



MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF WEST HANTS
Special Planning Advisory Committee
February 21, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Sanford Council Chambers

- PRESENT:** Councillor Jennifer Daniels, Chair
Warden Abraham Zebian
Deputy Warden Paul Morton
Councillor Rupert Jannasch
Councillor Kathy Monroe
Councillor David Keith
Councillor Tanya Leopold
Councillor Debbie Francis
Councillor Randy Hussey
Councillor Robbie Zwicker
Mr. John Smith, Citizen Member
Mr. Matt Smith, Citizen Member
- STAFF:** Madelyn LeMay, Director of Planning and Development
Jeanne Bourque, Planner
Velma Macumber, Admin. Assistant
- GUESTS:** Kris MacLellan, Energy Project Developer, Minas Energy
Shawn Duncan, STRUM Consulting
Don Regan, CAO, Town of Berwick, AREA
Don Clarke, Mayor, Town of Berwick, AREA
Aaron Long, AREA
Bridget Tutty, Environmental Assessment Officer, NS Environment (6:21 pm)
- PUBLIC:** One member of the public was in attendance

Chair Daniels called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and reviewed fire evacuation procedures.

Chair Daniels noted that a presentation from Bridget Tutty, Environmental Assessment Officer, Nova Scotia Environment, was the first item on the agenda. However, Ms. Tutty was delayed in traffic, so Chair Daniels suggested moving on the next item on the agenda, the presentation of Minas Energy and AREA.

PRESENTATION TO PAC – MINAS ENERGY AND AREA

Kris MacLellan gave a presentation in support of their proposal for the expansion of the wind turbine facility.

Mr. MacLellan explained that the development was not a COMFIT project, nor was it a large-scale project in response to Nova Scotia Power's initiative. He stated that it was a partnership of three municipalities; the Towns of Berwick, Mahone Bay, and Antigonish, and it demonstrated a great example of inter-municipal cooperation.

Mr. MacLellan advised that in Phase One, 16 MW of Renewable Energy was generated, enough to power 4,500 homes. There were 33 Nova Scotia companies hired and \$15 million spent in Nova Scotia during the construction. He noted that CO2 emissions were reduced by approximately 25,000 tonnes, and tax revenue was generated for West Hants.

He also noted that a Community Liaison Committee was established for the life of the project and \$5,000 a year was given to the Ellershous Community for such things as solar panels and heat pumps for the Ellershous Community Hall. This amount will increase to \$10,000 if the development proposal goes through. Mr. MacLellan referred to a map showing the existing and proposed turbine sites.

Chair Daniels asked Committee members if they had any questions.

Councillor Hussey asked for a timeline for the development to occur and when it would be completed. Mr. MacLellan advised that it was hoped that construction would begin this year and be completed in the next couple of years.

Chair Daniels thanked Mr. MacLellan for his presentation.

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION – APPLICATION TO EXPAND ELLERSHOUSE WIND FARM

Chair Daniels advised that the Public Information Session was part of the West Hants public consultation process. This gives an opportunity for the public to give input on the proposed development agreement for the Ellershous Wind Farm Expansion.

Chair Daniels advised that the proposed amendments would allow the expansion made up of seven large wind turbines, which includes accessory components, access roads, and driveways in Ellershous. When the Public Information Session was completed, the PAC meeting would resume and Councillors may ask questions or make comments at that time.

Ms. Bourque noted that there was one member of the public in attendance.

Ms. Bourque reviewed the staff report with respect to an application from AREA to amend the existing development agreement to enable an expansion to a wind energy facility on a portion of PID 45007903 located in Ellershouse.

Ms. Bourque noted that AREA owns the Ellershouse Wind Farm, and has commissioned Minas Energy to develop the project on its behalf. Minas Energy submitted the initial proposal to build seven large wind turbines in Ellershouse, West Hants in 2013. Each turbine can produce 2.3 megawatts (MW), for a project capacity of 16.1 MW.

Through this application for an amendment, AREA is proposing to build an additional seven turbines, of the same capacity, which would increase the total project capacity to 32.2 MW.

Policy 4.22.4 of the Municipal Planning Strategy allows Council to consider installations of large wind turbines (over 100 Kw) or wind farms outside the Growth Centre, Village, or Hamlet designations by development agreement. One of the considerations of this policy is that any required provincial and/or federal government environmental assessment processes be completed. The second environmental assessment was given Ministerial Approval from the Nova Scotia Minister of the Environment on February 2, 2017.

Ms. Bourque noted that Policy 4.22.4 also outlines other matters to be considered: adjacent land uses, noise, shadow, public safety, safe road access, and Policy 16.3.1, the General Policy for Development Agreements.

Ms. Bourque asked the public if there were any questions or comments. No questions or comments were raised by the public attending the session, so the PAC meeting resumed.

STAFF REPORT – ALTERNATIVE RESOURCE ENERGY AUTHORITY - AMENDMENT TO DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT TO PERMIT EXPANSION OF ELLERSHOUSE WIND FARM

Ms. Bourque continued with reviewing the staff report with the Exhibits. She referred to Exhibit 1 which shows the boundary of both the original project site and the proposed expansion, the final location of turbines #1 to #7, the proposed locations of turbines #8 to #14, access roads both existing and proposed, civic points indicating dwelling units, and woods camps. The project site is located on a portion of the same property on which the first seven turbines were built. It is owned by Atlantic Star Forestry Ltd. for which AREA has negotiated a lease. She advised that a new clause was added to the new development agreement which requires signoff from one property owner at the end of Salmon Hole Dam Road stating the development can be closer than the buffer of 1,000 metres to their existing residential dwelling.

Councillor Monroe asked if there was a Phase 3 planned for the property. Mr. MacLellan stated that it depends on how the phases are defined. Phase 1 is the existing development and Phase 2 would be what is proposed, and as of now that is all that is planned for the site.

Discussion was held with respect to wind turbines being wired with fiber optic data cables and if they could be utilized for broadcasting. Minas Energy will look into this possible opportunity.

Chair Daniels asked if there were any further questions from the Committee. Hearing none, she asked if the Committee was ready to make a recommendation.

Moved and Seconded that Planning Advisory Committee send the application from Alternative Resource Energy Authority (A.R.E.A) to amend the existing development agreement to enable the construction of a further seven wind turbines on PID 45007903, in Ellershouse, West Hants, to Council for a public hearing and decision, and that Planning Advisory Committee further recommends that the notification area for the Public Hearing be two (2) kilometers from the project site boundaries.

Motion carried.

Ms. Bourque noted that Bridget Tutty had arrived at the meeting, and asked the Committee members if they had questions with respect to the environmental assessment to ask Ms. Tutty.

PRESENTATION TO PAC – PROVINCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS – BRIDGET TUTTY, ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OFFICER, NOVA SCOTIA ENVIRONMENT

Councillor Leopold asked about the delay on the approval of the environmental assessment.

Ms. Tutty advised that what was discovered in the case of ministerial approval being delayed was having to do with requiring more information on the sound modelling and archaeological data. Once this information was received and it was satisfied, the Minister gave approval upon conditions that monitoring be done with respect to noise in the event of public complaints.

Councillor Leopold asked if follow-ups would be done by Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) to ensure that the conditions were being met. Ms. Tutty replied that an auditing system would be set in place to follow up on monitoring and recording data. This system is for immediate and ongoing assessments.

No further questions were asked by the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved and Seconded that the meeting adjourn.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Chair