

CONCERNS ABOUT HAZARDS OF ATLANTA GAS LIGHT REGULATOR STATION IN A NEARBY RESIDENTIAL AREA

Atlanta Gas Light (AGL) is moving forward vigorously with its plans--developed without significant community consultation or prior awareness--to build a large natural gas regulator station in the middle a residential area not far from Century Center and right under a major direct flight path from PDK Airport just two miles away.

The general public only became aware of the AGL plans in early January 2013 after nearly four acres of trees were cut down on a lot (parcel 36) adjacent to the neighborhoods of Clairmont North, Tanglewood Circle, Shalimar Drive, and Clairmont Terrace. The placement of a major gas regulator facility in a residential area and under a major airport flight path should be concerning to anyone who cares about their neighborhood's safety and security.

The high-pressure gas lines to such gas regulator stations--and the stations themselves--have catastrophically explosive potential that could destroy an entire neighborhood if the station or its high pressure lines were ever damaged or broken due to natural or human causes, and fires from such explosions could spread far more widely if they could not be readily contained.

As just one recent example of the type of disaster that could occur, on June 9, 2010, a massive fire engulfed San Bruno, California, two miles away from the San Francisco International Airport. The gas line explosion (less powerful than a regulator station) generated a huge wall of fire that damaged or utterly destroyed more than 100 homes, 38 of them completely.

The catastrophe is vividly documented in the 3-minute

news report posted on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZ6YbUrnxVM>. You are encouraged to view that brief news report about the San Bruno fire, especially if you are under any misimpression that such a disaster couldn't happen in one of our Atlanta neighborhoods.

A vigorous effort to try to convince AGL to choose a safer site that is not just slightly more than a hundred feet from long-established residential areas has been launched by the Clairmont Community Alliance (contact email address: clairmontcommunityalliance@gmail.com). In response, AGL organized an "open house" on February 26 at which they got an earful from more than fifty concerned individuals who asked them a number of specific questions that the AGL representatives were either unable or unwilling to answer.

Among the topics that AGL representatives failed to credibly answer or substantiate were (1) alternative site locations that may have been considered, (2) a map of the existing pipeline (which is to be abandoned in place) that could be compared to the proposed new line, (3) evidence that any environmental impact studies had been conducted, (4) the noise level that could be expected from the planned regulator station, and (5) safety plans or safety measures to notify or protect residents in cases of accidents.

This last topic is of special concern to residents now, since on Friday, March 8, 2013, a relatively small 4" gas pipe was hit during a residential dig in the vicinity of the planned regulator site. No formal warning was given to the surrounding residents for the better part of the day despite the

fact that a leak from a smaller gas pipeline had caused a major explosion in Kansas City just two weeks earlier.

If this is the level of safety that AGL is providing during the construction process, residents wondered how their safety would be protected once the full pipeline and regulator station handling extremely high-pressure gas transmissions is actually up and running.

The Clairmont Community Alliance held an open community meeting on March 20th to inform residents about concerns about the specific location chosen for this gas regulator station and to explain what concerned individuals can do to make their voices heard on the issue most effectively.

If you missed that meeting, you can find out about (1) what went on at the meeting and (2) what you can do to help by emailing: clairmontcommunityalliance@gmail.com.

--Larry Foster, Board Member,
North Briarcliff Civic Association



AGL staging area and site of the Gas Regulator Station, as seen from the back yards of adjacent homes. Courtesy of Lori Muskat