

9-12



Decision Making

A Mock Town Meeting On A Proposed Tank Farm

INTRODUCTION:

Your class will represent all of the citizens who live and work in a small town called Priceford. A major business development company called Zanec Corporation has asked Priceford for permission to install five 10,000 gallon Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) on their property just outside of Priceford.

This proposed tank farm will supply fuel and manufacturing chemicals to an existing Ball Bearing Factory. Your class will divide into several groups each having very different interests, and will hold a town meeting to discuss and vote on Zanec's proposal.

OBJECTIVE:

Your class will gain experience in recognizing potential hazards to a community's water supply and weighing the risks and benefits of community development, and will practice decision-making skills in a mock town meeting.

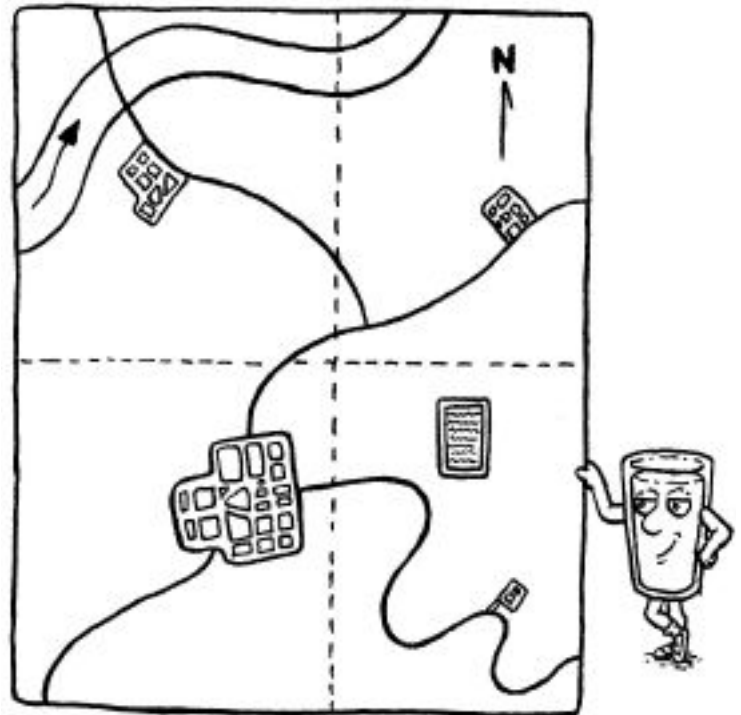
GENERAL PROCEDURES:

1. After reading over the activity's introduction and objectives as a class, begin preparing for the town meeting by randomly dividing your class into five groups.
2. Once the groups are formed, they should take (at home or in class) the time they need to:
 - a. Study the facts of Priceford's water resources
 - b. Elaborate on their own special group's interests.
 - c. Discuss how each item of Zanec's proposal affects their interests.

The background information each group will need for these three tasks is given below. Each group should also select its own spokesperson to represent the group's interests at the meeting.

3. When each group is ready, the Town Council should call the town meeting to order, read the Agenda and introduce the Zanec and Business group to present their proposal. Each other group should then be allowed to comment on the proposal.

4. The Council will summarize the issues it believes to be important, BRIEFLY support or refute each issue and then vote on the proposal.



Priceford's Water Resources:

Priceford gets more than half its water from municipal and private wells. The vulnerability of the underlying aquifer in each quadrant of the map below was assessed in the Resource Management Activity (use the vulnerability "scores" calculated for the four quadrants in this activity).

- Quadrant 1 is largely undeveloped in the Priceford area. A small community, Riverville, is about 25 miles down the river. This quadrant is least acceptable to Zanec due to its distance from its property in Quadrant 4.
- Quadrant 2 is largely farmland but also contains a small community which relies on well water.
- Quadrant 3 includes Priceford town center and all the residential areas for the town's citizens.
- Quadrant 4 contains a factory just north of Bucky's Corner. Zanec proposes installing the USTs here.

Special Group Interests

1. THE TOWN COUNCIL - you must conduct the meeting, listen to all the arguments, and decide what is best for all citizens. Based on the facts you gather, the most logical arguments made by any of the groups and your best judgment, you will vote on whether to:

- 1) Allow Zanec to install the tank farm as proposed, OR
- 2) Allow installation only with certain changes in the proposal, OR
- 3) Reject the proposal completely

2. ZANEC and the local BUSINESS GROUP - You must stress the need to allow the Ball Bearing plant to expand and to attract new businesses for Priceford's economic well-being.

3. LOCAL HOME OWNERS - You are divided. Some desire the new jobs and prosperity made possible by developments like this; others worry about the potential for water, air and noise pollution; still others are concerned about property values; and others are concerned about taxes needed to meet the increased solid waste disposal and sewage demands which are related to development.

4. SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT - Your local chapter of this national group opposes the installation of any USTs until extensive testing has been done and sufficient safeguards are in place. You favor the least vulnerable (but least accessible) site.

5. THE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT - You are essentially neutral as long as the proposed installation complies with all county health laws and procedures. You must find out whether the proposal meets these standards.

Zanec's Proposal:

Zanec is a major development company which has already invested heavily in the Priceford area. The proposed tank farm is only one improvement in its existing developments. Zanec believes its proposal is in the interest of Priceford for the following reasons:

- The tank farm will allow the Ball Bearing plant to expand, bringing about 250 new jobs to an area that has an unemployment rate which is above the state average.
- The company will bring revenues to Priceford, not only through wages, but also through property taxes, income taxes and more consumer spending by its workers and their families.
- The Ball Bearing plant expansion will be attractively designed, well-maintained and an asset to the community.

- The UST Installation will comply with all current regulations and is critical to whether Zanec can continue to build in Priceford.
- The new jobs will result in new home building and increased property values.
- Taxes paid by the plant will help finance school and road improvements while helping to keep home owner's taxes low.
- Zanec requests permission to site its tank farm on its property in Quadrant 4 (see map)

Town Meeting Agenda

This notice was published in the Priceford newspaper.

TO ALL CONCERNED PARTIES

An open meeting will be held for community review and input on Zanec Corporation's proposed installation of five 10,000 gallon underground storage tanks on property to the Ball Bearing factory. All interested groups are to have selected spokespersons who will each be given 4 minutes to present their views. The public is invited to comment on the following issues:

1. Should Zanec be allowed to install the USTs at the proposed site?
2. If not, what alternative location is acceptable to all parties?
3. What are the risks related to the proposal?
4. How can the risks be minimized to protect ground water?

The remainder of the meeting will consist of a question and answer period after which the Council will vote on the proposal.

Location: Priceford Town Hall
Time: Friday Afternoon

The town meeting Agenda should serve as a guide for the Town Council to conduct the meeting. As stated in the notice the Council should allow each group only 4 minutes to offer their views on each of the questions on the Agenda.

When all groups have been heard, each Town Council member may ask one question of one group. Finally, the Council will vote on the proposal. The Council's vote should be based to a large degree on the most logical and persuasive arguments raised by the groups.

