

DRAFT

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF CHARLEMONT**

11/5/09

Members Present:

Gisela Walker, Co-Chair
Dan Miller
Jerry Pratt
Trevor Mackie,
Kathy Eicholz, Associate

Also Present were: Roy Schaefer, Jim Schaefer, John Schaefer, Christopher Loftus, David Strong of SED, and members of the public. Planning Board Co-Chair, Bill Stephens was also present, but had previously recused himself from the hearings. Selectman Win Healy arrived later.

Walker opened the Public Hearing at 7:05 PM. Walker stated that in thinking about how to vote on this Special Permit Application, the Board acknowledges the controversy in the community on the impact of the turbine on the scenic vista, human and bird health, exposure to light, noise and other effects and the perceived quality of life. Walker further acknowledged that the turbine will introduce a tall and visual structure into the Town for decades. She pointed out that most of the information and reports available about wind power impact on people and wildlife have been on multiple turbine wind farms or on turbines much closer to residences than is the case with this one.

Walker stated that on the other hand there has been much support for the positive economic impact of the turbine on Berkshire East and the town and for promoting and using renewable energy at a time of such great global concern. Walker went on to state that tonight the board will balance all these issues, review the Special Permit Criteria, review the language that was discussed at the last hearing and vote on the Application. Walker stated that a 4:1 vote is needed to pass, and informed all present of the filing and appeals process.

Miller stated that when the Board discusses putting together a Wind Turbine Bylaw in the future, it should not allow the turbine to be as high as possible, to be as profitable as possible but should be similar to the current cell tower bylaw, which restricts heights. Miller went on to say that he still would like to bring tower down to 50 meters. Stating that the Board's goal as responsible Planners is to look at what's best to Charlemont, not the world, Miller asked for a vote to bring the tower from a 75 meter to 50.

Discussion ensued among the Board members with most feeling that bringing the turbine down 80 feet would not make a significant difference, and that it will have an impact no matter how high it is. It was also felt that the Applicants have modified the application as requested by the Board and that is what the Board should vote on. Walker suggested they review the Special Permit criteria, and see if there are any

other issues other Board members may want to change, and if so, the Board can vote on them along with Miller's motion.

The Board then discussed each of the 12 Special Permit criteria items by which the Board decides their Special Permits.

Next, the Board returned to Miller's request to lower the turbine. It was decided to poll the Board to see if there was even the need for a motion. None of the members sitting on the Board agreed with the suggestion of lowering the turbine, so no motion was made.

Walker made a motion to accept the permit as submitted and written up. The motion was seconded by Mackie and passed 4:1, with Miller abstaining.

The Board thanked the Applicants for their generous offer, recommended that the Select Board vote to accept it and noted that their vote was not contingent upon the offer.

Win Healey commended the Board for their thoughtful and respectful discussion of some very complex issues, and noted that the way they comported themselves was admirable.

The public hearing was closed at 9:42 p.m. by a majority vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carlene Millett,
Former Secretary to the Boards