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Opposition to energy plant grows

Citizen group against Plainfield proposal

By DON BOND
Norwich Bulletin

PLAINFIELD — The Economic Development Commission is all but guaranteed a full house when it hears a burning energy plant at its Feb. 2 meeting.

Opposition to the proposed plant surfaced this week when two leaders of groups that opposed Trumbull de Arganese's auto racetrack came out against the energy plant.

ADVERTISEMENT Plainfield Renewable Energy LLC, a joint venture between NuPower LLC of Norwalk and Decker Energy International Inc., last week announced plans to build a 30 megawatt w off Mill Brook Road, the new town road leading to the Lowe's distribution center.

David Ertsgard, president of Concerned Citizens for the Quiet Corner, said Wednesday the Mill Brook Road plant is only six-tenths of a mile from the town's Early Childhood Learning Center and is about three-tenths McDonald's at Route 12 and Lathrop Road.

"The location will be detrimental because of its proximity to residences, schools and the town itself," Ertsga

"The plant is entirely against the town's Plan of Conservation and Development's objectives of keeping the town and protecting the health and of its citizens."

Of the company's plans to use scrap wood as fuel, he said: "This is construction debris and is loaded with t and mercury are found in paint that is also included in construction debris." Ertsgard said his group plans to meet this weekend to discuss its strategy for the Feb. 2 meeting.

"We plan to ask a lot of the tough questions and demand answers," he said.

Among the concerns his group wants addressed are air emissions, water use, wood storage, traffic, forest loss of local control over the project, Ertsgard said.

He said he's also concerned about any off-site location where grinding and chipping of the wood products i how the truck traffic, which he estimates will be one every 10 minutes, will affect the infrastructure.

Peter Brodeur of Community Avenue will be among those at the meeting, but he's already a supporter of th

"I'd rather see that than a racetrack," Brodeur said. "Power plants have filters to control emissions. There w the plant than there would be from a single auto race."

First Selectman Kevin Cunningham said he's keeping an open mind about the project and is doing consid issue.

"Like any other proposed development, we should ask all the important questions to see if it is right for Plai said.

He said he plans to visit similar plants in Stratton, Maine or Burlington, Vt., this weekend and added, "I'll be questions at the meeting."

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Plant tour touts power's potential in Plainfield

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By DON BOND
Norwich Bulletin

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PLAINFIELD -- First Selectman Kevin Cunningham said Monday his tour of a Maine wood-burning power plant Saturday gave him no strong reason to oppose a similar plant proposed for Plainfield.

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Cunningham, accompanied by Town Planner Louis Soja and Economic Development Director Elizabeth Swenson, visited the Boralex Stratton Energy Plant in Stratton, Maine, where the group received a guided tour of the facilities and plant site.

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They also discussed the impact of the plant on the town with Stratton First Selectman Jay Wyman, whose home is only about a quarter-mile from the plant.

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Plainfield Renewable Energy LLC, a joint venture between NuPower LLC of Norwalk and Florida-based Decker Energy International Inc., recently announced plans to build a 30-megawatt wood-fueled power plant off Mill Brook Road, the new town road leading to the Lowe's distribution center.

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"I do have some concerns, but I'm sure they'll be answered," Cunningham said. "But nothing I saw there struck me as a serious impasse."

He plans to express those concerns at a meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 7 p.m. Thursday, when representatives of the Plainfield Renewable Energy Group will unveil their plans to build the 30-megawatt power plant off Mill Brook Road, the new town road leading to the Lowe's distribution plant.

Dave Ertsgard, president of Concerned Citizens for the Quiet Corner, said he still has concerns about the proposed plant.

"Perhaps Mr. Cunningham's research has not been as extensive as ours," said Ertsgard, who said his group already has about 35 questions it wants answered at Thursday's meeting.

"We've spoken to a lot of people, a lot of groups and have some very specific questions we want to have answered."

Cunningham said the Statton plant is a 45-megawatt facility, but, like the proposed Plainfield facility, uses wood products, including demolition debris, as its fuel source.

Cunningham said the visit to the plant was especially useful because it gave the local contingent an opportunity to view first hand the information he had already obtained from a variety of sites he has checked on the Internet.

He said a sound barrier is used to buffer sound from the plant, and there was no odor problems at the site. "Fifty yards from the plant, you can't hear the hum from the generators," Cunningham said. "To me, the wood being stored

WHAT'S NEXT

- The Plainfield Renewable Energy Group will meet Thursday to present its plans for its proposed plant to the Economic Development Commission at Plainfield Town Hall.

WHERE TO CALL

For more information about a Plainfield, call:

- Plainfield First Selectman Kevin Cunningham

- Plainfield Economic Development Director Elizabeth Swenson, 230-3016.

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for use as fuel smelled a lot like a pile of mulch you'd find at a garden center."

Cunningham said he will question officials of the proposed plant about the steam emissions. "I want to be certain they will be monitored and that they meet state Department of Environmental Protection standards," he said.

Soja said he anticipates the town may have a few issues about the proposed site that will need to be resolved, and said the plant will need some buffering to protect neighboring homes from sound or light problems.

Reach Don Bond at 774-5563 or dbond@norwichbulletin.com

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Both Sides Gird For Plainfield Power-plant Hearing

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By MEGAN BARD
Day Staff Writer, Plainfield/Griswold/Bozrah
Published on 2/1/2006

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Plainfield— Town officials and opponents of a proposed wood-burning power plant have been researching the project, whose developers will conduct a public informational meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday at Town Hall.

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On Saturday, town officials visited a plant similar to the one the Plainfield Renewable Energy Group has proposed for Mill Brook Road on the former Gallup Superfund site near the Providence-Worcester Railroad tracks. First Selectman Kevin Cunningham, Town Planner Lou Soja and Economic Development Director Elizabeth Swenson visited the Boralex Stratton Energy plant in Stratton, Maine, a facility that generates 45 megawatts of electricity.

The proposed Plainfield plant would generate 30 megawatts of electricity that would be sold to the regional power grid.

Cunningham and Soja said the inside of the Maine plant smelled like a giant wood stove. The plant was built in 1989, and is not as technologically advanced as the one being proposed by Plainfield Renewable Energy. Cunningham and Soja said that outside the plant there was some minor noise from the wood chip yard and from the facility's generators. Cunningham said a sound barrier around the Plainfield facility might reduce such noise.

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Cunningham said he intends to visit a plant in East Providence that processes wood construction debris that might be used by the Plainfield facility. He said that based on his visits and other research, he will have several questions ready for the development group at Thursday night's meeting.

- ± Researchers Find Women More At Risk Than Men For Undetected Coronary Disease
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Cunningham said last week that while the project could create jobs, reuse a brownfields contaminated site and generate tax revenue, he cannot yet endorse it.

Cunningham said residents should withhold negative judgments until after the developers have an opportunity to present their case.

In a news release last week, resident David Ertsgard, president of Concerned Citizens for the Quiet Corner, promised that the group would be out in force to oppose the project. The group most recently opposed the creation of an intense commercial zone east of Interstate 395 known as C5, a proposed domed auto racetrack that would be built in that zone and a waste facility proposed by Waste Management on Black Hill Road.

Ertsgard said the group will have questions for the developers Thursday. The group has significant concerns about the proposed plant's proximity to nearby homes, businesses and the Early Childhood Center located more than a half-mile north on Route 12.

Ertsgard said the group has concerns about emissions from the proposed plant's smokestacks, water usage, wood storage and traffic. He also questioned the quality of the construction wood debris that would be burned. He said there could be toxins, including lead, asbestos and mercury, in paint that could be in the debris.

Day Staff Writer Paul Choiniere contributed to this story. ■

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Residents grill official about electrical plant

By DON BOND
Norwich Bulletin

PLAINFIELD -- Bob Gauvin, an electrical construction worker, spoke in favor of a proposed wood-burning energy plant Thursday night at a public forum on the project hosted by the Economic Development Commission.

"We need more energy and this plant will bring good-paying jobs to Plainfield," said Gauvin, whose Colonial Road home is about a mile from the site of the proposed plant on Mill Brook Road.

ADVERTISEMENT "If I'm working, I'll probably buy a new truck, or I might put an addition on my home, either of which will increase the taxes I pay to the town, as well as help the area economy," Gauvin said. "But, if I'm unemployed, I can't afford to spend money for a truck or an addition."

Gauvin was among about 150 people who turned out to hear representatives of the Plainfield Renewable Energy LLC outline plans for the 30-megawatt plant that will burn a combination of green wood and clean construction and demolition wood to produce energy. Plainfield Renewable Energy LLC is a joint venture between Florida-based Decker Energy International, Inc., which runs three other wood-burning power plants in the country, and NuPower LLC of Norwalk.

While Gauvin supported the project, David Campbell, who said he just bought a home close to the site, was concerned about truck traffic and other issues.

He questioned the company's estimates of 50 trucks per day carrying wood to the site, at a pace company officials said represents about one truck every 10 minutes of normal daytime business hours.

"What happens if you need more wood?" Campbell asked.

Michael Whiting, chief executive officer of Decker Energy, said the company would maintain an on-site supply of wood for burning and would have to bring in additional wood on Sundays "only if a major problem, such as a huge snowstorm, delayed the weekday deliveries."

David Ertsgard, president of Concerned Citizens for the Quiet Corner, questioned Whiting and other company officials at length about how the construction and demolition to be burned would be stripped of toxins or other contaminants and about pollutants in the air emissions from the plant.

Whiting said the construction and demolition wood undergo a three-step inspection and cleaning process off site that combines hands-on work and technology. He insisted the plant would use state-of-the-art technology to ensure only clean wood is burned.

"We don't want those toxins," he said. "The burden is on us to meet state health regulations designed to protect the most sensitive people."



Tali Greener/Norwich Bulletin

Richard Gendreau, right, a senior Plainfield resident, shows Plainfield residents a drawing of the energy project Thursday at Plainfield, and Bill Garriepy listen. The property

AT A GLANCE

How it works

- In biomass gasification, woody components in it are released a heat water, creating steam that creating the electrical energy.

What's next

- The developers of the plant before the Connecticut Siting Commission hearings to determine if the plan dates have been set for those hearings

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Ertsgard cited the annual tonnage of some toxic chemicals emitted by a 12-megawatt wood-burner in New Hampshire and attempted to have Whiting discuss the level of toxins the Plainfield plant would emit.

Whiting said the plant will have to meet state Department of Environmental Protection standards, which he said were the nation's most stringent, and said the New Hampshire plant was built about 20 years ago.

Whiting drew a laugh when he responded to Ertsgard's question if the company would agree to purchase a \$1 billion insurance policy to cover any health problems suffered by local residents.

His answer: "No. Not at that amount."

Reach Don Bond at 774-5563 or dbond@norwichbulletin.com

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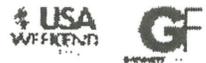
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Plant emissions is top issue for Plainfield

By DON BOND
Norwich Bulletin

PLAINFIELD – Some opponents and town officials say they want specific details of a proposed wood-burning energy plant after Thursday's lengthy public forum on the project.

Plainfield Renewable Energy LLC wants to build the plant on the former Gallup property, which is considered a brownfield site. The land was designated a former Superfund cleanup site after barrels of toxic chemicals were found buried on the property in the 1970s. The land is zoned for projects that include energy plants.

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Plainfield Renewable Energy is a partnership of the Florida-based Decker Energy International Inc. and NuPower LLC of Norwalk.

"I still want more information from them, especially about the emissions of toxins and other materials," First Selectman Kevin Cunningham said Friday. "I plan to ask them to compare the emissions from their plant to others already in existence, such as the Lisbon incinerator and the Exeter Energy tire-burning plant in Sterling."

Cunningham said he also wants more details about the test modeling the company plans to do around Mill Brook Road, where it proposes to build the 30-megawatt plant. The testing will help determine what levels of gases emitted from the plant are rising in the atmosphere and what health risks, if any, they would pose for people living near the plant.

Cunningham said he was pleased Decker Chief Executive Officer Michael Whiting agreed the town be allowed to hire a company to conduct unannounced reviews of the emissions from the plant.

"Providing the town the opportunity to participate in on-site inspections is important," Cunningham said. "It will help to dispel any doubts about how closely the plant is being monitored by the state."

Resident Nick Bolanis said because the state is a proponent of clean energy projects, including wood-burning plants, residents are suspicious about how closely the state would monitor them.

He also asked Whiting if any of his three other plants been fined for emissions violations or other issues.

Whiting said there have been some problems noted, but none serious enough to warrant a fine or fee.

Scott Guilmartin, an employee of NuPower, said the company looked at potential sites in Waterford and elsewhere in the state before selecting Plainfield. He said the proximity to Interstate 395, to rail lines and CL&P power lines all were important factors.

WHAT'S NEXT

- Plainfield Renewable Energy proposed wood-burning energy Siting Council, which will determine in Plainfield. No date has been set.
- Plainfield's Economic Development panel has not discussed the matter. The panel may take a formal vote on what Economic Development Director panel has not discussed the matter something we'll consider."

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Bill Garriepy of Mill Brook Road, whose land abuts the proposed site, said he favors the project. The company either will purchase a small portion of his property or swap a small amount of land in return for acquiring the portion of his property it needs for the project.

"I'm all for the plant," Garriepy said. "The land back there is all wasteland, as far as I'm concerned. Building the project will provide jobs and help with town taxes."

Company officials said the project would provide about 200 construction jobs and at least 25 full-time jobs when the plant opens. It will pay the town about \$500,000 in property taxes, which equals between 65 and 70 percent of one mill on the current tax rate, Board of Finance Chairman Robert Vickers said.

Dave Ertsgard, president of Concerned Citizens for the Quiet Corner, said Friday company officials "danced around" a number of his questions, especially about the levels of toxic chemicals the plant will emit.

He said opponents expect to have professional assistance to present their case against the plant when the proposal goes before the Connecticut Siting Council.

Reach Don Bond at 774-5563 or dbond@norwichbulletin.com

Originally published February 4, 2006

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Power Plant proposal Gets mixed Review in Plainfield Wood-burning Facility Generates pros, Cons Among Local Residents

By **Claire Bessette**

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Published on 2/3/2006 in [Region » Region News](#)

Plainfield — Residents and town officials had mixed reactions Thursday night to an hourlong presentation by officials from Plainfield Renewable Energy LLC, who described their plans for a \$60 million wood-burning electric generating plant on Mill Brook Road.

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The plant would produce about \$500,000 a year in local taxes, officials said.

The technical presentation — at times too technical, one resident complained — described how the plant would burn a combination of clean wood and sorted nonhazardous construction and demolition wood that would be shipped to the plant. It would generate about 30 megawatts of electricity for the New England power grid.

Emissions scrubbers and baggers would capture ash and particulates, which would be trucked to an off-site landfill. Smoke stack emissions would be kept within strict standards imposed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the state Department of Environmental Protection, officials from Plainfield Renewable Energy told about 150 residents and town officials.

David Campbell, a new Plainfield resident and would-be neighbor of the proposed plant, said the presentation harped too much on assurances of environmental controls and not enough on issues that affect residents' daily lives, such as noise, traffic, safety and property values.

Michael Whiting, chief executive officer of Decker International Inc., one of the two partners involved in the project, told Campbell he didn't see any reason why the plant would hurt property values in the area.

"You don't see why?" Campbell said. "I could name 10 reasons right off the bat."

Campbell was concerned that project officials had underestimated the number of trucks — about 50 per day on weekdays and half that on Saturdays — and the need for weekend deliveries of wood to fuel the plant that would operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He also questioned what benefits the town would derive, besides the 200 construction jobs during the 18-month construction period and 25 permanent jobs thereafter.

Others, however, touted the estimated \$500,000 in property taxes per year — the equivalent of two-thirds of a mill or more — and said the region and the state need such power plants. The 200 construction jobs would benefit local trade unions and small contracting companies, they said.

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The project is a joint venture by Decker, which runs three similar plants in Michigan and North Carolina, and NuPower LLC, based in Norwalk. The plant would be located on 29 acres on Mill Brook Road, the former Gallup Quarry property, a contaminated former federal Superfund cleanup site. Developers said the project would bring that industrial property back to the tax rolls, while not disturbing the two acres of land where chemicals had been dumped in the past.

Scott Guilmartin, a representative of NuPower, said the site is ideal because it has easy access to Interstate 395 at Exit 87, has a freight rail line along the west edge of the property and would have access from Mill Brook Road, which was recently upgraded to handle heavy-duty trucks that go to the new Lowe's distribution center on nearby Lillibridge Road. High-power Connecticut Light & Power lines run nearby as well.

The site already is zoned for industrial development, and regulations allow energy-producing plants there.

The plant would take in wood from a variety of sources, including trees cleared from building lots, wood chips, wood pallets and some construction and demolition debris. About half would be so-called "green wood" and half construction or demolition wood.

The main boiler building would be 75 feet tall, and the smoke stack would be 130 feet tall. Natural buffer zones of trees and sloping land would help conceal the plant, officials said, and outdoor lights would be directed "inward" to reduce glare in surrounding neighborhoods.

Resident David Erstgard was skeptical of the environmental information presented by the developers, and questioned projected plant emissions and the possibility that the plant would receive hazardous materials. Erstgard cited emissions statistics from a much smaller wood-burning plant in New Hampshire that included tons of lead and hundreds of pounds of arsenic, mercury and other toxins.

Whiting said the plant would have strict contracts with wood suppliers to ensure that hazardous materials — including asbestos, pressure-treated wood, paint and plastic — would not enter the plant. All sorting would be done off site.

The burning technology, called gasification, would result in emissions much lower in particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide than comparable fossil fuel plants. Whiting said any toxins emitted would have to fall below state and federal maximum levels. Air would be monitored continuously, and the plant would have to report any excessive emissions to the DEP or face fines for violating its permits.

The DEP and the Connecticut Siting Council likely would conduct public hearings on Plainfield Renewable Energy's permit and site-plan applications. The company plans to submit applications for permits within the next few months and start negotiating power-selling contracts with CL&P late this year.

The group hopes for state permits by early 2007 and to start construction then. If that timetable is maintained, the plant could open by mid 2008.

The project already has been endorsed by the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund as a renewable energy production plant. The Clean Energy Fund, created by the state legislature in 2003 to promote alternative sources of energy, approved a \$500,000 loan to the partners to support the development of the project.

c.bessette@theday.com ■

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**Presentation Given At
February 2, 2006 Public Informational Meeting**

Plainfield Renewable Energy



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Plainfield Renewable Energy, LLC

A Norwalk, CT based joint venture between NuPower LLC and Decker Energy International, Inc.

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- *Decker Energy*
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 - *124 MW capacity; \$230 million capital cost*
 - *Michigan (2) and North Carolina*



Other Project Team Members

- *R. W. Beck – Owner’s Engineer*
- *M. I. Holzman & Associates – Air Permitting*
- *Anchor Engineering – Site/Civil Engineering*
- *Wiggin & Dana – Local Counsel*



Project Overview

- *30 MW CT Class I wood-fueled power plant*
- *Low emission biomass gasification technology*
- *Fueled by biomass/waste wood*
- *Located on 29 acre, industrial-zoned parcel in Plainfield*
- *Development loan commitment by CT Clean Energy Fund (CEF)*
- *Targeting CEF's Project 100 Class I incentive program for clean, renewable power*



Why a Renewable Power Plant?

- *Critical in-state Supply/Demand imbalance*
 - *Projected shortfall of about 1,000 MW*
 - *Risk of Brown-outs, Black-outs*
- *Energy Independence/Fuel Diversification*
- *Growing state renewable targets vs. limited renewable options*
- *Unique opportunity to help meet state renewable and capacity targets with previously wasted indigenous fuel*



Project Site

Why Plainfield?

- *Excellent road infrastructure*
 - *Convenience to I-395*
- *Adjacent power lines*
- *Railroad option*
- *Minimal residential proximity*

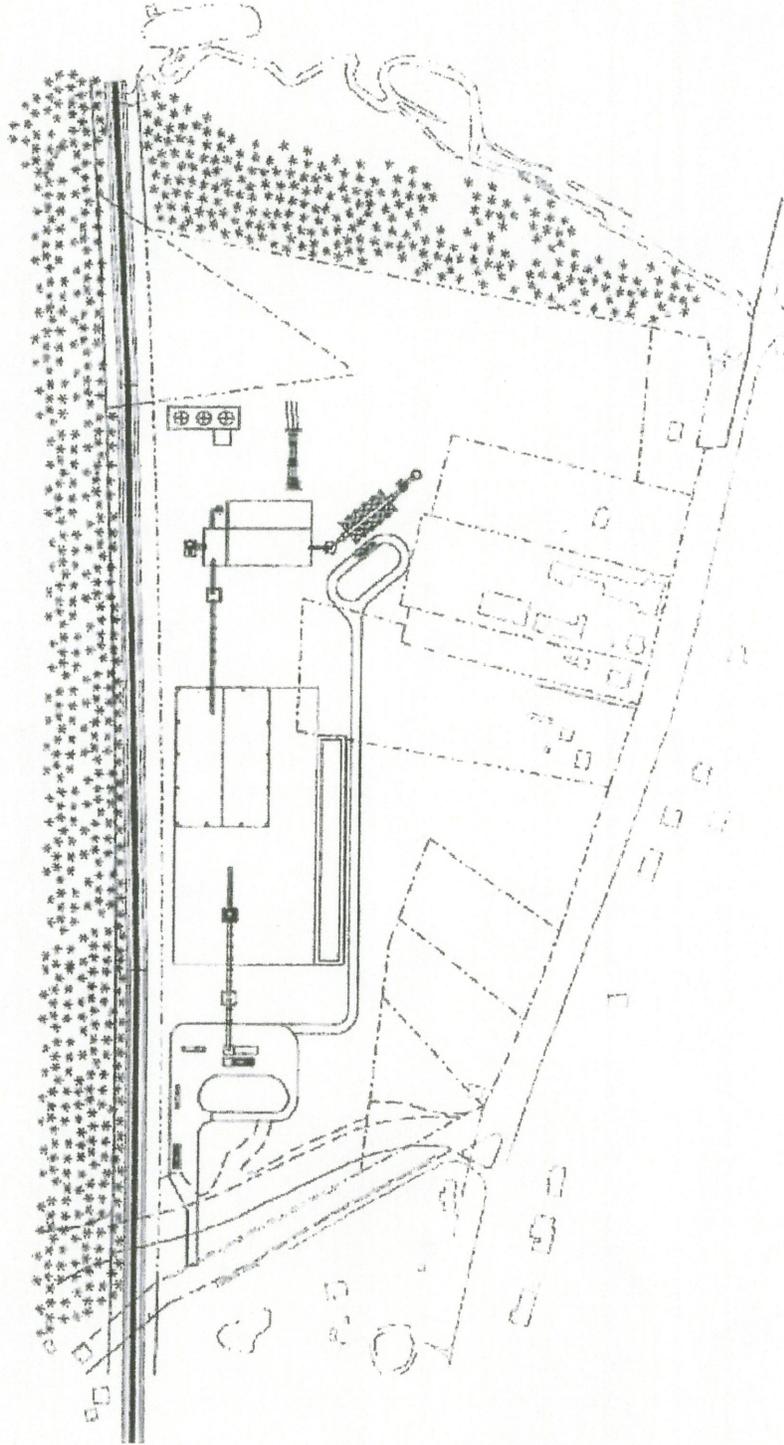


Site Plan

- *Existing zone & site history*
- *Description of buildings and site plan*
- *Lot coverage, sideyards and setbacks*
- *Wetlands*
- *Drainage plan*
- *On-site wells*
- *Fire & Safety*
- *Sewer*



Conceptual Site Plan



Plainfield Renewable Energy

Configuration & Technology

