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TransGas on track for deadline

Scriba officials' meeting with company planning to build energy plant was closed.

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By Charles McChesney

Staff writer

Planning work continues for a \$2 billion coal gasification plant in Scriba.

"We're working on an engineering study at the moment," said Aaron Daley, manager of development for TransGas Development Systems.

In August, TransGas, of New York City, announced its intention to build a plant next to Novelis to turn 20,000 tons of coal a day into a natural gas substitute for use by Novelis and others.

TransGas has until early February to file a site plan layout with the Scriba Planning Board. Daley said Monday he expects to meet that deadline.

"Nothing's changed in the plans," he said.

Dec. 7, Daley met with Scriba Supervisor Kenneth Burdick, Planning Board Chairman James Wellington, board member David Girard and Town Attorney Kevin Caraccioli at Novelis, Caraccioli said.

While the meeting wasn't open to the public, Caraccioli said it was legal.

"It was just an update on where they were and where they were headed," he said. "No business was transacted. No decision was made."

Kestas Bendinskas, a chemistry professor at State University College at Oswego and leader of a group opposed to the TransGas proposal, said he understood that the meeting was not illegal, but was disappointed.

"We trust their integrity," he said of Scriba officials. But he said any meetings regarding the proposed coal gasification plant ought to be open to the public, "to make sure TransGas isn't sneaking behind our back."

More than 250 people showed for an October meeting in Scriba where opponents and proponents

spoke out on the plant proposal. The meeting was a hearing on changing a law that bans manufacturing fuel in Scriba. Later in the month the town board sent the law change back to the planning board for more discussion.

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