

Knopp touts energy initiative

By SUSAN SHULTZ
Hour Staff Writer

NORWALK — The future of the South Norwalk Train Station Parking Garage is looking brighter — literally.

On Monday, speaking from the train station, Mayor Alex Knopp announced improvements that provide more energy efficient lighting. The improvements will take place at Department of Public Works facilities, as well as the Waste Water Treatment on South Street.

All of the improvements, which are expected to be completed within 90 days, will save the city an estimated 600,450 kW hours annually, avoid more than \$50,000 in annual energy costs, and more than 15 years will save the city an estimated \$663,000.

"Norwalk will be expanding its 'smart government' energy conservation efforts by making these improvements," Mayor Knopp said.

Nxegen, Inc., of Middletown, did a detailed audit of the South Norwalk Parking Garage and found that the lighting fixtures were outdated, as they were using old fluorescent technology and inefficient High Pressure Sodium fixtures.

Nxegen will finance the three new proposed projects at zero percent interest and will require no up-front case payment by the city.

Gary Lane, vice president of Nxegen, was on hand to show a sample of the new lighting fixture.

"We work with a lot of different municipalities, and Norwalk has been very proactive in energy conservation. We're proud to be a part of this," Lane said.

The new lights are long and rectangular, with bulbs that last just as long as the current lights and that are less expensive to replace.

See **KNOPP, A12**

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From A1

five to replace. In addition to the quality of fixture, the placement of the lights will also improve the visibility in the garage at night.

"The lights are currently set high in the ceiling, but we plan to move them down lower, and the length and quality of the new fixtures will provide more security to those getting their cars at night," Lane said.

Nxegen has already completed similar energy conservation programs at Norwalk City Hall, the Norwalk Library, and the Board of Education's central kitchen.

"It's just as important to improve the quality of lighting as well as conserve energy, and where better to do that than at the library?" Knopp asked.

The cost of replacing the lighting fixtures will be \$130,122 at the train station, \$104,114 at the Department of Public Works facilities, and \$26,252 for the water treatment facilities. All of the payments will be repaid over a period of 72 months at zero percent financing. During this term, the annual energy savings will exceed the loan repayment to Nxegen, and the remainder of the savings will be captured by each facility, and ultimately the

city.

Nxegen expects to start the project within 60 days and hopes to have it completed within 90 days after it commences.

The mayor said these initiatives will help combat the anticipated increases in electricity costs that are associated with the electricity constraints in southwestern Connecticut.

"By reducing city electricity consumption, we can minimize the impact of these unfair federal pricing policies and reduce congestion on the grid system that services this area, which can lead to avoided costs and fewer brown-outs for Norwalk," Mayor Knopp said.