

Antrim Planning Board – Ad Hoc Committee

June 15, 2011

6:30 a.m.

Town Hall Meeting Room

Members attending:

Martha Pinello

Mary Allen

David Dubois

Barbara Gard

Eric Tenney

Guests:

Richard Block

Charlie Levesque

Galen Stearns

1. Agenda: Martha passed out the agenda for this meeting.

2. Minutes: Due to a mechanical glitch only two hard copies of the minutes for May 31, 2011, were available for distribution. Mary will send the minutes to each member by e-mail. Members will suggest corrections or approve the minutes electronically.

(Note: The Ad Hoc members electronically approved the 5/31/11 minutes as written.)

3. Plan of Work: Our Plan of Work, drafted in conjunction with Antrim Planning Board, was discussed. Martha is suggesting compression of some of the time elements to ensure that a Special Town Meeting ballot session can be held on either Oct. 25 (if two public hearings are held), or Nov. 1 (if there is a need for three public hearings).

The Antrim Planning Board will be reviewing our efforts to date at their next meeting (Thursday, June 16). Our committee's work on the site plan review regulations and the draft ordinance will be presented.

The June 22nd Public Input session is our next event. Mary is sending press releases to all the local papers. Antrim Planning Assistant Diane Chauncey is handing the legal posting for the meeting, a display ad in the Villager, and required posting on public sites in town. Martha is preparing posters announcing the meeting and each Ad Hoc must take two and get them posted in town.

Martha also announced that the Planning Board hopes to hold an all-day event on Saturday, Aug. 27, as the first public hearing date for the proposed ordinance. That will allow ample time for voters to address the board with their concerns at a time that is convenient to them, and will draw the town together in the manner of a "Town Meeting Day."

Finally, Martha announced that she has approached Jean Vissering, a landscape architect from Montpelier, Vt., to see if she can provide us with consultation or feedback on aspects of siting for utility-scale wind energy projects.

4. Reports:

Regulation review: Mary gave a full report on her work with the Antrim Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations. She has not been able to connect with Andy Robblee but expects that he can offer some additional help and suggestions at the June 16th Planning Board meeting.

Mary took two approaches to the work:

1. Suggesting changes to about 10 sections of the current regulations to include utility-scale wind energy projects.

The most extensive of those revisions would be to the Subdivision regulations in order to cover the unique nature of having several large tracts of land used for a single purpose. Nothing in the current regulations covers that issue, or the question of leases or a limited life for the project.

Extensive work would also have to be done to the Site Plan Review application requirements to include the needed research studies for such wind projects (including avian migrations, natural community, natural heritage, etc.). Some current requirements (soil mapping, high intensity soil mapping, contours at 5 feet intervals, etc) might be made less restrictive given the large size of wind sites.

Mary's text of the changes to the current Regulations ran at least seven pages and members planned to review them outside of this meeting.

2. A second approach, which Mary prefers, would create a stand-alone section of the Regulations to deal specifically with utility-scale wind energy projects. This approach would be clearer to a potential applicant and it would be simpler and more direct for the public to understand.

She presented a very rough draft of what that approach might look like. Members will review this document outside of the meeting.

Ordinance Review: Dave has worked up a draft ordinance using the utility-scale wind project ordinance for Phillips, ME, as the template. The key component of that community's approach, which Dave supports, is the focus on noise control and setbacks.

What seems to work the best for protecting abutters from noise problems is testing before construction, testing after construction and setting a limit on how much the noise level may increase in decibels.

As they work on the draft ordinance, Dave and Barbara would like the Ad Hoc group to address several issues:

1. Conditional Use (as provided under Innovative Zoning Controls)
2. Use by Special Exception
3. Use of overlay zoning for wind.
4. Setbacks
5. Sound levels / standards / measurements
6. Mitigation / easements.

5. Items for Future Meetings

1. Speakers/experts to address tower siting and setbacks?
2. Interconnection
3. Review of hearing minutes for first proposed zoning ordinance to assure that topics are covered at June 22nd public input hearing.

Minutes prepared by Mary Allen, member of the Ad Hoc Committee
Approved via e-mail by the committee