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Oil and gas company to return to Shelby site

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SHELBY TOWNSHIP — West Bay Exploration Co. plans to pick up this week where it left off last August at a well site located near 26 Mile and Dequindre roads.

The next step, as of last week, was to bring in a truck-mounted completion rig to test the site for oil.

“We’re disappointed that West Bay chose not to meet with the Township Board and inform the residents of the

community of what’s going on there,” said Township Attorney Rob Huth. “Their decision to meet with a few residents and concerned neighbors is not nearly what we expected from West Bay.”

He said the township asked a number of times for the oil and gas company to meet with the Board of Trustees and that the company had not been forthcoming in communicating its plans for the site.

“We felt that the most effective

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Oil

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way of communicating our plan was through a smaller group than a Township Board meeting," said West Bay Vice President Patrick Gibson.

"We're going to be positive and hope that, after this completion process is done, moving forward, our relationship will improve," Huth said. "I'm just hopeful that the well ends up being not commercially viable and thankful that world oil prices are low."

Gibson said the completion process and testing of the well would take two to three weeks. He could not specify an exact start date, but said he expects operations to begin this week.

Gibson said the rig to test the well would only run during daylight hours while crews were at the well, and it would pull fluid out of the well to see whether it contains oil or just the brine water used to flush out the well.

"We met with various parties in the community about how best we could operate the well with a minimal amount of impact," he said. "The other likely scenario would be that the well may not have oil in it. If that's the case, at

the end of the two to three weeks, we'll use cement to plug it and restore the location to how it looked before we got there."

Gibson said he was aware that residents are not pleased with West Bay's presence so near a subdivision in a residentially zoned area, but that all the company's activity was legal as regulated by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

"We provided additional information that Mr. Huth required for the township, in particular the fire chief. We're keeping them apprised of all of our plans and giving them information about what exactly is going on," he said.

Dave Sutton, who lives about 2,000 feet from the well and is a

member of the grass-roots group Citizens Against Residential Drilling, said he set up the informal March meeting that West Bay attended with about a dozen concerned neighbors at a nearby restaurant, Steiny's Tavern.

"They did not dazzle us with their science, and we did not help them find morality in their business practices," he said. "They were just there to sell, I think. They did very little listening, and in the end, we agreed to disagree. Basically, we're at war with these guys."

Sutton said the residents in the area of 25 Mile and Dequindre

roads plan to exercise their freedom of speech and let West Bay and everyone else know their displeasure.

"What they're doing is legal, but it's just wrong, and we're not going to sit back on our patios and have a barbecue and talk about, 'Woe is us,'" he said. "We will be visible. We will be loud. We will call attention to the fact that this is continuing to happen."

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