

## **Antrim Planning Board – Ad Hoc Committee**

June 29, 2011

6:30 a.m.

Town Hall Meeting Room

### Members attending:

Martha Pinello

Mary Allen

David Dubois

Barbara Gard

Eric Tenney

### Guests:

Rick Wood

Brian Beihl

Galen Stearns (joined at 7:45 a.m.)

**1. Agenda:** Martha passed out the agenda for this meeting. She indicated that Brian Beihl had been asked to join us to discuss ways to increase public input and options for informational postings for our work and for utility-scale wind energy in general.

**2. Minutes:** The minutes for June 15<sup>th</sup> and the public information session on June 22<sup>nd</sup> are circulating via e-mail. Members are asked to vote on accepting them via e-mail so they can be officially posted.

**3. Discussion of SEC decision; next steps:** Ad Hoc members who were present at the final jurisdiction hearing (June 27<sup>th</sup>) before the NH Site Evaluation Committee shared some of their thoughts about the next steps for the Ad Hoc Committee.

Martha said that the fact that the SEC took three significant votes that day (1. a vote to delay a decision on jurisdiction until Sept. 7 and to ask for a status report at that time from the Antrim boards, which ended in a 5-5 tie; 2. a vote to accept jurisdiction, which passed by a 6-4 margin; and 3. an affirmative vote to require that Antrim Wind Energy submit its application to the SEC by Jan. 31, 2012, or the jurisdiction decision would lapse) was seen described as “seminal” and an indication that Antrim was on the right track in working on local ordinances and regulations for utility-scale wind energy facilities.

There was some discussion about which commissioners supported jurisdiction and which were supported local rule, given the nature of their agencies and how much contact they had, or didn't have, with municipalities. Members also felt our decision to bring in three consultants to assist with key aspects of the draft documents had impressed some of the commissioners who wanted to allow that work to continue. It was also noted that the swing vote after the first tie vote was cast by the commissioner representing OEP.

Rick Wood, a guest at this meeting, asked how the SEC's jurisdiction decision would interface with the local planning board and the Ad Hoc Committee's work.

Members said they weren't sure. The suggestion was made that if our work continues as planned under the compressed timeline, and if an ordinance is approved by the voters this fall, the SEC might be more inclined to look at this local effort and incorporate some of the town's efforts into their decisions. That has not been in the case in the past, but this would be the first time that a town had an approved set of local planning tools for utility-scale wind energy facilities at a time when the SEC was reviewing an application.

The consensus of our committee was to continue with the work session with the Planning Board on June 30<sup>th</sup> and to see what steps the full board wanted to take next.

#### **4. Report on contacts with consultants**

Martha then gave a report on her discussions with various consultants.

Jean Vissering, an expert on siting and visual impact, has been contacted and has submitted a scope of work. Several members met her at the June 7<sup>th</sup> conference on wind energy in Marlborough, Mass., and were impressed with her approach.

Benjamin Bell of Peterborough has been contacted. His name also came up at the Marlborough, Mass., conference. Martha planned to meet with him later in the day and will report back at the next meeting. His areas of expertise are noise testing and parameters, turbines and mitigation.

Carol Ogilvie, who is the professional planner for the Town of Peterborough, has been contacted and has agreed to work on a per hour basis to review the drafts of both the ordinance and site plan regulations to see if they are consistent with good planning practices and with New Hampshire statutes.

#### **5. Work Session**

Mary gave an overview of what she would present to the Planning Board regarding her work on the regulations. Barbara and Dave discussed their draft of the ordinance.

The topic of using an overlay for wind energy zoning was discussed. There was some discussion of the merits of using an overlay and of conditional use. This topic will be addressed again after the June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting with the Planning Board.

Brian Beihl and Rick Wood raised concerns about methods to make more information about wind energy facilities and the work of the Ad Hoc Committee available to the public.

Rick would like to see more documents and source links available on the town's website. This approach would help those who want to read source information independently to know where that information is available.

There was some discussion about Brian's independent website and whether that could be used in a more official capacity. The general feeling was that it was an important resource, but that voters also need to be able to get information from official town sources too. In addition to online sources, hard copy and information would need to be available to those without access to the Web and for those who prefer to read paper copies of the documents.

There was some discussions about using summaries on the website or in hard copy, to give a general overview of timelines, work being done locally, and general information about wind energy facilities. In addition, map of the potential overlay district, wind resources in the town, zoning districts and other visual guides would be helpful, Rick suggested.

Brian suggested that a mailer be sent to every address in Antrim before the planning Aug. 27<sup>th</sup> public hearing on the new ordinance.

An informational trip to the Lempster Wind Farm was also discussed. Brian and Mary will work on setting this up and will make the contacts by traveling soon to Lempster on a scouting trip.

## **6. Other discussion**

Members briefly discussed the Selectmen's work on the PILOT agreement. Mary, who is also a school board member, suggested that the Selectmen ask their assessing consultants to look at ConVal's nine-town cooperative agreement and the current school funding formula. If a utility-scale wind energy facility is built in Antrim, and if it adds significant value to the town's assessment totals, that could have an impact on the school funding formula. Mary said it appears that when one town gains in value, it picks up a larger share of the tax burden and that could increase the town's payments to the school district.

The ConVal school funding formula is based 50 percent on the equalized assessment of each town.

Galen Stearns asked what the effect on the school adequacy funding would be. Mary said that formula was set by the state and suggested that Galen contact both the NH Department of Education and the NH Department of Revenue Administration for guidance. This formula changes often, she said, and those agencies would be better informed about the impact of additional taxable property in town.

## **7. Items for future meetings:**

- Discussion of overlays, new district or by conditional use
- Tower siting and setbacks
- Interconnection
- Determine reviews environmental impact statements

Minutes prepared by Mary Allen, Ad Hoc Committee member