

Town of Enfield
Public Hearing Minutes
Enfield Elementary School
Monday, March 28, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Present: Deputy Supervisor Vera Howe-Strait, Town Councilperson Virginia Bryant, Town Councilperson Mike Carpenter, Town Councilperson Henry Hansteen, Town Councilperson Michael Miles, Town Clerk Alice Linton. Absent: Town Supervisor Ann Rider.

Deputy Supervisor Howe-Strait opened the public hearing at 7:10 p.m. by leading the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Deputy Supervisor Howe-Strait stated the purpose of the public hearing was for the Enfield Town Board to hear the public's opinion on the completeness of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) regarding some modifications that the Black Oak Wind Farm is wanting to make to their project layout. Specifically, to potentially relocate 2 of the approved wind turbines to 1 of 3 proposed locations, as well as relocate a substation, add a new permanent wind measurement tower just south of Turbine 4, and relocate approximately 8,400 linear feet of buried collection line, but, except as noted, the Project would otherwise remain as consisting of seven wind turbines generating 16.1 megawatts (MW) of electricity utilizing the GE 2.3-107 model wind turbines.

Black Oak Wind Farm's environmental people Haley Aldrich, with additions made by the town's environmental engineers, LaBella Associates, have presented the Enfield Town Board with a DSEIS regarding these proposed changes and the town board accepted this document as substantially complete and ready for public comment on March 9, 2016. The document is available on line at www.blackoakwindfarmny.com and a hard copy is at the Enfield Town Hall and the Tompkins County Public Library. The Enfield Town Board was then required to open a written comment period and have a public hearing for the purpose of hearing from interested people and agencies as to the completeness of the DSEIS. This period commenced on March 12, 2016 and has been extended to April 22, 2016 with an additional public hearing being scheduled for April 12, 2016 starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Enfield Elementary School, 20 Enfield Main Road, Ithaca, NY.

Deputy Supervisor Howe-Strait then opened the floor to public comments.

Les Blomberg of Montpelier, VT stated modeling and monitoring data for the project has not been provided. The work needs to be provided so it can be seen how results are achieved. Enfield's noise ordinance states 60 decibels is the limit of ambient sound levels in Enfield, which is the least protective level of noise of any standard in the United States.

Jude Lemke of Enfield asked why the town board is rushing through this process. Black Oak Wind Farm says change is coming - are turbines being moved? The town board accepted the DSEIS before all board members had time to review the document. She would like to see the town board enact a moratorium and doesn't believe the wind farm has vested rights.

John Rancich of Enfield stated in 2002 he brought the idea of a wind farm project to the Enfield Town Board. He feels that the DSEIS is complete. He doesn't feel there is a need to wait any longer. The wind farm has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars already to do things the right way. He urged the town board to go along with the process to provide jobs and income to the town and school districts.

Susan Multer of Ithaca has taught students not to believe everything they hear and read. After looking at the DSEIS and the changes made in response to people, she feels good about the project.

Dawn Drake of Enfield stated she has concerns about the level of noise in her back yard. She is concerned she will have to give up her personal way of life. Although this is a community project, many of her neighbors are living in fear. She supports alternative energy, but not changing a way of life from industrial products.

Rob Tesori of Enfield stated he previously asked, if he wanted to build closer to his property line where a turbine was proposed, if he would be able to. He doesn't believe he would be able to obtain a building permit. He questioned if residents close to turbines will be able to subdivide and build on their land as they have planned for years. He feels the town should look deeper into the project and get the facts straight.

Dr. Rob Mackenzie of Trumansburg stated the wind farm will be in his view shed. He has reviewed the project with the Black Oak Wind Farm president and feels the wind farm is taking care of humans and the natural environment. He offered his strong support for this important issue.

Brad Connors of Enfield offered his insight on facts of significant importance. He feels far too little research has been done. At best there will be no impacts on health and safety from wind turbines, but it is also possible that in the future funding may be received for research on the live specimens living close to the wind farm.

Mimi Mahaffey of Enfield feels Enfield is running out of time to come to a resolution on this issue that has divided the town. Both sides care deeply, but this is a ticking time bomb. She would like to see the community stand together and commit to cutting electricity from our lives. There is a constant need for more, although Americans use double the amount of electricity used in developing countries. There is power in numbers and we should seize the moment and all of us should make a sacrifice.

Jonathan Comstock of Brooktondale stated he is concerned about misinformation being actively spread. Some of the information presented has been exaggerated. Studies have shown that the sound levels of proposed turbines are safe for wildlife. He would like the board to go forward with accurate information.

Ellie Boisvert of Enfield stated we should cut the use of carbon dioxide and look at alternative services. Look at where information is coming from and make sure it is a good source.

Ray Stiefel of Ithaca feels we are not employing all renewable resources. By not applying solar energy we will remain status quo - business as usual. His heart feels pain for neighbors impacted, but his feeling is if we use energy we need to be responsible.

Tammy Alling of Enfield stated she is worried about our carbon footprint. There are many turbines in sight of her family's property. Everyone should try to save the earth as much as possible. Think about the future.

Beverly Gingerich of Enfield stated she first learned about the Black Oak Wind Farm Project four months ago. Once she began learning about wind turbines she discovered maybe only one in every six people will have health problems, but even that is disconcerting.

Doug Everhart of Enfield stated he doesn't believe the wind turbines will be heard over the sound of birds and the wind blowing. He plans to work up to the base of each turbine on his property and is not concerned. He feels research has been done and the turbines are safe. Ice from the blades should drop down and not fly off. He is concerned about the environment.

Dan Flerlage Enfield has taught ecology and biology to high school students who are quietly terrified - they know decisions dictate their future. If we could substitute all efforts to equal a shift in fossil fuels it would be wonderful, but we are too used to the patterns of life. We have to accept change.

Mary Kobler of Caroline has been following the wind farm closely. She has had health issues and doesn't live by a wind farm. Yes, there are health issues for some that live by a wind farm, but wonders if they relate to the wind farm. She feels a source of the future is in Enfield and nothing has changed with this new environmental impact statement.

Marguerite Wells of Enfield is the Project Manager of the Black Oak Wind Farm. She has been working on the project for nine years and believes Enfield should be proud of having a wind farm and that is why there are so many investors. The wind farm is not trying to be stingy. She has met with residents in northern New York who have lived by wind turbines for seven or eight years and she found no one who had a problem - they loved the property taxes the wind farms paid. Black Oak Wind Farm has been trying to address neighbor's concerns the best they can.

Cyrus Umrigar of Caroline Depot Road is a supporter of the wind farm. He feels there are adequate setbacks and Black Oak Wind Farm has spent a lot of money so there won't be a big impact on neighbors. He urged the town board to approve the minor changes. There is infrasound made by wind, waterfalls and refrigerators, not just wind turbines.

Marcus Gingerich of Enfield is an engineer in research and worked in the peer review process. He believes papers can be written without peer review. Currently six wind turbines are proposed for less than a mile from his home. No matter what direction the prevailing wind blows he will be hit with infrasound. Although infrasound can't be heard, there are studies that show the human brain, when subjected to wind turbine infrasound, will respond.

Eric Gasteiger of Enfield stated he realizes clean energy is needed. The proposed substation is on property adjoining his, but he has received no official notification. He is concerned with numbers of birds and bats killed every year by turbines. A survey by the Audubon Society showed the carcass of a bird hit by a turbine blade can be thrown 500 yards. The studies done showed only birds killed within 200 yards of a turbine.

Mr. Jones of the Town of Ithaca lives in a community where decisions are made together. Residents must learn to live with the results, even if they aren't perfect. Residents need to appreciate "we" rather than "me".

Gary Fisher of Enfield stated he is disappointed the town board is not following rules. They are not addressing the obvious impact on personal environment and safety of individuals in this construction. There may be some physical adversity, but there are also mental issues that need to be taken into consideration. Both physical and mental adversity increases stress. This needs to be addressed as it is a major issue.

Suzette Shults of Enfield stated she has concerns with turbine 5 which is 549 feet from her property line. Other studies recommend further setbacks. She cannot move her property/home. There is not enough room to safely install an industrial wind farm where it is currently being proposed.

Gabe Newhart of Enfield stated his grandparents originally owned his property and he feels the project is far from safe. He asked the board to reconsider and change setbacks for the turbines.

Chad Newhart of Enfield asked the town board to do the job for residents, not investors, and give safe setbacks.

LuAnn Fisher of Enfield stated she has health concerns. She feels her health problems, that keep her from working, will be worse with turbine noise 24/7 every single day and night. She is also concerned about the flicker from turbine blades. Her family has built a sanctuary with birds and animals so she can have solitude. She had hoped the land could be divided for her children. That won't be possible now as the turbines will be too close to the proposed building sites.

Deputy Supervisor Vera Howe-Strait closed the public hearing at 8:22 p.m. and reminded the public that another public hearing will be held April 12. Comments can also be submitted in writing to the Enfield Town Clerk at 168 Enfield Main Road, Ithaca, NY.

Adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Linton, Enfield Town Clerk