

Joint Town of Enfield Board and Planning Board Meeting
May 2, 2007

Town Board Members Present: Jennifer Fisher, Rob Harvey, Peggy Hubbell, Jean Owens, Sandy Small
Town Planning Board Members Present: Virginia Bryant, Ann Chaffee, James McConkey, Rich Neno Sr., Calvin Rothermich, Debbie Teeter, Doug Willis

Call to order 7:10 p.m. by Town Supervisor Jean Owens

Welcome and Introductions: Supervisor Owens explained the purpose of this meeting was to provide the town Board and Town Planning Board members and town residents an opportunity to share information, ask questions and learn about the wind farm proposed for Connecticut Hill.

Privilege of the Floor

- John Rancich, 30 year resident, introduced himself and described his plans for a wind farm on Connecticut Hill. He would like to eventually install 10-15, 2.5-3 megawatt turbines on the site. The first phase would involve the installation of 10 turbines within the town of Enfield; these turbines would generate power equivalent to the Tompkins County power demand. All of the proposed sites are tentative; he is in the data gathering phase of the project now. He is looking at landowner involvement at this time, and an arrangement similar to that which is currently occurring for gas exploration and leasing. Mr. Rancich wants the town to participate at some level with this project so it receives a portion of the profits; however, this is only a proposal. Part of his proposal is that after 10 years the town can assume ownership of the wind farm if they choose to. His plans include a visitor and education center, which can also be available for town meetings and functions. He would like Town Board members to agree in principle with his plan and direct the Planning Board to act as the lead agency for the SEQR process.
- Carrie Miller, Town of Newfield: Asked those present to envision towers running along the Connecticut Hill ridge, specifically 400' high rotating towers, and also to envision these across the road or next door. She believes that these are not environmentally benign structures, they are loud. She suspects wind energy supporters are thinking of home-sized installations. What will it be like for those who have to live near these towers? She disagrees with the rationalization "What else kills birds" to justify the number of birds killed by wind towers. She's unhappy with Caroline residents who've written letters to the Ithaca Journal in support of a wind farm in Enfield. She wonders if the existing high-power lines will need upgrading. She said Enfield seems overloaded with expectations to solve large problems. She thinks that the construction of the wind farm will degrade Enfield's rural character. She urges the Town Board and Planning Board not to be pressured into something that may not be in the town's best interest.
- Elizabeth Allen, Black Oak Road: Believes the commercial wind industry is ignoring the growing amount of information indicating there are negatives associated with wind power. She believes the construction of a wind farm on Connecticut Hill will sacrifice the existing rural character and way of life. Big business says property values will increase, however the Boards need to do a lot of research before making any decisions.
- Rebecca Coulter, Tower Road: Asked if board members will view all information available on the towers? She has letters from residents living near wind turbines reflecting negative experiences. Research needs to be done, there is much information available on the Internet. She stressed that those who live nearby the proposed wind farm will have to live with those structures every day.
- Dan Seacrest: This country is based on freedom and independence, and is headed for a train wreck. We need grassroots efforts, we need to come together rather than be driven apart. We need to stand together, and he believes much of what has been said tonight is rhetoric. He has been to wind farms, the country of Denmark made a bet with towns that people would be happy and they are.
- Cliff Newhart, Black Oak Road: He will see 5-6 of these turbines 24/7; how many people will have to live by them? They are 400' foot mechanical monsters, 70 tons for the blade and turbine. He's concerned about noise. He referred to Dr. Nina Rierpant's research and what has been termed "Wind Turbine Syndrome" which includes symptoms of headaches, distress, nausea, etc.; she recommends a setback of 1.5 mile. She has spoken to the NYS legislature on this issue. He is concerned the town has no zoning, which means that there are no setbacks or other regulations governing the installation of this type. He believes Black Oak Road will be destroyed by the construction vehicles. The French National Academy of Sciences called for a moratorium within certain districts, although it says it's okay if towers are a mile from the nearest residents. All the towers in this proposal are within 1 mile of residents. Area residents don't have cable TV when the wind blows, when

the wind towers go in it will chop up what little signal they currently get. Connecticut Hill is one of the scenic vistas identified by Tompkins County Planning. There are beautiful sunsets, and residents coexist with nature. The installation of this wind farm will mean loss of peace and quiet, loss of valuable resources, and will not result in the shutdown of a nuclear or coal plant. Connecticut Hill is one of the last wild places in Enfield and Tompkins County.

- Audience members questioned the credentials of Dr. Rierpant; Mr. Newhart is willing to provide her website so people can check. He also mentioned that he can currently hear the data gathering tower, specifically the wind blowing through the guide wires.
- John Rancich introduced Guy Crow, an attorney for three towns with wind energy installations, John Confer, an Ithaca College professor who has also worked with ornithologists, and Lanny Joyce, from Cornell University, as experts in the area of wind energy and invited those present to ask them questions.
- John Confer: Said how we will get energy in the future is a concern for all of us, and that all energy production kills: 30,000 people are killed annually in coal mines, and more die as a result of strip mining. Towers to kill birds- some – however, how do we get energy for the future with the least amount of environmental damage?
- Rich Neno asked how many birds are killed annually by solar panels? Probably less than by wind power, but mining is part of the process of producing solar panels.
- An audience member had a question for the lawyer: What would be the structure of a public utility? Watkins Glen has a public utility which provides power for three cents per kilowatt hour. These tend to be government entities or corporations; you can select where power comes from. When energy goes into the grid, power is lost in relation to the distance traveled. An LLC is the proposed structure for this proposed wind farm.
- Audience member to Guy Crow: what legal protection is there for the property value of those that live near this proposed wind farm? He's within 500' of one of the proposed towers. In Lansing, this was an issue, but resulting research did not find a correlation between installation of wind towers and nearby property devaluation; however, it could be different in Enfield.
- Sandy Small to Guy Crow: Does Lansing have a local law regarding wind towers? Yes, they have zoning and site plan review. Debbie Teeter and Jim McConkey added there are model wind regulations the town could refer to for developing its own regulation.
- Audience member to Guy Crow: If you have a wind tower lease, can you still get a gas exploration lease? Generally there is a distinction between surface and subsurface rights, you would need to word your lease appropriately.
- Jean Owens asked John Rancich to explain his maps, which he did, specifying that the sighting information reflected is tentative.
- Jim Dennis, County Board member: The County's Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee is looking at wind power right now. Two NYS counties currently have wind power generation. The Tompkins County Assessment Department could help residents contact the right people to find out property value impact near wind farms. Audience members said different wind farms have different impacts.
- An audience member said they understand the concerns of the neighbors, and wondered if they have been any efforts to re-site any of the towers?
- Ann Chaffee asked John Rancich if there will be any changes or new construction needed to hook this wind generation facility to the existing grid? Mr. Rancich said it will require a substation; the site is valuable due to the high winds and existence of a high power line.
- An audience member drew attention to the existing poles along the sides of most roads; they're everywhere, were used to them – it's advancement. Houses went up on Connecticut Hill and that ended the open public use; change is inevitable.
- An audience member said they were looking for reassurance that research will be done.
- Mike Miles, Enfield representative to the Environmental Management Council. He expressed concern over the tone of the meeting, thinks as a community we can be respectful to one another. The Town Board and Planning Board need to work through the process, and this is just the beginning of that process.
- Question for Dr. Confer: Is there a plan to install wind turbines Ithaca College, and what is the configuration of these turbines (height, propeller speed) and what birds might be affected? Most birds are migratory and killed the night, especially in the fall when there is cloud cover or it's foggy. Another audience member asked about bats. Dr. Confer said some places have more bats and birds, although it might be possible to use ultrasonics to chase bats away.
- Audience members inquired how they could get information to Town and Planning Board members. Information can be left at the Town Hall and will be put into Town and Planning Board member boxes.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.