

Statement from Cale Keable

Solicitor Oleg Nikolyszyn and other's suggestion that I directed Invenergy to Burrillville is ludicrous and an obvious example of political "hot potato." Mr. Nikolyszyn, who was appointed by the Republican majority on the council, should concentrate on providing legal advice to the town council instead of engaging in petty, partisan finger pointing on behalf of its Republican members and town manager, Mike Wood. Mike Wood and the town council have faced the town's disgust at their actions and now they desperately seek a way to make their problem mine. I know my friends and neighbors in Burrillville will see this obvious political tactic for what it is. Unlike others, I know my people are smart, intelligent people, capable -- and deserving of -- self-determination.

When, after listening to the people of Burrillville, I made the decision to oppose siting of a massive, oil and gas burning power plant in Pascoag, people immediately told me that power plant proponents would find a way to attack me. After all, there is a lot of money at stake. So this obvious and desperate attempt at political character assassination, just as the people seek redress in the General Assembly -- which is exactly what several members of the town council instructed them to do -- does not surprise me in the least. Even the casual observer should be suspicious of the timing of Mr. Nikolyszyn's statement.

It is well known in Burrillville that our town manager, Mike Wood, intimidates anyone that steps out of line, including town council members and town employees. As the whole town has seen, Mike Wood now has them toeing the Invenergy line. I, however, refuse to live in fear of Mike Wood's intimidation tactics. Obviously, that has made me a target. I will not allow his bullying to stop me from representing my friends and neighbors as best I can. If that means I can never win another election, then so be it. My only question for the town council is: "why have you not joined Sen. Fogarty and I in opposing Mike Wood's power plant?"

The Invenergy proposal and forthcoming tax treaty should be about one thing -- what the people of Burrillville want for themselves. Now, more than ever, I believe putting the power plant's tax treaty before the voters is the only way to ensure our voice is heard and Burrillville's best interests met. Those in favor of a tax treaty can vote for it. Those opposed will have their day at the polls.

In the winter of 2014/2015 (either late December or January), Invenergy's attorney -- who I know and respect from the legal community and from the State House -- asked me to attend a meeting in Burrillville with the town manager, whom the attorney did not yet know, his client, and the town planner to discuss a possible development in Burrillville. Such an informational meeting is in not in any way out of the ordinary and I always try to assist my town with whatever needs that they might have. I attended the meeting and learned of Invenergy's proposal for the first time. Invenergy's plans had obviously been completely planned out before I was ever brought in the loop. Again, the meeting was certainly not to ask my permission or anything of the like as Mr. Nikolyszyn would seem to suggest, it was informational. The only thing that is curious about this meeting is the fact that apparently it was some time before Mike Wood -- who heard the same information I did coming out of that meeting -- bothered to inform the town council, who are nominally his boss. This should not be surprising to those who understand Burrillville politics.

Throughout 2015 and into early 2016, I had a neutral stance on the merits of the project and attempted to assist the town manager and town council in any way they asked. During that time, I was asked to submit legislation to help Mike Wood's power plant and had several conversations in that regard. However, as the fact that the will of the people differed significantly from Mike Wood's became clear to me, I did not submit legislation to help the power plant. I suppose that like many, I did not fully grasp the threat to our town at that time.

However, in March of 2016, as Sen. Fogarty and I spoke to at first dozens and then hundreds of Burrillville residents, I became convinced that Mike Wood's power plant would hurt our town. I therefore made the decision to publicly oppose the power plant in a letter to the Siting Board on April 7, 2016. I would hope that Mike Wood, the town council, and the council's staff stop their attacks against me in a transparent attempt to lay their problem at my feet. Instead, I hope they stand up against the plant and for our people. At a minimum, I hope they at least be intellectually honest and acknowledge the fact that they want Mike Wood's power plant and will do anything to make sure it gets built, if that is their position.

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