

Hamlin Wind Tower Committee *Minutes*
Tuesday, March 6, 2007
7:00pm

The regular scheduled meeting of the Hamlin Wind Tower Committee was held in the Hamlin Town Hall located at 1658 Lake Road, Hamlin and was called to order by the Chairman Art McFarlane at 7:00pm with the location of the exits and defibulator explained for those present.

Present: Jerry Borkholder, Linda DeRue, Ed Evans, Ed Haight, Dave Lukas, Art McFarlane, Glen Quetschenbach, Mark Reeves and Andy Simpson.

Also present: Councilperson Mike Marchetti, Planning Board member Tom Jensen, Conservation Board member Tom Breslawski, Aaron LaFaro and several other interested residents.

A motion was made by Glen Quetschenbach, seconded by Ed Evans to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2007 meeting as presented. Members polled, all ayes.

WETHERSFIELD TRIP COMMENTS

Ed Evans stated that at the last meeting a decibel meter was passed around the room. Most people know noise. Two committee members mentioned the wind towers were very noisy. No one standing at the base of the tower had to raise their voices to talk and no one had trouble hearing anyone talk. The towers turn at a continuous rate regardless of the wind speed. He stated that he worked on the current noise ordinance for the Town and it was adopted and is part of the current Town Code. The wind towers at Wethersfield are old technology. The new wind towers produce less noise. The weather conditions during the visit were not good. He passed around pictures from Wethersfield and a picture of Cook Road to compare the sites. Dave Lukas was concerned about the decibel readings. He stated that they need to visit other locations and compare the noise. They need something documentable to go by so the noise levels can be compared. They need a standard to go by that is why they used the decibel meter. Ed Evans agreed that they should compare the noise level at other sites. He recommended using something that everyone could understand. Dave Lukas stated that they need to compare apples to apples. Art McFarlane stated that the reason why the meter was passed around the room at the last meeting was to show that the reading in the room was the same as the reading at the site. Jerry Borkholder requested a copy of the noise ordinance that Ed Evans referred to. Ed Evans stated that it is part of the Town Code. Andy Simpson asked what initiated the study for the noise ordinance. Ed Evans explained that a gentleman came to the Town Board several years ago and complained about motorcycle noise and loud music from his neighbor and he challenged the Town Board to come up with a noise ordinance. So Ed worked with the Town Attorney and they came up with one. It is still used today.

Linda DeRue commented that it was extremely cold when they visited Wethersfield. She thought the towers were very large and loud. The flicker was constant. Attorney Spitzer

did recommend that they visit the towers during the worst weather conditions to really get a feel of the impact.

Andy Simpson stated that he noticed that Wethersfield is a very rural area. There are very little residences around the site. It is different from Hamlin. He felt that the towers were enormous in size. They are very industrial. It was hard to gage the noise with the background noise. The weather conditions were not the best. He questioned the towers spinning at a constant rate. He thought they increased with the wind speed.

Ed Evans stated that there are 10 towers there now and 84 more towers will be put up. A resident claims that they came in and put up towers where ever they wanted but now the town has an ordinance in place. New wind towers are being put up in April 2007 and the town would be receiving money. Art McFarlane asked if Ed had any monetary information that the town was receiving. Ed stated no he didn't. Andy Simpson stated that the towers could be seen from miles around. They seem out of place up on the ridgeline. Ave Lukas printed something off of the Wethersfield website that stated that the blade design allows for high efficiency and almost undetectable sound.

Mark Reeves stated that this was their first visit. The towers were antiques compared to other sites. This was the worse case to visit. The members didn't have to raise their voices to speak. He suggested visiting on a less windy day. He would look into the beating sound versus the whooshing sound. He hadn't heard that the noise increases with the increase of wind speed. They can taper the blades as the wind increases now. They need to gather more information. The area was not well kept but they were not ugly in his opinion.

Glen Questschenbach stated that the committee needs to visit more wind farms.

Ed Haight stated that it was good to go and get hands on information. They need more information on newer towers before any decisions can be made.

Linda DeRue asked if there were any results from the MET towers yet. Art McFarlane stated that there are no results yet. The data is accumulated on a monthly basis. The information is for them only. If they do propose something to the town then the town will be able to see the data then. He stated that he did talk with the representative and he said so far the figures for January were encouraging. No decision would be made though until a whole year of data is collected. Andy Simpson stated that he was at the meeting with the representative Duncan and he didn't hear him say that they would wait after the data was collected. Art McFarlane stated that he was told that nothing would be done until they are sure the wind power is here. Jerry Borkholder stated that he understood that as soon as there is enough data they are going to move forward. Art McFarlane stated that Duncan wouldn't commit to anything at the Public Hearing. He was very cautious. Andy Simpson stated that Duncan is going to protect the corporation versus the committee protecting the town. Art McFarlane stated that they are going to be very careful before they invest 50 million dollars. Dave Lukas asked Art how he knew that Duncan was telling him the truth. Art stated that he knows he would be in big trouble if

he didn't tell him the truth. Andy Simpson asked if it was their own money. Art McFarlane stated that they are not being reimbursed by the State. Dave Lukas has a print out on Wind Incentive Program that reimburses the company. Art McFarlane stated yes but it has a \$100,000 cap. Jerry Borkholder stated that he has looked into it and he has found information that stated they get reimbursed up to 2/3 the cost of each tower. Art asked to see that information.

REPORTS

Ed Evans gave his report. He has done some research. He passed around pictures of previous windmills on Redman Road in 1890 and one behind the Citco Station on Lake Road in 1910. Linda DeRue commented that they are not the same as what is being proposed today. Ed stated that he was very uncomfortable that at the last meeting trailers were put down. People who live in mobile homes value their homes also. One lady has some concerns about the effects on her daughter's health. The strobe effect that causes seizures is not the same as the flicker effect from the wind towers. A report was done and it concluded that wind towers don't cause seizures. He talked to someone who lives near one and the strobe effect is a rare occurrence. Someone stated that the wind towers at Fenner were very noisy. He passed around a picture of when he visited the towers with his father and they whispered and didn't have any trouble hearing each other. Ed stated that Mike Marchetti has a tape of the Wethersfield noise. It is a matter of opinion whether the constant whooshing sound is annoying or not. Some people can block the noise out. Another resident stated that the Cook Road location is beautiful. He passed around a picture of the gravel pit on Cook Road and stated that is not pretty at all. The power lines and poles in Town are not pretty either. Other people asked if there were other locations for the wind towers. The Cook Road area is where the significant wind is. A map of the wind speeds was shown and the only area with significant wind is that area according to the map. Boundary easements were discussed. Ed stated that he had a couple of boundary easements. They are not secret. They pay \$1000 to \$2500 up to 20 years to neighboring properties of wind farms. Linda DeRue stated that there are strings attached. Ed stated that he just signed one for his other property and there are no strings attached. He didn't know that he was going to gain monetarily at the last meeting. Andy Simpson stated that at the last meeting Ed said he wasn't going to profit. Ed stated that he didn't know he was going to receive anything at the last meeting. He just found out. Jerry asked if there was a clause in there that they couldn't complain or talk to anyone about the towers. Ed said no it doesn't say that. Ed mentioned that there are 5 members on the committee that can qualify for the boundary easement. Dave Lukas stated that he would pay \$1000 not to have to see a wind tower. Andy Simpson stated that he can't believe that the Cook Road location is the only site available in Hamlin. Art McFarlane stated that the location of the substation also determines where the towers can be located. It is very costly to hook up to the substation. It is just not the cost of the towers that are involved. There are other costs. Duncan thinks that about 20 towers would be proposed in that location. Andy Simpson stated that they can't rule out that other locations in Hamlin aren't viable. Art McFarlane stated that he has been told by the representative that they are only interested in the one location. Linda DeRue stated that is his personal opinion and adjustments can be made for the towers to be in other locations. Art McFarlane stated that the town will decide the stipulations. Linda DeRue stated if the

town accepts wind towers then it opens it up for other companies to come in and put towers in other locations. Art McFarlane stated there is no other location in Hamlin. Linda DeRue stated that is your opinion. Dave Lukas stated that according to the Wind Overlay Zones and Article 10 Eminent Domain there is a new plan going into effect where the State can come in and tell you where the wind towers can go. That is why a moratorium should be implemented. Legal questions need to be answered and more information needs to be gathered.

A motion was made by Dave Lukas, seconded by Linda DeRue to recommend that the Town Board hires Attorney Spitzer to answer legal questions for the committee.

Ed Evans asked to finish his report. Ed stated at the last meeting other sources of energy were discussed. He would like to rely on what is happening currently. A report from China looked into all kinds of generators as an alternative but decided to go with wind towers to generate their fuel and eliminate the coal burning plants. China says wind energy is the energy of the future. Another speaker at last month's meeting stated that the developer wouldn't answer any negative questions. Ed did ask a developer to come and speak at a meeting but after Ed explained how the meetings were the developer declined. It is a rule that they don't put themselves in that kind of environment. Another speaker commented on the LWRP. Ed stated he was on the original LWRP committee and policy numbers 1, 18, 26 (parts A-G) and 27 of the policy can be applied to the wind towers. There is nothing in the LWRP that would slow down wind farms. Dave Lukas asked about the strobe versus flicker point. Ed gave opening and closing blinds as an example of a flicker and a mirror flashing sunlight in your eyes as a strobe effect. The new tower blades don't have a shiny smooth surface anymore so they don't cause a strobe effect anymore. Dave stated then it's a difference of definition then. Dave stated that the constant whooshing sound would be very annoying to him. Similar to a dripping faucet would drive him nuts. Dave asked what the wind speed was when Ed was at Fenner. Ed stated that he wasn't sure but his gut feeling would be about 10-12. Linda DeRue commented on the gravel pit picture. She stated that she has to drive by the gravel pit to see it but she wouldn't have to drive by the tower to see it. The location of the towers is what bothers her. Andy Simpson commented on the China report. He stated that he didn't think that China was on the cutting edge of anything let alone the cutting edge of technology. Ed disagreed.

RECEIVING OF OTHER REPORTS

Mark Reeves had a hand out from Ag and Markets. He stated that farmers should use Ag and Markets as site managers for the towers. They would supply site investigations if requested. It was recommended that the Board get close to them. Andy Simpson asked if there was just one person or a team. Mark stated that he couldn't answer that question.

Jerry Borkholder stated that he worked with Glen Questschenbach on a letter to mail out to all residents bringing the wind tower issue to their attention. A motion was made by Dave Lukas, seconded by Linda DeRue to mail out the letter to all residents. Members polled, all ayes. Art McFarlane stated that he would talk to Supervisor Denny Roach about the letter.

Dave Lukas passed out his report on setback requirements for Wind Towers. Setbacks for various towns were given. International setbacks were also discussed. Mark Reeves asked if there were any reasons for the setbacks. Dave stated that ice throw and tip loss determined the setbacks. Mark asked if there were any scientific studies done on this. Dave stated that there were studies done and the website information was listed in his report. Mark asked if the setbacks were from just residences or from out buildings also. Dave stated they were from residences and there were setbacks from roads also. Dave stated that there was a motion on the table that needed a vote. Art McFarlane stated that the Town already has legal council. The town doesn't need two attorneys. The decision should be done through the Town Board. Dave stated that they need expert information on wind overlays and Attorney Spitzer in an expert. Jerry Borkholder stated that the committee cannot hire an attorney but they can recommend that the Town Board hire him so the committee can get answers to legal questions. Ed Evans asked if he was the only specialist available. Jerry stated that he is inexpensive and near by. Art stated that he had some problems with Spitzer's presentation. Some of his comments were false. Ed Evans stated that he was concerned about Spitzer as a choice. Andy Simpson stated that he has represented both sides. Linda stated that she was extremely impressed with Spitzer's presentation.

A vote was taken on the motion to recommend that the Town Board hire Attorney Spitzer. Borkholder aye, DeRue aye, Evans no, Haight aye, Lukas aye, MacFarlane abstain, Reeves no, Simpson aye, Guetschenbach aye. Motion carried.

Mark Reeves suggested asking the other support boards for their input on the towers. He suggested discussing the effects on ground water at the next meeting. Concerns that were brought up at the open forum should be discussed and they should decide whether or not to act on these items. Jerry stated that he was concerned about how the they were approaching topics. He suggested picking one topic and discussing that one topic at the meeting so everyone can be prepared and bring information pertinent to that one topic. They need to move forward and make progress. Art stated that it is everyone's opinion and they need to decide where to go from there. Jerry stated with that attitude they won't be able to make progress. Ed Evans stated that you can't get 9 people to all agree on the same thing. Jerry stated that he hoped that everyone could be open minded enough to come to a conclusion on the topics and make progress. Mark stated that his is the first meeting that they have been able to talk as a committee. They need to work on some objectives and determine what is best for the town. Jerry stated that they need to do research and get answers so regulations can be made. Mark suggested setting a timetable. Jerry suggested picking a topic for the next meeting so the members could be prepared. Mark suggested looking at the objectives at the next meeting and discussing how to get there.

FENNER FIELD TRIP

Taking a trip to see the wind towers at Fenner was discussed. Andy suggested waiting until the weather is better. Ed Haight suggested mid April. Art stated that he get that in motion. Andy asked if it was going to be just the committee. Art stated that if they had a

sign up sheet for residents that wanted to go then they could plan on the number of buses needed. Art stated that the residents would have to pay their own way for the trip. Art will bring a sign up sheet to the next meeting.

WEBSITE

Putting the “Bubble Flyer” on the website was discussed. Jerry stated that nothing should be put on the website unless it is approved by the committee. He stated that the current links should be removed and it should be a 50/50 balance on the website. It is their page and they should decide what is on it.

A motion was made by Jerry Borkholder, seconded by Dave Lukas to remove the current links from the website and only add links approved by the committee. Members polled, Borkholder aye, DeRue aye, Evans no, Haight aye, Lukas aye, MacFarlane abstain, Reeves no, Simpson aye, Quetschenbach aye. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION

Art McFarlane stated that he recently found out that his daughter has also signed a contract for wind towers so he is going to recluses himself from voting on any committee matters. Art asked if the committee wanted to vote on the “Bubble Flyer” now or wait. Some discussion took place. Art stated that at the next meeting the Open Forum will be from 8:00-9:00pm. Linda asked why. Art stated so that the end time can be controlled. Linda asked if this could be discussed. Art stated no because he was the Chairman and he was in charge of the agenda. Andy stated that it is their job to set regulations and make recommendations. Art stated that he has an Environmental Impact Study that can answer a lot of these questions if anyone is interested. It is a lot of pages that’s why copies of it weren’t made.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ed Evans, seconded by mark Reeves to adjourn tonight’s meeting barring any further business. Members polled, all ayes. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Heather Norman
Clerk to the Support Boards

The next Committee meeting will be March 20, 2007 at 7:00pm.