

TOWN OF CHARLEMONT
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC MEETING
June 25, 2009 in the Hawlemont Cafeteria

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm

Members present: Gisela Walker, Jerry Pratt, Trevor Mackie, Kathy Eichholz, and Dan Miller, Bill Stephens

Board reviewed survey of the property owned by Robert Burrington, Mohawk Trail following up a question from him whether or not the property had enough frontage on a public way to subdivide that property. The board determined that there isn't sufficient frontage to do so.

7:15 pm Board opens the Special Permit **hearing for the application from Berkshire East Ski Resort** to construct a wind turbine on the property to generate electricity.

Letters regarding conflicts of interest were read by Dan Miller, Jerry Pratt, and Bill Stephens. The letters from Mr. Miller and Mr. Pratt stated that they were visual abutters with properties being in direct line of sight of the project. They both felt they could be objective but wanted to check with the applicant to make sure they were comfortable with them sitting in on the hearing. Jim Schaefer, co-owner of Berkshire East said that he was fine with those members sitting on the hearing. Mr. Stephens stated he was an abutter to the Berkshire East property and felt it necessary to recuse himself from the hearing. His recusal was accepted by Mr. Schaefer.

Trevor Mackie also stated for the record that he is an employee of National Grid, the regional power company who will purchase any surplus power from the project.

Motion: That Dan Miller, Jerry Pratt, and Trevor Mackie be absolved from any conflict or interest by the Rule of Necessity. Seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Schaefer, co-owner and representing Berkshire East gave a brief introduction to those in attendance on the importance and necessity of the project to help offset the exponential rise in the cost of electricity. The ski resort uses an enormous amount of power (\$150,000/yr) to run the operation and is facing a tripling in the cost of that power. The installation of the wind turbine represents "...a physical hedge against those rising operating expenses".

The presentation was then turned over to the consulting engineers representing the wind turbine construction company, Kevin Schulty (sp?) and David Strong

The wind turbine would be owned and operated by Berkshire East.

The proposed wind turbine is a 900 kw unit. The engineers anticipate Berkshire East using 60% + of the power generated and 20 % - 40 % sold back to the power grid.

The proposed turbine height will be 331' from the base of the tower to the tip of the rotor blades. The blade length is 95', nacelle diameter of 20'. The unit will rotate at approx. 8mph or 18-24 rpm. The tower will have an inside ladder for maintenance purposes.

The wind field study performed by the consulting firm found that the proposed site for the wind turbine has an estimated production of 27%

There was some discussion of the access road to the proposed wind turbine site. Mr. Schaefer pointed out that only 150' of the access road to the tower site will be in the town of Charlemont. The remainder of that road runs through the town of Hawley. Mr Schaefer asked the board if for whatever reason the existing access road becomes prohibitive for transporting components to the site, could the existing ski trails be used for transporting components to the site? The board felt there would be no problem with using the existing ski trails for that purpose.

Some discussion was given to the confusion over the actual location of the town line between the towns of Charlemont and Hawley. There is a traditional town line and a legal town line. The proposed site is approximately 85' from the traditional town line and 107' from the legal town line. Both are well beyond the 25' setback required by town zoning. The Plan B site would be about 250 feet from the legal town line. The consultants briefly discussed the environmental impacts relative to migratory birds, etc. Their studies show no significant impact.

Date of a balloon tests were set at Friday July 10, 2009 between the hours of 4-8pm, and Saturday July 11, 2009 between the hours of 8am-12 noon.

Balloons are to be floated at the height of the nacelle and the top of the rotor blades.

The Board will conduct a site visit on June 11 at 12 noon with possible trip to the turbine at Jimeny Peak.

Motion to continue hearing to July 16, 2009 at 7:00 pm. Seconded. Passed unanimously

At 8.55 pm the C0-Chair (Stephens) opened the **hearing for the Malone/SBA Celltower** application; Mr. Finnegan, attorney for SBA on this project and two other attorneys attended as well as Mr. and Mrs. Malone and several abutters (see sign in sheet).

As this was understood to be the final hearing to spell out the conditions for the permit, Bill Stephens followed the outline of the appropriate bylaw section and the approval conditions can be reviewed in the notice of decision. There was considerable discussion still about the final height of the stealth tower but in the end the permit was approved unanimously by the Board. The hearing closed shortly after 10 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Stephens, co-Chairman