

PORTAGE DAILY REGISTER



Columbia County's Daily Newspaper

Tuesday October 3, 2006

- Home ▶
- Local News ▶
- Sports ▶
- Opinion ▶
- Speak Up ▶
- Obituaries ▶
- Classifieds ▶
- About Us ▶
- Calendar ▶
- Archives ▶
- Subscriber Services ▶
- Your Home ▶

Local News ▼

Cambria continues ethanol discussions

By Ann Marie Ames, Daily Register

CAMBRIA — Production of ethanol already is prohibited in the village, but that didn't stop more than a hundred residents from signing a petition that would further tighten restrictions.

The Cambria Village Board voted 6-1 Monday night to allow special counsel Richard Lehmann to craft a new ordinance banning chemicals or materials used in the production of ethanol from being stored in the village.

The suggested wording for the ordinance was given to the board in the form of a petition signed by 125 village residents, said Cambria resident Dallas Buchholz. The petition was a reaction to a proposal by Didion Milling to construct a 40 million gallon ethanol plant in the town of Courtland. The proposed facility would be across the road from Didion's current grain storage facility, which is on Cabbage Road inside the village limits. The ethanol plant had been proposed within village lines in 2003, but was shot down by a referendum.

Trustee Tim Perry voted against the motion.

"We are just giving a suggestion," Buchholz said. "It really needs to be run by an attorney to have them work on an ordinance or the revision of the ordinance."

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The intent is not to restrict the operation of Didion's current facility, Buchholz said, but to send a message to the company that ethanol is not welcome anywhere near Cambria.

"We don't want to discriminate against (Didion's) current operation," Buchholz said. "We just want to tell them, 'No. We really want you to understand that we are serious about the safety of our village. We are serious about the statement that we have made that we do not want an ethanol plant here.'"

Didion Vice President of Operations Dale Drachenberg said his company will continue to

work with the village to make the project palatable.

"We want to work with the village in any way that we can to make the expansion positive for them," Drachenberg said. "That's been our stance, and that's what we will continue to strive for."

The fate of the proposed plant could come as early as this afternoon. The Columbia County

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Planning and Zoning Committee will again take up Didion's petition for a conditional use permit for the plant's operation at 4 p.m. in the Community Room of the Columbia County Law Enforcement Center, 711, E. Cook St.

In September, the committee tabled the petition following a public hearing, when the group said it needed time to review new information about the plant. At the September hearing, many area residents told the committee that the proposed 10-acre site is not appropriate for ethanol production, while many corn producers said the plant is needed to stimulate the local grain market.

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