

Residents living near train tracks want CSX to turn off horns

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TOWN OF ULSTER, N.Y. >> Residents along Glenerie Boulevard are seeking Town Board support in convincing CSX that a section of track along residential houses should be declared a quiet zone.

Glenerie Lake Park Association representative Linda Fallon on Thursday was among people making the request for the zone to be established for about a quarter-mile on each side of the crossing over Eastern Parkway.

“Under the train horn rule, locomotive engineers must begin to sound train horns at 15 seconds and no more than 20 seconds in advance of all public grade crossings,” she said.

“The rule does not stipulate the duration of...blasts,” Fallon said. “Many times we have heard a continuous horn for one-quarter mile...(and) the maximum volume of the train horn is 110 decibels.”

There are about 30 houses along Glenerie Boulevard on the west side of the tracks and Eastern Parkway on the east side.

“There are...medical studies over 40 years that show that for those who live near the railroad the horn noise disturbs sleep which could, in turn, increase the risk of cardiovascular disease and is a possible link to hypertension,” Fallon said.

“For anybody who says one gets used to the noise, studies indicate that sleep is disturbed,” Fallon said. “One medical study indicates that using ear plugs, leaving a fan on, even closing the drapes or windows doesn’t completely resolve the issue of the railroad noise pollution.”

Councilman Clayton VanKleeck, who lives about 0.1-mile from tracks where they cross Leggs Mills Road, said there is substantial empathy for the residents but options for dealing with CSX are limited.

“I’ve lived next to the railroad all my life, I know how much power I (don’t) have,” he said.

“We can’t promise you anything because it’s the railroad,” VanKleeck said. “We can promise you we will try.”

VanKleeck following the session estimated trains use the track at a rate of one per hour during the day and one per 90 minutes at night.

Fallon noted that during recent labor negotiations, residents were hoping that CSX employees would go out on strike.

“We were hoping that we would have a couple of days without them,” she said.