

**Wind Turbine Public Forum**  
**Thursday, August 13, 2009**  
**6:00 p.m.**  
**Town Board Room**

Community Development Director Bob Joseph opened the forum by stating this is a meeting to hear from the public how they feel about regulating small-scale wind turbines. On August 11, 2009, the Town Board placed a 120-day moratorium within the town limits on issuing any building permits for small-scale residential wind turbines. Comments from tonight's discussion will be reviewed by Staff and eventually the Estes Valley Planning Commission.

Director Joseph briefly discussed the various types of wind turbines, and also reviewed the net-metering program currently in place with Estes Park Light and Power.

It was suggested by someone in the audience to put Director Joseph's PowerPoint presentation on the Town website.

Dave Rusk/County Resident is a small wind turbine advocate. He mentioned the Estes Valley's unique wind and views, and believes tower height should not exceed the tops of trees. He has seen some very small turbines made for urban areas. He believes zoning may require certain restrictions. He stressed the importance of communicating with neighbors.

Tom Gresslin/Town Resident suggests requiring an environmental impact study prior to approving a wind turbine. He cited various reports from different states that were opponents of wind turbines. He supports using the Platte River Power Authority's (PRPA) wind energy program.

Sandy Lindquist/Town Resident questions the mechanical track records of turbines and believes regulations should be in place to enforce maintenance and repair or removal.

Reuben Bergsten/Town Engineer explained the wind energy program with PRPA. The Town is planning a pilot program to determine the productivity in this area.

Director Joseph clarified the land use code does not currently prohibit the installation of wind turbines as long as they are 30 feet or less in height. Until the moratorium, the practice was to treat them like any other structure, and the Town had a legal obligation to permit them. Town staff has a professional and ethical obligation to hear from the community, and more discussion will occur prior to any regulation implementation. Any development code changes must be approved by the Planning Commission, Town Board of Trustees, and the Board of County Commissioners.

Betty Hull/Planning Commissioner stated wind turbines will be placed on an agenda for Planning Commission Study Session. She supports the moratorium to buy time to hear public comment and establish some regulations.

Carol Gresslin/Town Resident opposes wind turbines from a visual standpoint.

Director Joseph stated it is difficult to obtain second- and third-party data, but easy to obtain manufacturer's data. Performance can be very different depending on the region of the country. Estes Park has a lot of turbulence, which can compromise performance. Prop driven units always have to search for the wind direction, while helix types operate in wind from any direction. Different technologies have different pros and cons for performance and visual impacts.

Marcia Logan/Town Resident would like to be able to know more about the types of wind turbines that will be allowed.

Clay Wright/Town Resident is a proponent of wind turbines in Estes Park, and believes they show that the Town is willing to stand up for the environment. He sees them as a very positive statement to the country.

Jim McCormick/County Resident wants renewable energy sources to be used thoughtfully. Wind turbines are not just a personal decision, but affect the people around them, and there should be measures to mitigate the impact. He is a strong supporter of purchasing wind power from the Town's program with PRPA. He is in favor of the moratorium. Mr. McCormick supports disallowing them altogether since wind energy is available through the PRPA subscription program.

Frank Theiss/County Resident asked about the recovery of embedded carbon emissions. Director Joseph stated if you do not put horizontal axis turbines high enough to operate at their optimum efficiency, they may never recover their costs. So, as performance is enhanced the visual impact is increased.

Mayor Bill Pinkham said the Platte River Power Authority is in the process of contracting to double their capacity for wind energy. He also stated if you have wind generation on your own property, you still need to be connected to the grid due to the unreliability of the wind in the area. He noted there is an online site showing wind patterns in Colorado. His perspective is that the PRPA wind energy program allows everyone to participate, while personal wind turbines will be limited to only a few individuals due to the cost. Director Joseph stated most cost recovery data is from manufacturers that are testing in optimum positions and areas.

Reuben Bergsten/Town Engineer stated the preliminary anemometer results he has seen for this area are disappointing.

Ron Norris/Planning Commissioner believes information should be gathered on the following areas: height of towers versus designs, what other communities have done

with setbacks and zoning (particularly in mountain communities), noise data, wildlife impact, energy production in variable winds, and actual performance and reliability of these units.

Jim Tawney/Town Resident believes we live in an overregulated community. He thinks wind turbines can be strategically placed in the community with careful consideration. He also wants to make sure property rights are protected.

Frank Theiss/County Resident supports wind turbines at a height of 30 feet.

Jay Heinemann/County Resident believes there are other ways to be “green” rather than installing wind turbines; specifically, adding insulation to your attic, purchasing wind energy from the Town, or purchasing an electric thermal storage heater (depending on your type of heat source).

Jim McCormick/County Resident suggests having a conceptual discussion about whether or not wind turbines should be allowed in the Estes Valley.

Director Joseph asked for a show of hands as to whether there is a place in the community for small turbines if regulated properly – 7. Those that were opposed to the idea no matter how they were regulated – 12. Undecided – about 9.

Roger Galloway/Town Resident is very opposed to wind turbines in Estes Park, believing it is the opposite of what our location next to Rocky Mountain National Park represents. He thinks it will depress property values and irritate visitors.

John Kamprath/Town Resident is concerned we are going to go the wrong direction, and wants to make sure there will be opportunities as the technology improves and advances. He wants to make sure property rights are protected.

An Allenspark resident believes we have an obligation to care for and maintain the views for the tourists that visit the area.

Mayor Bill Pinkham mentioned that Boulder County has discussed this topic and has created some definitions. He wonders if the PRPA could do a better job promoting its wind energy program.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.