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## **Oneonta Common Council bans gas drilling**

**By Jake Palmateer** Staff Writer

ONEONTA \_ The Common Council voted Tuesday to ban all forms of natural gas drilling in city limits.

One alderman said he will work to see the city takes even more steps.

The vote was not unanimous. With Third Ward Alderman Erik Miller absent, Seventh Ward Alderman Liz Shannon abstained.

After the meeting, she said she supports the concept of banning natural gas drilling, but said the draft ordinance was poorly written.

Several members of the public spoke out in favor of the measure, including Colleen Blacklock, who submitted a petition with 1,888 signatures.

The measure makes it unlawful for any person or corporation to drill for natural gas within the city. Under the proposed ordinance, violators are subject to a maximum fine of \$250 for each day a violation occurs.

"I am fully supportive of the ordinance," Eighth Ward Alderman Kevin Hodne said.

Hodne said hydraulic fracturing would be an economic disaster for the area because the high concentration of drilling rigs and equipment would affect tourism and the service industry.

"I think we are taking a good stand here," he said.

No one spoke against it.

In response to call for further action from Hartwick College professor Mark Davies, Fourth Ward Alderman Mike Lynch, who worked with Alderman Miller on the draft, said he would be looking at additional steps the city may take. These include regulating the staging areas used to store chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process or equipment used in the drilling.

The Common Council also voted unanimously to approve an amendment to the zoning code overhaul they passed May 17.

An area near Silver Creek that under the draft zoning code was zoned for apartment complexes, was changed to a more restrictive zone.

A mayor's public hearing on the amendment was set for June 21. Mayor Dick Miller said the zoning code overhaul passed May 17 will get his signature.

"I will be signing the new zoning code," Miller said. "I suspect that comes as no surprise to anyone."