

Gas leak that closed Old Mill Road in Weston investigated

Written by Patricia Gay
Thursday, 01 March 2012 00:00

Police, fire and EMS crews responded to a report of a gas leak at Cobb's Mill Inn on Old Mill Road, Friday, Feb. 24, around 4:30 p.m. The road was closed for a little more than an hour and then reopened.

Weston Fire Marshal John Pokorny said the leak occurred when an old gas tank from Cobb's Mill Inn was being removed as part of the restaurant's renovations.

The tank contained propane as well as mercaptan, a non-toxic chemical that smells like rotten eggs that is added to natural gas to make it easier to detect.

While propane is a colorless and odorless gas, mercaptan is oily and over the years it had settled into a thick layer in the gas tank, Chief Pokorny said. When the pipes from the gas tank were disconnected so it could be removed, the odor of the mercaptan was unleashed, prompting a call to emergency services.

Chief Pokorny said the gas company arrived promptly and the Cobb's Mill area was metered to see if there was any gas in the air.

"Propane is heavier than air, so low areas were metered. There were no dangerous readings," Chief Pokorny said.

As a precaution, Old Mill Road was closed during the metering, along with Cobb's Mill Road, at the end of Old Mill Road, in Wilton. The dirt section of Newtown Turnpike — across the Saugatuck River from the restaurant — was closed as well.

After the gas company declared the area safe, the oil tank was removed from the property.

The town's newly acquired Humvee was put to use for the first time. It was used to bring

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stanchions, signs and other equipment to block the roads.

Cobb's Mill Inn, which has been closed since 2010, is undergoing interior renovations. The new owner, Drew Friedman, got zoning approval in January to do work on the property, including repairing the roof, ceiling, floors, window sills, gutters, and furnace; and replacing the hot water heater and water pump.

Mr. Friedman told the Planning and Zoning Commission in January that he hopes to open the shuttered restaurant as soon as possible.