

# Summary of topics from June 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Input Session

Ad Hoc Committee

Attendees:

All Ad Hoc members: (Pinello, Gard, Dubois, Allen, Edwards, Tenney)

Three from press: 1 from Villager and 2 from Ledger-Transcript

Public: 20 names on sign-in sheet

## **A. Siting and wind project-specific concerns**

### Set-backs and noise

The committee has review a lot of data on decibels and set-backs. This issue is relative to the diameter of rotor height of tower and the decibel level, in conjunction with the topography, parameters and various combinations of machinery and conditions.

Feedback requested from audience on their concerns or suggestions. Several said noise was a concern, some wanted more information from the committee on possible solutions to this issue. Some did not have enough information to make a suggestions on set-backs; one suggested a 2-mile set-back as has been done at one New York site and an option to buy out the property owner or financially compensate them for noise problems.

Some reported mixed experiences on trips to Lempster. Some did not hear any noise. Other said they had heard a sound like a “jet that never stops.”

### Tower height, number of towers

There was discussion on how tower height might be regulated and what can be done to improve the visual impact of a wind energy project. One solution offered was that the developer present a visual assessment of the project, done by a professional, as part of the permitting process.

### Health concerns

It was suggested that health concerns would include both noise and shadow flicker potential and should be addressed as part of the siting regulations.

### Wildlife corridor/environmental concerns

Concerns were raised about wildlife corridors, the cedar swamp in the North Branch area, environmental damage, ecological damage from manufacturing and production and how those issues would be addressed in the ordinance/regulations.

Other important areas to be protected were mentioned, including old mill sites, Perkins Farm, Willard Pond, Nubanusit Lake and Gregg Lake.

Other concerns raised included the five nonprofit groups that own land in the Rural Conservation District, interruptions/barriers to wildlife trails and habitat.

### Quality of life -- Impact to RCD

Concerns were raised by possibility of opening up other industrial uses in the Rural Conservation District and impacts to property owners in that district. Included were a potential “jet plane sound” from the turbines, a question on how many houses will be impacted, negative impact to a beautiful wild place

The question was raised about what provisions will be made for those abutters who choose to no longer to live there. Some said they had moved to that area because of the quiet nature of the area. They wanted protection for the RCD.

### Mitigation, abatements

Brief discussion about the potential for tax abatements, mitigation to property owners, conservation easements.

### Lighting, radar, other issues

Several said they had concerns about decommissioning costs, night lighting, brightness of lights, blasting during construction, fencing, site security, liability issues for the town and penalties for violations.

## **B. General concerns over town processes**

### Notification, discussion

Several members of the public complained about the lack of information from town officials, including the Ad Hoc Committee, on wind energy projects in general and the status of the AWE proposed project.

They would like to see examples of model ordinances, lists, indexes, catalogues available to the public and they want reports on the town’s activity and progress. Especially appreciated would

be links to information that the Ad Hoc Committee is using. Abutters especially, but also all Antrim, residents, need to be better informed on these issues.

Several suggested the town improve its website to allow residents to get more information online. There was some discussion about the need to have it in paper form in public places, including the town library and Town Hall.

### Financial arrangement with Town

It was explained that the financial arrangements with the Town for a PILOT agreement (payment in lieu of taxes) and other compensation would be negotiated by the Selectmen. A section on the need to escrow decommissioning costs for the end of the project could be written into the ordinance and regulations, but the other documents were not part of this process.

There was a lively discussion of the financial impact of wind energy projects, with several suggestions offered:

- a. use a professional group to negotiate
- b. weigh the difference before assessing performance or financial ratios
- c. can an adjustable schedule be used?
- d. royalty – that would come and go with their revenue?
- e. use a fixed rate instead of one based on energy production
- f. annual reports are needed ... and should be made public
- g. set up a periodic review of rates; analysis on a regular basis
- h. this is a balancing act – the developer need to make money ... Antrim is making some sacrifices.

The general consensus was that property owners “should not lose out” -- if there is an impact from a wind energy project, they should be compensated.

Other questions: possible property tax assessments; compensation-financial arrangements; will the town be getting a kw royalty or property tax assessment impact; reduction in electrical rates?

## **C. Other questions of a general nature:**

### When can we see the ordinance/regulations?

Discussion: The committee wanted input from public first to make sure that all topics are covered. It wants to hear questions/concerns – we don't have answers to all at this point. Writing an ordinance for the entire town – not writing a specific ordinance for a specific project.

Ad Hoc holding a joint meeting with Planning Board on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Drafts will be presented to Planning Board in July.

Has the committee gone to Lempster to visit that wind energy facility?

Discussion: Most members had visited individually. Tours are being planned for Searsburg, Vt., and Lempster.

Will the project area be open to hunting? Other recreational use?

Discussion: What would you like to be able to do? How would you like to see it regulated?  
One responded “as little as possible” in terms of restrictions.

What can an ordinance or regulations do or not do?

What are the limits of Antrim’s authority to administrate this kind of project? Discussion of role of NH Site Evaluation Committee and local ordinance and regulations. Ad Hoc members said the planning tools need to focus on the town’s needs – Antrim has pockets of wind resources and it would not be prudent to design rules for one developers. We need to make this work for Antrim?

Other green energy??

In the future, some want to look at point of use of generation, municipal solutions, hydro – should do something

It was noted that Antrim already has regulations for small wind turbine for personal use?