

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE PLANNING BOARD

DECEMBER 7, 2011
FINAL MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Board members present: Mary Beth Ayvazian, John Kieley, Richard Whitcomb, Allan Pickman, and Rose Lowry

Call to order by Pickman at 7:37 p.m.

Approval of minutes: Move by Kieley to accept the minutes of 11/17/11 as amended, second by Pickman, and so voted unanimously.

Large Wind Energy System (LWES) ordinance: The board engaged in discussion on the development a draft ordinance. Kieley presented a list of several questions he wished the board to consider:

1. Should we have a large wind ordinance?
2. When does it need to be ready?
3. Is it advantageous to parallel New Ipswich? – pros and cons
4. Should we seek professional help? – who, and \$\$
5. How best to keep residents informed?
6. What should be covered? – view shed, noise, flicker, setbacks, birds

Lowry referred to question #1 and said she believes towns without an ordinance seem to have a tougher time. She made reference to wind towers in Gardner, MA, and a related website (<http://mwcc.edu/renewable/WindEnergy.html>). Information available there includes the history, costs, funding, and timelines of two wind turbines that were activated this year on the campus of Wachusett Mountain Community College. She noted many pre-project studies had been performed, and the avian (bird) study alone was 107 pages long. She also noted funding for the nine million dollar project consisted mainly of federal or state grants and bonds. *After further discussion, Kieley made a motion that the Planning Board agrees that Temple needs an ordinance to properly protect the town in regard to wind towers, second by Ayvazian, and so voted unanimously.*

Kieley referred to question #2 and brought up discussion of timelines. He said according to Adam Cohen, spokesman for Pioneer Green Energy, the company won't have a concrete proposal ready to present to Temple until at least May of 2012. One issue is that an agreement with PSNH to access the transmission lines is not yet in place. Kieley suggested the town get something on the books as early as possible to define process and requirements; this could be refined at a later date. Otherwise Pioneer Green could go directly to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) or the state Site Evaluation Committee (SEC). Pickman told the board about a hike he had recently completed on Kidder Mountain, which brought up discussion of tower height and impact of visibility on area towns. Board members were in agreement that sooner is better in terms of having an initial LWES ordinance. They discussed the general format and content of ordinances created by Antrim and New Ipswich, and decided to use the revised New Ipswich ordinance as a starting point.

Next there was discussion about whether to use setbacks or decibel levels to help control sound issues with wind towers. The Antrim ordinance utilizes setbacks, while the New Ipswich ordinance uses decibel limits. Pickman noted decibel levels vary, and can depend on equipment or weather variances. He wondered what might happen if a wind farm is built but

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then does not meet ordinance specifications, and what remedy could be undertaken at that point. Kieley suggested Temple may benefit from obtaining some engineering advice. He stated the town has to be in a position, when the state becomes involved, to defend what the Planning Board has done. He said for a few thousand dollars the board could get a review of the draft ordinance plus some technical advice, and suggested using the consulting firm in Peterborough with whom he has had previous contact. Kieley suggested Pickman email the selectmen's office with a proposal to pay up to \$5,000 for consultation services, although this amount is not in the town's budget for this year. Kieley said the Selectmen must manage the prudential affairs of the town and find the money; putting the amount in next year's budget is an option. *Ayvazian moved to approach the Board of Selectmen to ask for up to \$5,000 to obtain an engineering consultation, second by Lowry, and so voted unanimously.*

Audience member Bev Edwards spoke of several concerns, including the need to have bird studies done, plus consideration of health and noise issues. She said the bird issue is "huge". Lowry stated the local hawk watch group and Audubon Society do not have firm information on this type of impact. Board members indicated the ordinance should specify a bird study be done, by a consultant chosen by the town and paid for by the applicant. Edwards suggested the study be one year long to cover two migratory cycles. Ayvazian wondered if the same consulting firm could perform a storm water runoff study, but Pickman suggested a different NH engineering firm be utilized to analyze water runoff issues. Edwards said she feels wind turbines could create an entire disruption of a previously undisturbed state of environment. Possible impact on other wildlife was brought up, including a substantial moose population roaming the area near the proposed site of the wind farm. Kieley said there is language in the New Ipswich ordinance with specific penalties to deal with health problems. There was further discussion on whether to include decibel levels or setbacks, or both, with regard to regulating noise levels. Pickman stated if the board wants to encourage wind turbines, the developer must be able to meet requirements stated in the ordinance. If the town wants to discourage them, different language would be indicated. Ayvazian worried that if the ordinance is too restrictive, developers would go around the PB through the ZBA or SEC. Pickman said the board must properly craft definitions, and board members agreed that numbers and language in the ordinance must be specific. Audience member Connie Kieley urged the board to work to protect the town and the habitat.

Next the board discussed the possibility of 1) more or all of Pioneer Green's wind turbines in Temple and none in New Ipswich, and 2) other locations in town that might be considered for a wind farm, i.e. Fisk Hill. Lowry said the board must "set the bar high". It was decided that Ayvazian will contact the Attorney General's office to gather general information, and find out if the developer goes the SEC route, will the SEC listen to the town regarding specifications in a local ordinance. Lowry then proposed the board send out another mailer to town residents to keep them informed and gather their feedback. She suggested advertising the first public hearing, and said she hoped to encourage people to vote "yes" on adopting the ordinance. The board agreed to meet again on December 14th to as another work session. Pickman stated the first draft should be ready by the end of the year, to be finalized at the first meeting in January. Kieley will draft a "Temple-ized" version of the New Ipswich ordinance, and Lowry will proof-read.

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Lowry then asked board members for their personal feelings about wind turbines. Ayvazian said she was conflicted, indicating a problem with NIMBY (not in my back yard) thinking, as it would preclude alternative energy and “oil is ugly, but I respect objections to the project and follow the will of the people”. Lowry said she could picture turbines if they are state-of-art and whisper quiet, and reach a “high bar”, although this cannot be guaranteed. Her research has clarified what should be in the ordinance. She summarized that Temple residents deeply care about issue of wind turbines in town, while the developers are doing it for the money, including grants and loans, and not “to be green”. Kieley said he can visualize the towers, and reminded the board a lot of people have fought for Temple’s mountains. He said a part of the Wapack trail was re-routed due to a cell tower; he does not want to hike and see a wind tower. He said he hopes that a wilderness experience for kids should remain the same in the future as it is now. Pickman said he has personally seen polluted air from the Bow plant that heads north toward the lakes and White Mountain National Forest, and would appreciate an alternative energy source. Whitcomb said he had only seen the Lempster wind farm, and was okay with the looks but unsure about noise issues.

The board then discussed how to keep abreast of what is taking place with Pioneer Green at meetings in New Ipswich. They agreed to designate Pickman as the email contact person for Adam Cohen, to minimize the possibility of scattered emails or phone conversations. They also agreed Cohen is welcome at all public meetings. They then summarized what needs to be done to move forward with creating the ordinance, obtaining an engineering consultation, and mandating related studies. Pickman said regarding impact on wells that hydro-fracking of ledge done for this type of project should not impact wells at a distance. Kieley stated that depreciation, assessing and taxes were outside the purview of the PB, but said payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT’s) are allowed by law and must be considered. They also briefly discussed regional impact and notification of abutters, including impact on views from surrounding municipalities. Mention was made of a letter received from the local Historical Society proposing 2000 foot setbacks. Pickman said that would negate using 95% of the area being proposed by Pioneer Green for a wind farm. Kieley reiterated his feelings about being able to hike and see old cellar holes and the site of the glass factory without encountering wind towers.

Move to adjourn by Ayvazian, second by Lowry, and so voted.

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Betsy Perry