

# PORTAGE DAILY REGISTER

Columbia County's Daily Newspaper Thursday, October 26, 2006

## weather



High: 49°F  
Low: 35°F  
Chance Rain  
20%

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### The pressure is on for Cambria village officials

By Ann Marie Ames, Daily Register

CAMBRIA — Village Hall was a pressure cooker Wednesday night, and cabbage was the entree.

The Village Board had called a special meeting to discuss a form to be used in the regulation of weight limits on Cabbage Road. But after a heated discussion between two trustees and angry interjections from residents in attendance, the board adjourned, tabling the item and citing a need to study newly received materials regarding Cabbage Road. The road divides the village of Cambria from the town of Courtland, and a portion of it runs along Didion Milling's grain storage facility. The road also allows access to the construction site of Didion's proposed ethanol plant that has been both hotly contested and supported by area residents and farmers.

"My point is that if they (the town of Courtland) are certain that we don't own the road, what are we doing here?" said Trustee Jim Pharo. "I think it's between us and Courtland. I can't vote for something that might not be worth the paper it's printed on."

Board President Gary Nehring said he plans to talk to leaders in the town of Courtland about their opinions on the regulatory rights of the contested road. The board will take up discussion of regulating the road at its next meeting on Nov. 6.

Trustee John Domino agreed that the item should be tabled, but argued that until the matter of right-of-way can be determined, construction of the ethanol plant should halt.

"The issue I have now is that I don't think they have all of the necessary permits. They've applied for more permits," said Domino, referring to an upcoming Nov. 7 Columbia County Planning and Zoning Committee public hearing. A conditional use permit Didion has applied for in order to move earth in a shoreland area will



Ann Marie Ames / Daily Register

Cambria residents packed into a tiny board room Wednesday night to hear the board discuss regulation of Cabbage Road, which allows access to the proposed Didion Milling Ethanol plant. Here Dale Drachenberg, standing, explains a map to Village President Gary Nehring.

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be up for consideration at the hearing. "They've started construction, and we're still not settled on the easement issue. They've waited two years. What's three more weeks?"

Trustee Tim Perry disagreed that construction should be halted and accused Domino of being against the plant since the start of the application process.

"There's no need for that," Perry said. "You want to keep fighting this and spending money. The village has changed. We've already wasted a lot of money with (Special Counsel) Lehmann. Why keep wasting, fighting? Why not negotiate and moved forward?"

The section of Cabbage Road that has been contested in the first third of a mile that runs east from Highway 146 along the 25-acre Didion property that the village annexed from Courtland in 1991. According to town of Courtland Chairman Glenn Smits, the town built the road in 1917. He agrees that regulatory rights to the road are unclear.

"When the village annexed that land, it's never been very clear if they annexed part of that road, or didn't," Smits said in a telephone interview following the meeting. "In the past we've taken care of the road, plowed snow and things. Maybe the last couple years they have. But that road was never clear. We have documents to show that the town laid it out in 1917, and there's really nothing to show that it's changed."

The village has Wisconsin Department of Transportation documents and maps that it says suggest the village has right-of-way. One of the documents received by board members prior to the meeting was a letter from Village Attorney Vytas Salna stating that the contested portion of the road was annexed by the village.

Many of the village residents that packed into the tiny board room expressed frustration with the board's decision to table discussion of the form.

"You have a letter here that says we own it," said Bonnie Smith. "What's the problem?"

Aside from the potential to lose heavy equipment access to the construction site, should the village eventually enforce weight limits, Didion faces opposition from a grassroots organization. Wednesday, Cambrians for Thoughtful Development filed an appeal of the conditional use permit to operate the facility that Columbia County granted Didion on Oct. 3. The five-member Board of Appeals will review the complaint. The board could uphold the Planning and Zoning Committee's decision, overturn it or modify it.

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