other new construction plans going forward.

It would start with the Precinct measuring the amount of water each customer uses, providing a range of water use that is acceptable for each category of customers, and developing incentives or payment consequences if water used was in excess. It would require the towns to adopt rules for when gardens can be watered; and encourage the use of recycled/gray water for watering lawns and gardens. The State and towns and precinct could offer incentives for installing low flush toilets and other “water guzzlers”.

Additionally, the Precinct would need to develop transparent standards for how/when new housing is allowed to go onto Precinct water. Lastly, the DES and appropriate parties would remediate the current contamination of water near the Cleaners so that people who are not able to access Precinct water can drill wells and access clean water, alleviating demand for the Precinct water.

Leadership: With my citizen hat, no longer my Cleveland Company hat, I urge the leadership in this room and beyond to take a proactive approach to solving our current and future water needs, as well as our workforce housing needs. A strong, enlightened leadership position from the Precinct, the Towns, the State and all our businesses and citizens would look at the combined goals of water usage, water conservation and workforce housing to move forward together.

In addition to forest and land conservation, water conservation and cleaning up contaminated lakes, ponds and rivers, one of my father's Jim Cleveland's strongest local interests was in developing workforce housing and lower economic housing. He fought hard to get Bittersweet built for the benefit of economically challenged elders. Towards the end of his life, he planned a manufactured housing development in New London so that young policemen and women, fire fighters, teachers, EMTs, nurses, and others could afford to live in this town. He died too soon to see his vision come true. I'd like to think that the Twin Pines project would meet his approval and that he would want the Precinct to approve water for this important addition to New London. I know that he would applaud water conservation efforts, given the current and future needs of the community.

I know from family experience that change is not always easy. There were good people in our town that strongly resisted the building of Bittersweet. And there were good people who strongly resisted the wells on Colby Point. But both projects made New London better today than it was back then. We need to move forward to make New London better tomorrow than it is today.

Thank you for letting me speak. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.