

TOWN OF PORTLAND/PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP
PORTLAND TOWN HALL
MAY 29, 2019 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dan Schrantz	Supervisor
Gary Miller	Council
Jerry Boltz	Council
Patti Farrell	Council

TOWN BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Rick Manzella	Council
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PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Harold Smith	Chairman
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Lori Foster, Robert Patterson Sr., Daniel Larish

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dale Furman

- Supervisor Schrantz opened the workshop at 7:40 p.m. He stated the purpose of this meeting is to review the Local Laws on Wind Turbines and Solar. The Town has been approached by EWT for wind turbines and numerous calls from Solar companies. A lot has changed since the Town has adopted the Solar and Wind Turbine Laws. Mr. Schrantz stated it is important that the Town have everything covered and in place. There are pros and cons and the Town Board must make decisions on what is best for the residents of Portland. The growth of the Town is one half to one million dollars of new valuation every year, Supervisor Schrantz said that's a slow steady growth with little or no increases on the Town's budget for the past 20 years. The Town does not want to stop that growth. The Town of Portland has always protected the farmlands. The board will have to review agricultural exemptions and pay backs if a turbine or solar farms were built on land with an agricultural assessment. Chairman Harold Smith stated within the Solar Law none would be constructed 850 feet below sea level. Above 850 feet solar can be constructed, also north of the Thruway and south of Route 5. This was to protect the gravel soil. Chairman Smith and Planning Board member Dan Larish attended a conference regarding wind and solar, Mr. Smith said the presenters were very clear that the Town's can set aside areas for wind and solar. He said it doesn't have to be the whole township, If the Town does a percentage, we have done our obligation. Mr. Smith discussed other concerns for decommissioning turbines and solar panels. Planning Board member Dan Larish stated the Town should not be afraid to put a moratorium on wind and solar laws for six months to one year, until we review the law to see how to navigate solar and wind locations. Supervisor Schrantz stated EWT turbines that have been presented look like a different type, they have no gear box, direct drive but there are no turbines close for the board to look at. Mr. Larish again stated therefore a moratorium is the best tool. Board members agreed they must do what is best for all residents within the Town of Portland. Planning Board member Bob Patterson asked

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if the town can do another moratorium on wind since they did one years ago. Mr. Smith stated he thinks the town can saying things are changing so fast the town has to do what is right regarding zoning, state laws etc. He also told board members there are books to guide us on the process. Eric Holton from EWT Turbines was present to answer any questions. Mr. Holton explained the location and project. Three sites that are currently being looked at:

- Route 20 between the Thruway about 1 ½ miles east of the center of Brocton.
- North of Thruway between Pecor and Mathews Road.
- West between Pecor and Onthank Road.

Clerk Sobecki gave board member's a copy of the following from EWT:

Recyclability and Environmental – We would like to emphasize that the majority of our turbine components are recyclable and/or reusable. For examples, 1) the tower, nacelle, and generator are made mostly of steel and therefore 95% recyclable (or reusable), 2) unlike nearly every other direct drive (no gearbox) wind turbine, our generator design does not require the use of rare earth metals, and 3) the blades rarely degrade significantly and thus can be easily refurbished and used again in the growing second-hand market. Furthermore, each turbine is estimated to generate approximately three million kWh of clean electricity each year, which equates to 2,100 metric tons of avoided greenhouse gas emissions (according U.S. averages published by the EPA). This is the equivalent to greenhouse gasses emitted by 450 cars each year or the amount sequestered by 2,500 acres of forest. Finally, in a 2014 life cycle analysis published in the International Journal of Sustainable Manufacturing, researchers concluded that the environmental impact of a wind turbine is typically offset by its environmental benefits within the first year of operation.

Town Benefits – As we have mentioned before, there are several direct benefits to the town:

1. Revenue – we intend to seek a PILOT, which will result in predictable annual payments to the town for the life of the project.
2. Local clean energy generation – the proposed projects are designed as Community Wind projects. Our turbines will connect to existing National Grid power lines and serve only National Grid customers. The projects are meant to provide benefits to local homes and businesses; we cannot export energy to other states or Canada. Portland residents will have the option to subscribe to the projects to save costs on their utility bills and support local clean energy and development.
3. National Grid system upgrades – we expect to invest well over \$1 million in upgrades to the local National Grid distribution system (e.g., wires, substation, protective devices), which will benefit all connected National Grid customers, not only those who elect to subscribe to our community wind program.
4. Land-use preservation – we intend to site our turbines such to minimize any impact to existing or future agricultural operations. This includes using existing access roads as much as possible, burying electrical lines, and minimizing the physical footprint.

Viewshed – We are committing to use a turbine that is significantly smaller than others currently operating and proposed in the area (e.g., Arkwright Summit). We encourage you to review the turbine

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overview document that we shared with the Town Clerk on May 17 that provides a graphical size comparison to these other turbines. Furthermore, we are conducting a detailed viewshed study to identify any recognized sensitive locations (e.g., historic places).

Comparison to Arkwright Summit – we see in the meeting notes that some neighbours to the Arkwright Summit project have outstanding issues with those turbines. We would like to emphasize that our turbines are significantly smaller in size and quantity. The EWT DW61 turbine has a rated power capacity of 1 MW and a tip height of 326 feet. The Arkwright Summit turbines have a rated capacity of 2-2.2 MW and a tip height of 492 feet. Also, we are proposing a maximum of ten turbines across three sites in contrast to the 36 turbines that comprise Arkwright Summit. For additional comparison, our turbines are nearly 275 feet shorter than those proposed for the recently approved Ball Hill project (599 feet). Smaller turbine size or quantity generally means less shadow-flicker effects and cumulative noise. However, we will complete detailed studies to evaluate both common concerns and are proud to report that our initial studies indicate full compliance with Town law and national/international guidance. We would also like to point out that we have mitigation options available for both issues, if needed. Finally, our direct-drive design further reduces mechanical noise due to the absence of a gearbox.

Mr. Holton told the board EWT is hoping to avoid a moratorium. Mr. Holton stated they are trying to get a feel from the town on what their concerns are before they submit a full application. Mr. Holton discussed the security bond they put on the turbines for decommissioning, which are updated every few years. After more discussion, Supervisor thanked everyone for coming and closed the workshop at 9:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Roxane Sobecki
Town Clerk