

TOWN OF ULSTER

Central Hudson gets more time to finish training center



The incomplete Central Hudson training center facility on Route 9W in Lake Katrine can be seen on Friday, June 2, 2023. TANIA BARRICKLO — DAILY FREEMAN

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TOWN OF ULSTER, N.Y. >> Town Board members have granted Central Hudson an additional five-and-a-half years to finish construction of its Lake Katrine

training center and distribution facility on U.S. Route 9W.

Supervisor James Quigley on Thursday said the electric utility has completed most of the work that will require the use of earth moving and heavy equipment that has been a source of irritation to neighbors.

“Central Hudson has already completed the gas village and the pole year and the primary control center development is currently underway, to be completed in 2024,” he said.

“Central Hudson has completed all of the intrusive work that included the blasting, dirt moving and tree cutting,” Quigley said. “There’s none of those activities left to be completed on the site.”

Site plan approval was granted in November 2019 for Central Hudson to construct the center on a 56-acre parcel that is connected to the 5.42-acre current equipment hub via a 1.8-acre parcel and the west end of the two properties.

Buildings being constructed on the site include a 40,351-square-foot academy with offices and classrooms, a 31,358-square-foot indoor training area, a “gas village” consisting of six residential training buildings, an 800-square-foot commercial training building, a 240-square-foot apartment training building, and a simulated electric transmission and distribution poll yard.

The electric transmission and distribution primary control center will consist of a 41,550-square-foot building.

The initial approval gave Central Hudson three years from the July 9, 2020, start of construction to finish the project. However, utility officials said progress was slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain problems, and state Public Service Commission determinations involving the utility’s capital investments.

Four speakers during the Town Board meeting said Central Hudson’s work on the site has been problematic, saying they believe the utility has not kept promises to be good neighbors during the construction.

Resident Regis Obijiski said between complaints from nearby residents and issues involving Central Hudson’s billing problems, the utility has “squandered” its image as having “unselfish” community leadership.

“This company has infuriated many of our town’s citizens who live near the ...

unfinished project site,” he said.

“At the very least there should be a public hearing on Central Hudson’s request before our Town Board considers any permit extensions,” Obijiski said. “This board is within its rights not to hold such a hearing but I am asking that you... open the opportunity for your constituents to voice their opinion on the best interest of the town of Ulster.”

Quigley disagreed with contentions that Central Hudson has not amended its construction practices and said a public hearing would only be needed if there were changes to the site plan.

“Whenever we have asked Central Hudson to do something they have complied,” he said.