

Happenings Around the County

Con Edison to Lift Gas Moratorium in Southern Westchester

By Marvin V. Church



MARVIN V. CHURCH

Back in March 2019, Con Edison's Southern Westchester gas moratorium went into effect. That meant Con Edison would no longer accept new gas customers in Southern Westchester. Existing building consumers who wished to transfer from heating oil to gas, and new constructing real estate developers could no longer get their gas needs met by Con Edison. Even though, Con Edison had been warning about its insufficient capacity to meet the gas needs of Southern Westchester, governmental officials and consumers were left unprepared when Con Edison finally made the gas moratorium official.

What does it mean that Con Edison is Lifting the Gas Moratorium?

As a result of political and business community pressure, Con Edison recently announced plans to lift the gas moratorium in the year 2023 up to the year 2043. However, the lifting of the gas moratorium for twenty years leaves more questions than it answers.

1. The gas moratorium is still in place and will be so for another four years.

2. The New York State Public Commission, the agency that oversees utilities, pledged to reduce greenhouse gases 40% by the year 2030 and 80% by the year 2050. Coincidentally, Con Edison's gas moratorium will be reinstated 7-years

(2050 - 2043= 7 years) before New York State is slated to achieve an 80% fossil fuel reduction.

The devil is in the details

Closer examination of Con Edison's plan and New York State Public Commission's overlapping fossil fuel guidelines reveal the following:

A. There will be no Con Edison gas available to new Southern Westchester customers until 2023.

B. There might not be any gas option available after 2043. So, for a period of 20 years, Southern Westchester will receive heating gas from Con Edison and then...no one knows what will happen then.

C. After 2050, New York State Public Commission reduced fossil fuel guide lines may disallow new gas supply agreements.

What are the obstacles facing consumers now?

From a consumer perspective, it would seem that with such severe gaps in Southern Westchester's gas plan, waiting might be the best option. While for some this would not be an unwise position, for other consumers, waiting is not an option. There are two basic issues consumers might consider before adopting an energy plan:

- The cost of implementing a heating option, and
- The usefulness of that option as New York moves towards zero fossil fuel.

Currently, there are several not widely known; yet, effective alternatives to natural gas that the industry calls 'non-pipe solution'. These are green energy solutions that do not rely on burning fossil fuel to create energy. While New York State is offering several million dollars for non-pipe solution installation, the out of pocket cost to the individual consumer is still an unknown factor even as more incentives come on-board.

Prior to Con Edison gas moratorium, grants and incentives were richly invested and widely available

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Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

Financial Fortitude* is the current Economic Development Program Initiative of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Designed to raise awareness about financial literacy, the ten components of the initiative include: Goal Setting, Financial Planning, Budgeting, Debt Management, Savings & Investments, Retirement Planning, Homeownership, Insurance, Estate Planning, and Entrepreneurship. The Westchester County Press will celebrate National Financial Literacy Month in April.

As technology and personal finance rapidly evolve, being financially literate has taken on new meaning and a sense of urgency. We pay bills on-line, use digital wallets, tap cell-phones at the register, and transfer funds between linked accounts from numerous sources. Cash is less common. Transactions are less tangible. Technology and personal finance has permeated our lives.

If we fail to upgrade our financial literacy skills and continue treating money management as taboo, teaching kids how to manage money will continue to be problematic. Silence about money and how to manage it keeps young people from developing a necessary life skill. It's hard to teach young people about cash (and managing money) when they don't see or touch it.

All sorts of people, regardless of age, income and employer, struggle with managing their money. Four in 10 adults, if faced with an unexpected expense of \$400, would either not be able to cover the expense or would cover it by selling something or borrowing money. This fact and many others were revealed in the 2018 Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households, prepared by the Consumer and Community Development Research Section of the Federal Reserve Board's Division of Consumer and Community Affairs: <https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/files/2017-report-economic-well-being-us-households-201805.pdf>.

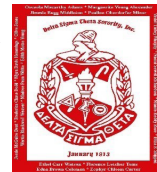
Programs designed to educate and empower consumers in the personal finance space are available and many are free. Your local bank likely has a financial literacy program suitable for your community or faith based organizations. The FDIC's Money Smart financial education program helps people of all ages increase their financial literacy skills; <https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/index.html>. For kids, there are apps that can teach them money management basics through games like Renegade Buggies; <http://renegadebuggies.familieslearning.org/index.html>, which is supported by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. H&R Block works with parents, teachers, and teens to share information about managing personal finances through its Dollars & Sense® program; <http://www.hrblockdollarsandsense.com/resources>.

Parents can help fill the financial literacy gap by educating themselves and their children. More than 60% of teens will turn to their parents for financial advice, according to the 2019 JA Teens & Personal Finance Survey conducted on behalf of Junior Achievement USA and Citizens Bank/Citizens One: <https://www.juniorachievement.org/web/ja-usa/citizens-bank>. Additionally, parents can teach good personal financial habits by modeling good personal finance practices; paying bills on time, maintaining a good credit score, and saving money.

For parents and role models who might be uncomfortable talking about money because they might be struggling with debt and living beyond their means, they are urged to step outside their uncomfortable zone. Personal finance mismanagement can be reset when there is a commitment to get on the right financial track. Share the value in learning from financial mistakes. If in the process of teaching our children good financial skills, we learn (and practice) a few ourselves, a win-win is achieved.

Children often learn best by doing. Let them swipe your chip enabled card at the supermarket. Then, hand them the receipt and point out the price difference between regular and sale items. Test their math skills by calculating the sales tax, without a calculator. Show them how you order items and pay bills online. Let them key-in the order and bill payment information. Show them what happens to the items in the shopping cart or if bills are paid late. Also consider including children in your family's budgeting sessions. Every moment we share how best to spend and save money can teach young people how to manage money. Start the conversation. #getfinlit! then #getfinfit!

*Financial Fortitude - The Westchester County Press has partnered with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.-Westchester Alumnae Chapter (www.dstwac.org), to bring the Financial Fortitude initiative to its readers. The information in this article is general in nature, publicly available, and not specific to you nor anyone else. The information is provided for education and informational purposes only, and is not intended to be and does not constitute financial, investment, legal, trading, or any other advice.



LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

The Board of Education of the Mount Vernon City School District, Mount Vernon, New York, popularly known as the Mount Vernon City School District, in accordance with Section 103 of Article 5-A of the General Municipal Law, hereby invites the submission of sealed bids from reputable and qualified contractors for the provision of labor and materials for the following contract with the School District:

BID #19-20-FSM-02: FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT
Deadline Tuesday May 14, 2019
at 11:00 am

Bids for the FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT Contract will be received until the above stated hour of prevailing time and date at the Office of the Purchasing Department at the Mount Vernon City School District Administration Building located at 165 North Columbus Avenue, Mount Vernon, New York 10553, at which time and place all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud at the Mount Vernon City School District Administration Building. Specifications and bid forms may be obtained by emailing Ken Silver, Assistant Superintendent, beginning on Friday April 26, 2019, or at www.enprtestatebidsystem.com.

Bids must be presented on the standard proposal form in the manner designated therein and as required by the Specifications. All bids must be enclosed in sealed envelopes, which are clearly marked on the outside: Bid For: "Mount Vernon City School District BID #19-20-FSM-02, FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT Contract".

The Board of Education reserves the right to waive any informality in or to reject any or all bids, or to accept that bid which, in the Board of Education's judgment, is in the best interest of the School District.

The successful Bidder shall be required to comply with the provisions of the New York State Prevailing Wage Laws. Additional information can be obtained at www.labor.state.ny.us/workprotection/publicwork. Please note that certified payroll records must be submitted with all invoices. Invoices will not be processed if certified payroll records are not supplied with the invoice.

A pre-bid meeting and/or walk-through will be held on an individual basis starting Monday May 6, 2019, by emailing Ken Silver or calling 914 665-5199.

All vendor questions will be due by 3:00 pm on Tuesday May 7, 2019. Any questions, please email perawford@mtvernoncsd.org and/or ksilver@mtvernoncsd.org

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did not see fit to protect the American people and move to impeach No. 45. Every day Trump remains in office is a threat to the well-being of people of color. His policies diminish our quality of life and the tone he sets in the White House gives license to those in America whose hateful, racist inner demons have waited decades for a chance to wreak havoc on their victims.

For months, Robert Mueller was hailed as the hero who had ridden in on his white horse to make everything right in Washington. But his report disappoints by failing to call out Trump's illegal actions for what they are. Anecdotes in the Mueller Report confirming already well-founded suspicions and widely known violations of law that had been reported in the media for months did little to further inform the public of Trump's wrongdoings. And in its present form, the report is subject to manipulation by Trump allies to normalize his behavior and anesthetize the American people to the abuse heaped upon us daily by this administration.

Anyone who cannot see an attempted conspiracy between the Trump campaign and the Russian government is simply choosing not to look. Anyone who is not convinced that Trump clearly obstructed – and attempted to obstruct – justice is choosing to abandon the rule of law.

Trump committed his many crimes in full view of the American public, so the facts laid out in the Mueller report should come as no surprise.

Right-thinking Americans should not allow politicians to be surprised at the contents of the Mueller report. Any politician who expresses such surprise is either too dishonest or too stupid to be returned to office.

Right-thinking Americans should not allow politicians to shirk from legitimate efforts to impeach Donald Trump. If they are too cowardly to weather the turmoil of an impeachment process, they should pack their bags, leave Washington and look for another line of work.

Oscar H. Blayton is a former Marine Corps combat pilot and human rights activist who practices law in Virginia.

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for consumers interested in oil to gas conversion. For consumers who will choose to become new Con Edison customers after 2023 there are two issues. One, no one knows if and how much incentives will be available to cover conversions and subsequently the out of pocket expense for the consumer. And two, whether the useful life of the equipment will end in 2043 when the gas moratorium is reinstated.

What's next?

New York State, Con Edison and energy advocates have quite a bit of work ahead. The implication of Con Edison gas moratorium's temporary lift raises serious questions about its aftermath. Then there is the optics of a hastily announced moratorium and then an even hastier announced lift of that moratorium. New Yorkers are savvy consumers and are apt to distrust or not buy into a plan that they believed it being rushed and of having gaping holes. It is incumbent upon those in charge of these roll-outs to ensure that all the t's are crossed, and the i's are dotted before moving forward.

This author continues to work with energy advocates, Con Edison, New York State to increase incentives for modest income property owners. Non-pipe solutions will be described in some detail in an upcoming publication.

Marvin Church can be reached at renewableenergy@comrie.biz.

Marvin is a Mount Vernon resident and has worked as an energy consultant for over 20 years identifying effective energy solutions and financial options for low, middle and market-rate customers. Marvin is a principle partner in Comrie Enterprises, LLC that is a NYSERDA Multifamily Existing Building Partner and a Energize NY Partner. He is currently a member of the Heat Smart Campaign Team where he campaigns for sufficient financial incentives for property owners who might find the cost of renewable energy solution prohibitive. And, Marvin is also a member of the Westchester County Sustainability Committee where he speaks to the concerns of the low to middle income communities.

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Hamlett-Carver, Career Center Program Specialist; Teresita B. Wisell, Vice President, Workforce Development and Community Engagement, Westchester Community College; Carolyn Chieco, High School Guidance Counselor and Consultant, Daniel Bonnet, Deputy Executive Director, The Centers for College & Careers at the Guidance Center of Westchester, and Orane Barrett, Chief Executive, Kool Nerd Club.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

From 6:30 - 8:00pm. MEETING OF ENJAN (End The New Jim Crow Action Network) in Poughkeepsie. ENJAN is a Hudson Valley network dedicated to fighting racist policies of racial profiling, police brutality, and mass incarceration (the "New Jim Crow"). Sadie Peterson Delaney African Roots Library, Family Partnership Center, 29 N Hamilton St, Poughkeepsie. Contact: 845-475-8781 or www.enjan.org

THURSDAY, MAY 23

A new initiative called Take the Wheel has started for Westchester youth ages 12-18, focused on hand-on activities designed to promote the practice of democracy and social advocacy. It is committed to forming a diverse community across religious, racial, social class lines. It believes, based on the March for Our Lives movement, that students from different towns working together will be more powerful than students working isolated in their own towns. The adult organizer is Howard Rodstein, a retired teacher. Take the Wheel has arranged for a free screening of the film, The Hate

You Give, followed by a discussion among Westchester teens about racism, gun violence and community activism. The 2018 film is a based on a novel of the same name and follows the fallout after a high school student witnesses a police shooting. It's directed by award winning film maker George Tillman, Jr. (Soul Food 1997, Men of Honor 2000, The Notorious B.I.G. 2009). Teens from Westchester are particularly encouraged to attend. It's on Thursday, May 23 at 5:15 pm at the Jacob Burns Film Center, 405 Manville Road, Pleasantville (easily accessible by train on the Harlem Metro North line: Pleasantville is 4 or 5 stops from White Plains - it's a 2 minute (or less) walk to the theater from the Pleasantville train station; by car about 25 minutes from WP).

JUNE 3 - JULY 12

The New York State Judicial Institute will host the 2019 New York Legal Education Opportunity Program (NY LEO) on the campus of the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University, located in White Plains, NY, June 3-July 12, 2019. The program is designed to ensure a diverse legal community by promoting academic success in law school for individuals historically underrepresented in the legal profession. Through an intense six-week summer program, NY LEO assists minority, low income, and economically or educationally disadvantaged college graduates in acquiring the fundamental and practical skills necessary to succeed in law school. NY LEO is administered by the Honor-

CALENDAR, Continues next week . . .