

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
May 1, 2006**

Present: Thomas J. Lacey, Chairperson  
Jack Carey  
Michael Molisse  
Kevin Whitaker

Not Present: Paul J. Leary

Also Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Councilor  
Gregory Shanahan, Councilor  
Michael Smart, Councilor

Recording Secretary: Janet Murray

Chairman Lacey called the Environmental Committee Meeting to order at 6:30pm.

**Discussion of Motion Initiated by Councilor DiFazio-Requesting the Installation of a Wind Anemometer at the South Weymouth Naval Air Station**

Councilor Lacey stated that Colin McPherson, a director for the South Shore Tri-Town-Development Corporation (SSTDC) and William Ryan of LNR Corporation were present this evening to aid in the discussion of the motion.

Councilor DiFazio stated that he believes that it would be proactive for the Committee to recommend the installation of a wind anemometer at the South Weymouth Naval Air Station. He does not think it is wise to wait for LNR or Tri-Town to come forth with a decision to do something affirmative for the potential for wind power development. He stated that a year's worth of data is required and the sooner it is started, the better.

Councilor Carey asked who would pay for it. Councilor DiFazio stated that the request should be made of LNR and/or Tri-Town to pay for this. The cost is estimated at \$10,000 to purchase and erect the equipment.

Councilor Whitaker questioned the portion of the motion that the Town pay for the cost to do this. Councilor DiFazio stated that he was open to changes to the motion, in order to get the equipment purchased and erected.

Councilor Lacey asked Councilor DiFazio if he was comfortable with the motion as written and if the Committee could make any necessary changes. Councilor DiFazio stated that his ultimate goal is for this Town Council to be proactive in directing a message to LNR and/or Tri-Town to analyze the potential wind energy at the base.

Councilor Lacey stated that he had concerns about the wording and some of the specific details of the motion. He stated that he is concerned about jurisdiction when instructing SSTDC to do

something. He noted that it could be an issue of semantics, but it is a concern. He also expressed concerns regarding the zoning issue raised on 04/03/06.

Mr. McPherson stated that the Directors of Tri-Town had a meeting last week and decided not to request the Executive Director of SSTDTC, Terry Fancher, to pursue the potential for wind energy. Mr. McPherson stated that SSTDTC would not take any action on a wind farm. He stated that there is a reuse plan and a zoning plan in place that does not contemplate this use; it contemplates a mixed use. The reuse plan was voted on by the three towns. SSTDTC, by law, is supposed to follow what the towns have enacted. He stated that any such actions would violate the reuse plan and zoning plan.

Councilor Whitaker asked if the zoning and reuse were not obstacles would the SSTDTC Board be interested. He stated no, but LNR may be interested. He stated that what has been represented is that the base is not a high wind area and a wind farm is not feasible. He stated that what LNR represented was that LNR would bring one or two wind mills into the plan, if feasible.

William Ryan of LNR Corporation appeared before the Board. Mr. Ryan stated that LNR is evaluating the applicability of wind power, consistent with the green design principle in the Secretary of Environmental Affairs certificate on the Notice of Project Change. This means that as part of Smart Growth and green design principles, LNR is required by the law that set up the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) to fully evaluate the different types of energy alternatives that can be incorporated into the reuse plan from a viability standpoint. He stated that this includes wind, solar, and various other hybrids that may come in. He noted that the scoping certificate issued by the Secretary does not speak to wind power as an industrial or utility type of application. The scope is to assess that based upon applicable particular individual circumstances as may exist as a component of the reuse plan.

He stated that if we are speaking of a bio-tech or bio-pharmaceutical manufacturing process and an energy alternative that may support that process, this specific process could be supported potentially by the erection of a windmill or some other alternative energy means that fits within the zoning which is viable for that particular type of process. It does not lead to off-site supply or for sale power generation or anything like that. Any use such as this would require a plan change, not just a MEPA change or a permitting change; it would require a zoning change, a reuse plan change, notification to the Navy, and the subsequent filing of a notice of project change to MEPA and the re-scoping of the MEPA certificate.

Councilor Carey noted that he was not present when this was originally discussed. He stated that there are people who are under the impression that LNR would do the proper testing to determine if wind power is a feasible option. He asked if this has changed.

Mr. Ryan suggested to Councilor Carey that the impression indicated is not an accurate characterization of what LNR said it would do. He stated that what LNR said it would do is evaluate the viability of wind power consistent with the reuse plan which was being voted on by the communities. There are those who would suggest that a wind farm remains a viable alternative regardless of the plan ultimately adopted. He noted that this is a separate question that LNR is not prepared to answer.

Mr. Ryan stated that he believes that what Mr. McPherson represented previously is persuasive in that any type of industrial capacity at this site is not going to happen. He stated that this is data that is based on 20, 30 or 60 year old evidence. He thinks that this is beside the point, as wind patterns are a function of temperature, climatology, latitude, and longitude. Within the last 50 years, none of this has changed.

Councilor Carey asked if this means that even one wind mill would need a zoning change. Mr. Ryan stated that this was not true as you could fit within the zoning up to 165 feet. He stated that what LNR is going through in the next several months, and through the final environmental impact report phase which will not be until this time next year, is to look at where those site specific applications might be optimized. He noted that this is not limited to wind, but also includes solar and other potential forms of energy alternatives that may be more viable.

Councilor Carey stated that he thought that doing the testing would help to determine whether wind energy “pockets” exist on the site.

Mr. Ryan stated that the process that LNR is going through right now is scoping those “pockets” and assessing the impacts of these pockets present at the site, determining how it comes up against species habitats, wetland districts, and how do the various lines and mitigation parameters have to be drawn around what those are. The first piece is to deal with those types of issues.

LNR must define these issues and how the pockets of the existing plan work within these parameters. Then LNR can look at where they can potentially include where the different type of energy viabilities might be. This can't be done until it is known what the permitting of the whole plan looks like first.

Mr. Ryan suggested that to install a tower at 185 feet would require not only a zoning change but also a plan change which involves approval from the three towns.

Councilor Whitaker suggested that it might make sense to determine if there is a potential for wind energy first, and then go forward to decide what is feasible, whether it is site use of wind energy or an industrial wind power application. He asked if LNR could set up a way to measure something in the industrial area. Once LNR starts developing, could they entice potential developers to come in and perform their own studies in those pockets.

Mr. Ryan stated that there is nothing to prevent testing for some type of wind power that is specific to a particular application. He added that an industrial wind power application can not be a part of the current plan without approval from the three towns and possibly the Navy.

Councilor Whitaker stated that there needed to be a basis to explore wind energy. Obtaining a benchmark would be worthwhile regardless of the potential use. Mr. Ryan reiterated that specific application use is the only way to consider alternative energy usage. He stated that many of the questions mentioned this evening will be brought up in the next year as part of the environmental impact process.

Mr. Ryan stated that LNR believes that all necessary information is presently available in regards to wind potential. They will look at wind at site specific applications.

Mr. McPherson stated that SSTTDC has contractual obligations to the towns and to LNR. SSTTDC is not the decision maker. He also stated that as far as the idea of an industrial wind farm, the Council should do their own homework. There was a power point presentation which implied a billion dollar revenue. He stated that the presentation was missing many aspects.

He stated that as a Director of SSTTC, he has heard from several South Weymouth residents, who are stating to the East Weymouth Civic Association, and the East Weymouth District Councilor-the day they put a couple of wind mills at Legion Field is the day there will be wind mills at the base. People don't want 100 four hundred foot towers in their neighborhood. One wind mill may not make noise but 100 will. 100 wind mills will disrupt cell phones and other microwave activity. Also, 100 wind mills would be one of the 20 largest wind mill projects in the country and the other 19 are located in non residential areas. It would be the first time it was attempted in a heavily developed area. He stated that he has spoken with people in the industry who think that a wind farm would have an adverse impact on property taxes as well. He does not think that it makes any sense for this Council to move forward on this.

Councilor DiFazio stated that it is not the intent to put 100 wind turbines in South Weymouth. He stated that his ultimate goal is to obtain the data necessary whether a wind turbine is feasible. He stated that it was his understanding that the SSTTDC Board of Directors did not take a vote on this matter last week. It was the Executive Director who said that he did not want to conduct a feasibility study or install any wind turbines and that the Board was silent and no vote was taken. He suggested that the Board needs a voice. The voice needs to come from one of the host communities.

Councilor DiFazio stated that the Council needs to inform the Board of Directors that they are interested in obtaining that data. He also stated that the expert that LNR provided at the meeting last week had no opinion as to whether the map would discourage a developer from putting money into a project to develop a wind farm or wind turbine at the base.

Council President Smart stated that he was present at the meeting held last week. He paraphrased the Executive Director's comment that unless he was instructed by the Board, he would not spend anymore time researching wind. At this point the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr. Ward, asked if there were any comments to be made. None of the Directors spoke. President Smart stated that this would indicate that the Board of Directors did not want the Executive Director to pursue this further.

At that meeting, Mr. Kliman, the expert provided by LNR, presented a map. He stated that this is the first place that anyone, such as an investor, would go. It is from the Department of Energy's wind program. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory puts the South Weymouth Naval Air Station in the poor to marginal category. Mr. Kliman indicated that that was not something that they were willing to pursue.

Councilor Smart stated that his issue with the motion is that we are asking our representative from SSTITDC, who is present, this evening, to do something that he has stated will not be pursued as the information is already available. He did not want to ask SSTITDC to spend the tax payer's money to do this again.

Councilor Whitaker stated that he believes that Mr. DiFazio is asking to find a way to communicate that we would like to have these measurements taken to see what is and is not viable. He believes that the homework has already been done as we have had several presentations by a number of experts in the field.

Councilor Whitaker stated that he lives a stone's throw away from the base and it is news to him that there are those who have no interest in finding out the facts.

Councilor DiFazio asked that the Committee amend the motion to simplify it to allow the installation of an anemometer to measure potential wind energy for data to be used for a developer.

Councilor Carey suggested the meeting be continued to allow for editing and amendments.

A MOTION was made Councilor Carey to CONTINUE this Item and was seconded by Councilor Molisse.

Councilor Whitaker made an AMENDED MOTION to request that the Weymouth Town Council request SSTITDC and LNR to examine alternative energy sources at the Naval Air Station, including, but not limited to, studying the suitability of wind turbine power through use of an anemometer. There was no second.

The Original MOTION to CONTINUE was PASSED on a 3-1 vote.

At 7:50 pm, there being no further business, A MOTION was made by Councilor Carey to ADJOURN and was seconded by Councilor Molisse and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas J. Lacey, Chairperson