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[Print Page](#)

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Dominion facility's site plan approved

NORWICH — Dominion Nuclear on Tuesday cleared a final administrative hurdle in its bid to construct a 15,000-square-foot emergency operations center in Norwich's business park.

The Commission on the City Plan unanimously approved site plans for the \$10 million project, which will serve as the permanent command center for Millstone Nuclear Power Station in Waterford. Company officials say the complex should be functioning by the end of 2014.

Approval of the plan was widely expected, after Norwich Community Development Corporation and city officials lauded Dominion's announcement in late August to subdivide property on 24 Stott Ave. owned by Easter Seals Capital Region and Eastern Connecticut.

"Normal use would be very minimal," Tom Bransfield, a Dominion project manager, told the commission Tuesday night. He said the company will run "quarterly drills" that will drive up the building's occupancy for "a day or two" each time.

In addition to serving as Millstone's emergency response center, the site will be used for training, equipment storage and limited administrative functions. There will be no radioactive materials on site.

A federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission mandate requires the facility to be located at least 10 miles away from Millstone.

In addition to winning support for its site plan, Dominion also secured a unanimous vote by the commission on Tuesday for the subdivision of land. Officials will install 75 on-site parking spots and have an arrangement with the Connecticut Tigers to use Dodd Stadium as overflow if needed.

Peter Davis, Norwich's director of planning and neighborhood services, said Dominion's proposed use for the land is in harmony with city zoning codes.

"The proposed lot and existing lot will comply with zoning regulations," he said.

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[Print Page](#)