

SHELBY TOWNSHIP PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Shelby Township Supervisor Rick Stathakis Phone: (586) 731-5154
Email: rstathakis@shelbytwp.org Website: www.shelbytwp.org

March 18, 2015

Shelby Township Board takes step to amend zoning ordinances for oil operations

The Shelby Township Board of Trustees voted unanimously to approve, introduce and publish an amendment to the township's zoning ordinances to include multiple changes regulating oil and gas drilling and processing at its March 17 meeting.

The township's zoning ordinances currently lack standards for the location and operation of gas and oil processing facilities. The newly proposed standards assure that activities that state law permits the township to regulate are located in appropriate zoning districts and operated based on an accepted standard to alleviate the potential for nuisances to any adjoining residential neighborhoods.

"All we are looking for, as a unit of local government, is some oversight to ensure the health, safety and peace of mind of our residents," Township Supervisor Rick Stathakis said. "I would like to thank Township Attorney Rob Huth and his team for crafting these amendments to give the Board the tools necessary to protect our township."

The amendments were brought to the board after the Planning Commission held a public hearing Feb. 23.

"The proposed changes are consistent with state law and in our opinion are enforceable regarding these types of activities within our community," Huth said.

The changes also introduce oil and gas wells as a special land use in both industrial research and manufacturing districts, new standards for the handling of toxic chemical substances and adding clarifying language regarding what qualifies as an essential service within the township.

"As this goes forward, the pollution and strain that many were going through was primarily relating to the drilling activity that took place for some 28 days," Huth said of the oil operation near 25 Mile and Dequindre roads that spurred the amendments. "What we are now acting on tonight is the activities that would occur afterwards on the chance that oil is found at the site.

"We've been told unofficially that there is an 80 percent chance that there is no oil there, but this gives our community the opportunity to regulate the activities surrounding that operation should the horrible event occur that they find oil there."

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