

DDOWT DIGEST

A NEWSLETTER OF DUTTON/DUNWICH
OPPONENTS OF WIND TURBINES

DDOWT Newsletter
Issue # 2 - March 2014



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Dutton/Dunwich Council Receives Clear Response

Chief Administrative Officer of the Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich, Laurie Spence Bannerman delivered an important report to Council at their meeting on February 12, 2014. The Council meeting was observed by a full gallery of interested observers, primarily DDOWT (Dutton/Dunwich Opponents of Wind Turbines) members.

Following a request to Council in November, 2013 by members of DDOWT, Council decided to poll D/D citizens to ascertain if there was strong feeling one way or another about the Industrial Wind Turbines (IWT) project being proposed in our community.

CAO Spence Bannerman reported the results of that poll on Feb. 12th. She summarized the cost to the Municipality of carrying out the survey, which totaled approximately \$3045, as well as the added staff time to send out the survey and tabulate the results. Based on 2011 Statistics Canada data, there were 3021 adults over the age of 18 residing in D/D. Over 50% of those eligible to vote did so, with 1503 results received by the deadline of January 31st, and an additional 63 surveys received after the deadline. This number of responders far exceeds the average number of voters that come out for any given Municipal election. So it is clear to anyone paying attention that this issue is a very important one to residents of Dutton/Dunwich.

Of the 1503 votes received by the deadline, 1265 indicated they were NOT in favour of Industrial Wind Turbines being built in our community. That is a whopping majority of 84% of the responding citizens

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opposed! Spence Bannerman also stated that among the 63 responses received after the deadline, 87% were not in favour. The Council did not take part in any discussion of these results, and Mayor Cameron McWilliam indicated that this survey would be considered by Council when making future decisions, but that it would not be binding on Council to make any decision regarding declaring D/D to be an "Unwilling Host" to IWT. Mayor McWilliam also noted that Council members will be attending the Good Roads Convention the last week of February, and they are expecting important new IWT information to be forthcoming at that meeting.

Very few municipalities have undertaken such a survey, to take the pulse of their citizens about IWT, and DDOWT applauds our Council for being so pro-active in evaluating the desires of the majority of their electorate. It seems clear that this has been money well spent by Council, to glean valuable opinion from the citizens of D/D, on an issue that could have a huge impact on our community for decades to come.

*84% of responding Dutton/Dunwich
citizens are not in favour of Wind
Turbine projects in our community
Results of Community Survey Jan. 2014*

Residential Developers Concerned about IWT

D/D citizens were not the only voices of concern heard at the recent D/D Council meeting. Two letters were also received and read by Council. These letters made it quite clear that IWT projects and expanded residential developments are not compatible.

“As an experienced business person and developer”, wrote Sandy Acchione, developer of residential land to the west of the village of Dutton, “I was shocked to learn how close the turbines will be to the cluster of homes in Dutton’. He went on to say, “...the village cannot grow in the direction of the turbines as the noise and vibration will be disruptive and likely create an unmarketable housing product.....The proximity of the turbines to the town, we believe, will encourage the people to leave the town thus creating negative growth. The tax impact of this can be catastrophic to the future viability of Dutton.....This is such a significant issue it will require us to reassess moving forward on our own development. Selling one house near a turbine is one thing, but selling 75 homes next to turbines is not viable.”

“...the village cannot grow in the direction of the turbines as the noise and vibration will be disruptive and likely create an unmarketable housing product...” a local housing developer

R & B Developments Inc., the developers of a 25-acre plot already zoned residential in Ridgewood Estates on the north-east corner of Dutton also sent a letter of concern. It stated, “There is a potential to construct 65 single family lots on this 25 acres. If the construction of these wind turbines proceeds, the

possibility of selling any of these lots would be severely impacted therefore making us reconsider the possible development.”

Both developers strongly recommended that Council should take all steps possible to prohibit IWT projects, for the benefit of new residential growth and its related tax revenue in the Municipality.

With at least two other areas of potential residential development under consideration for the Municipality of D/D, this issue should be of major concern to our Council as well as our community. Financial benefits for a small minority of our citizens, the 90 local farmers claimed to have signed IWT land options, may have a negative impact on the current economic stability, as well as the potential future growth of the entire Municipality.

One of many industrial wind turbine parts seen traveling our local roads over the past months. Here a blade moves along the 401, accompanied by the usual police escort.



Wind Turbine Setback Regulations Do Not Favour Land Under Development

Dutton/Dunwich Council asked Council staff to research current regulations with regard to wind turbine set-backs from land under development for family residences. At the Feb. 12th Council meeting, CAO Spence Bannerman reported back to Council.

She found that Ontario Regulation 359/09, which dictates a minimum of 550 metres as a setback from IWT to the nearest residence, does not take into account 'boundaries', only what are referred to as 'receptors'. Her report stated, "This means that if D/D has a large vacant area that is slated for future residential development, there is nothing in Regulation 359/09 legally dictating a 550 metre setback from the edges of this vacant area, just from a single point on that property, which could have huge implications."

Spence Bannerman went on to clarify, "A Municipality can raise concerns to the wind developer that a proposed wind turbine is within 550metres of a future development area, and the wind developer could take this into consideration during their analysis of vacant lots, but they are not bound by the legislation to do so."

The implications of this finding have been rightly flagged as a major concern by our D/D residential developers. And documents submitted to Council by the local Wind Turbine proponent, Invenergy, highlight this problem. Maps which they provided show two potential setback areas around Dutton - one which extends the setback slightly beyond the 550metre requirement, which is intended as the location only IF the Municipality agrees to go along with the planned project, and another showing the minimum regulated setback if the Municipality is not supportive of the project.

This is a clear example of putting pressure on the Council to go along with the project. Not the type of action you would expect from a company that states their project will benefit all residents.

Invenergy estimated D/D would receive \$7500/year/3MW turbine; the reality is that the tax would be more like \$1974. This is a discrepancy of \$5526 per turbine!

Discrepancies in Invenergy's Story

A fourth piece of information connected to IWT's, which was raised at the Feb. 12th Council meeting, had to do with property taxes.

Council asked CAO Spence Bannerman to report back on the potential property tax impact resulting from the installation of a Wind Turbine. She found that, "Current Ontario Regulation 282/98 governs that wind turbine towers larger than 500 kW will be assessed at the rate of \$40,000 per MW of installed capacity and taxed at the industrial rate. The Municipality 2013 industrial tax rate was 1.645784%. This means that the property taxes on a 1MW wind turbine would be \$658 using the 2013 industrial tax rate."

In documents submitted to Council January 8, 2014, by local wind turbine proponent Invenergy, the tax revenue estimate was considerably higher. Assuming the IWT's being proposed for D/D are likely to be of the 3MW class, Invenergy estimated D/D would receive \$7500/year per turbine, whereas the reality is that the tax would be capped by the GEA at \$1974 per turbine. This is a discrepancy of \$5526 per turbine! The entire 90MW project would yield an estimated \$59,220/year, nowhere near the \$225,000 claimed by Invenergy.

Little wonder that citizens express concern about the reliability of proponent data, and indeed their intention as a good corporate partner!

Wind Concerns Ontario Conference Highlights Problems with Wind Energy

Wind Concerns Ontario (WCO) is a recognized leader of wind energy opposition in Ontario. The group was formed in 2008 in response to the Government of Ontario plans to implement large-scale wind power projects, and to enact the Green Energy & Green Economy Act (GEA), which would remove local land use planning powers from local government. WCO is incorporated under legislation with Industry Canada, and serves as an ‘umbrella’ organization for community & citizen groups, and individuals in Ontario. WCO has no staff, and carries out activities through the contributions of dedicated volunteers.

WCO held its Annual General Meeting in conjunction with its 2014 Conference on Saturday, Feb. 22/14 in London. Several DDOWT members were in attendance. Here are highlights (most presentations are available through WCO):



Jane Wilson, WCO President is a writer and editor specializing in business and health care; she is also a registered nurse. She is the editor of the book *Dirty Business*, on the wind power industry in Ontario. She received a Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee medal for her work in championing Ontario's rural communities.

Jane reported on WCO activities in 2013. They included: Political Action, Communication, and Member Support.

- ✓ Political Action – “Not a Willing Host” campaign by municipalities; consultation with government; communications with various MPP’s in rural ridings to provide factual information.
- ✓ Communications – With members & leaders of community groups and with media; maintained their web-site and social media presence through Facebook and Twitter.
- ✓ Member Support –strategy & planning events; participation in an ERT (Environment Review Tribunal); creating a Fact Bank for members, media and other stakeholders; fund-raising for ERT’s and other legal actions; maintaining a public Calendar of events.

Emerging/Continuing Challenges and 2014 Plans were highlighted. They include:

- ✓ A burden of proof at appeals
- ✓ Further legal actions e.g. property values, legality of application documents, etc. Seek justice & compensation for those harmed by IWT projects.
- ✓ Provincial election in spring 2014 – need to get balanced information out to the public; stress issue is with current Ontario regulations, therefore the solutions are political.
- ✓ Communication on all issues connected to large-scale wind power generation; health, property values, power rates, local planning/Green Energy Act
- ✓ Get into urban areas with information, etc.
- ✓ Feedback on qualifications for procurement process
- ✓ Provide response to contracted projects

For an up-to-date list of all wind projects in Ontario, and their status, go to:
www.windpowergrab.wordpress.com

To see videos of what it’s like to live with wind turbines go to:
www.windturbinesyndrome.com/videos



Warren Howard, WCO Board member, is an MBA and former Vice-President with Scotiabank. He is now a councilor for North Perth, and a member of the Wainfleet Group of municipalities exploring ways to protect communities vulnerable to industrial wind power projects. He also participates in the Multi-Municipal Turbine Working Group.

Warren presented on Municipal Responses to Wind Turbine Projects (also being presented to Municipalities at ROMA Conference Feb 24-25), providing recommendations in many areas of concern to municipal Councils and citizens.

Did you know?

- ✓ Actual municipal experience with wind companies has been substantially different than their statements. Problems are real and need to be addressed.
- ✓ Turbines will be a municipal election issue in 2014.
- ✓ Despite planning powers being removed from municipal government by the GEA, there are other powers available to them e.g. Municipal Act, Public Nuisance Act, etc.
- ✓ Issues to be considered by local Councils are – building permit fees, municipal infrastructure, municipal drainage, fire safety, wind turbine decommissioning, noise regulation, shadow flicker, property tax revenue, community benefit funds.



Denise Wolfe, WCO Board member, is a medical auditor and an executive member of the Alliance to Protect Amherst Island.

Denise gave a detailed outline of how to go about auditing an REA (Renewable Energy Act) report, to respond to areas where a wind energy proponent did not meet requirements of regulations.

Did you know?

- ✓ Many proponents do not conduct adequate field studies to properly assess potential negative environmental impacts from IWT projects.
- ✓ The ‘zone of investigation’ for doing these field studies is 120metres either side of the road where the turbine will travel
- ✓ There is no MNR mechanism in place to audit/ensure that the proponents Natural Heritage Assessment & Environmental Impact Study is complete in content & quality.
- ✓ Re: decommissioning plans: no landfill in Ontario or Canada will accept IWT blades
- ✓ You should become knowledgeable of what Species at Risk might be found in your area – do not assume that the proponent list is complete.



John Harrison retired as a professor in physics at Queen's University, and is now deeply involved in the study of the effects of wind turbines such as shadow flicker, noise, and wake turbulence.

John spoke of The Fallacy of Noise Regulation in Ontario, which the government says have been developed to protect us.

Did you know?

- ✓ Current noise regulations are inadequate, set at a maximum of 40Db, and up to 51 Db if the wind is strong. At 40Db, 20-25% of people will be annoyed.
- ✓ There are many, many noise complaints in Ontario
- ✓ Wind energy projects currently operating are often out of compliance with regulations
- ✓ Both government and the wind companies know this is possible from their noise modeling.

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The articles in this newsletter are based on publicly available information and our opinion. We encourage all readers to review the wealth of information available and form their own opinion.

Become a member of Wind Concerns Ontario & receive current & reliable info on issues related to IWT <http://freewco.blogspot.ca/>

....More WCO updates next newsletter