

Minutes of the Planning Board Meeting  
April 1, 2010 at the Town Hall, Charlemont, MA

Members Present :Gisela Walker, Bill Stephens, Dan Miller, Trevor Mackie, Jerry Pratt, Kathy Eichholz (alternate)

Also present: members of the public (see sign in sheet)

The meeting opened at 7:00 PM.

The Board discussed the question of extending the timeline on Earl Bowen's permit for his celltower, as the 2 yrs. have nearly lapsed. Gisela will check with Town Council whether it can just be extended on with a vote of the PB or will it require a special meeting.

The PB previously voted Bill to be the Natural Hazard Emergency Plan representative for the Board; however, as his term is ending, the Board will appoint a new representative.

As regards the new Floodplain Bylaw, Dan suggests that the Board have Bob Handsaker attend a meeting (April 15<sup>th</sup>?) to explain the law, so it could be considered for next year's Town Meeting.

Gisela made a motion to release the executive session meeting minutes into public record; Bill seconded. Passed with a unanimous vote.

At 7:30PM, Gisela opened the public hearing for the amendment to the Special Permit given to Berkshire East for a wind turbine, which was properly posted in the Recorder. Gisela explained to the public that this hearing is only to consider a different type of turbine in place of the approved one; the placement of a turbine is already approved by previous vote and can not be changed.

At the beginning of the original hearing on the turbine, certain members were recused (Bill) and others invoked the rule of necessity (Jerry and Dan); these provisions are still in effect.

At this point, SED was asked to explain the reason for the change in turbines to the Board – they explained that they have a less expensive option that was lower in height producing the same amount of power. Plus, they were also experiencing technical problems with the EWT turbine. The new tower would be 41 ft. shorter, with the hub height less by 45 ft.(59 meters/ 194 ft.) – each blade is 3 ft longer than on the other turbine, with a 56ft total sweep. The nacelle has a more classic wind turbine appearance, but no stripes on the blades. SED explained that the new turbine has a gear box; they had a sound expert (Peter Guldborg of Tech Environmental) make a computer model of the turbine to simulate the noise of the gearbox, which assumes the worst case noise absorption conditions. The study concluded a 2 dBA increase above ambient noise. Dan asked when the turbine will be the noisiest. SED explained that when the wind is moderate (at low elevation, no wind, but up high, lots of wind), the noise levels will be

the highest. However, as the winds are predominately westerly, the majority of the time noise will be minimal.

Trevor pointed out that the PowerWind website states that the turbine can't be bought in the United States. SED informed the Board that it was indeed available in the U.S. and copied a letter of commitment from PowerWind to SED and Berkshire East. Trevor also asked if the power converter was liquid or air cooled – SED stated that the turbine had a liquid cooled converter, but was looking into getting an air cooled one. SED also explained that the system was a closed loop.

Gisela asked if the shadow flicker would be worse. SED answered that because the turbine is slower and lower in height, it would have no worse effect.

Jerry wondered about more noise on the ski slopes, but SED felt this was not a problem. Dan asked about the dimensions of the nacelle – SED said that it was sleeker (2.5 meters diameter) than the EWT one.

The Board now opened the floor for questions from the audience:

- Dick Boehmer asked if there was any change to the strobe effect (shadow flicker). SED explained that there was no significant impact, with only 3 hrs. shadow a year in town.
- Bill Stephens expressed concern over solar flicker and wondered if there had been any analysis done of this – SED explained that light and dark spots are equal in an analysis and that the effect is minimal.
- Bill also asked whether the analysis done by the sound expert factored in the wind direction – SED explained that they always assume that it is down slope from the turbine.

Gisela now asked the Board, with input from SED and Berkshire East, how the permit should be worded; it was decided to use “PowerWind” in place of EWT.

Jerry made a motion to create an amendment to the existing permit to change the original EWT turbine to a 900 KW Powerwind 56 Turbine and with specifications outlined in Feb 26, 2010 application from Berkshire East. Dan Miller seconded. Trevor now added that they should leave out the hub height on the amendment. The Board carried the motion unanimously.

Gisela now made a motion to accept the amendment on the special permit. Trevor seconded. No discussion. The Board passed the motion unanimously.

The public hearing was closed at 9:05 PM.

Gisela announced that she has begun reworking the information sheet for special permits, to make the layout clearer to the applicant.

The meeting was closed at 9:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Eichholz