

Recycle center hopes to expand

Residents oppose expansion of operations, citing increased traffic, noise, lights and the potential for well pollution.

By **TODD MCHALE**
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SOUTHAMPTON — An owner of a local junkyard refuses to scrap plans to expand recycling operations, despite objections from neighbors and a blow handed down by the township last week.

"I don't get it," said Thomas Gabrysiak, president of Allied Recycling. "We're a family-owned business. We've been operating since 2010, and there's never been any complaints."

That is, until residents got wind of a plan to put in a truck scale and make improvements to a building on the former Last Chance Salvage property on New Road.

Residents oppose expansion of operations at the site because of increased truck traffic, noise, lights and the potential for pollution of the wells in the area.

"It has morphed into a behemoth," resident Catherine Wishart said of Allied Recycling's business of late. "They're accepting cars for scrap. They're accepting aluminum for scrap. They're accepting computers for scrap. They're accepting refrigerators for scrap. Some of these items that they're accepting and they have advertising on the website literally have heavy metals in them."

See **RECYCLE**, Page **A4**

B.C.T.
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Recycle

Continued from Page A3

Wishart is among dozens of residents who have come out against the business' operations.

Gabrysiak said he has been accepting scrap metal and junk cars ever since he set up shop at the junkyard in 2010, but opposition didn't develop until he submitted an application to the Zoning Board to put in the scale and make improvements to a building.

"The biggest point is there were no complaints until we had a zoning application," he said.

The application submitted in March led officials to question whether the operations were permitted under local law.

On Thursday night, after nearly four hours of testimony from planners, engineers and residents, the board dealt a blow to Allied

Recycling's plan when it declined to grant approval of a certificate of nonconforming use for the property, forcing Gabrysiak to seek a variance to continue recycling operations.

Neighbors were happy with the decision, but they know it's just the beginning.

"I was glad we won the battle, but we're not done," Wishart said. "There's still a possibility he could be granted a variance."

The residents said they don't think the location is right for such a business, especially since there are homes nearby and a two-lane road leading up to it.

"I never saw personal people bring pickup loads (of scrap) before," resident Nancy King said. "(Now) I see guys on bicycles bring a few pieces of window. I never saw that before. ... It was a junkyard, not a recycling center."

The fate of Allied Recycling's operations may come down to the township's definition of a junkyard at a

special Zoning Board meeting on Oct. 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the municipal building on Retreat Road.

"It would behoove you to reach out to the community," board Chairman Stephen Zoltowski told Gabrysiak after the vote.

The business owner, a resident of Springfield, remains committed to the venture and is willing to do whatever it takes to keep it going.

"We've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars cleaning up the property," Gabrysiak said, in addition to shelling out thousands on the zoning application. "What (the residents) are trying to do is to shut us down."

If the municipality tries to shut him down, he said he's prepared to take legal action.

"Then we'll see what the judge says," Gabrysiak said. "We're a junkyard. It's been a junkyard since 1947. Junkyards recycle, and they always have."

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