



**EDENTON-CHOWAN
INSPECTIONS AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT**
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**Chowan County Planning Board
October 22, 2013
Chowan County Public Safety Center
305 West Freemason Street
7:00 pm**

Planner Landin Holland called the roll; Patti Kersey, Mary-Margaret McKinney, Lou Sarratt, Bobby Winborne, Jim Leggett, Allen Nixon and Mike Williams were present.

Mr. Holland introduced Richard Bunch with the NC Northeast Commission. He stated that they were a 16 county economic development group. He gave a brief description of their responsibilities in the region. He stated that alternative energy avenues are becoming very important in the region for possible job creation and investment opportunities for the community. He stated that the Northeast Commission was very supportive of wind energy. He stated that the property that the applicant, Apex, was looking at was one continuous piece of property and that helps in that there are not many different landowners that would be affected. He stated that they have discussed the matter with the Pentagon as well as the FAA and have dealt with any issues that they may have with the wind farm. He stated that our community college, COA, has a sustainable energy program. He stated that they have been able to collect information from their tower and use that in regards to this program as well. He stated that if he saw any red flags with this project he would not support it. He stated that Apex has done their homework and that he feels that this project would be good for the community.

Mr. Bunch introduced Tyson Utt with Apex Clean Energy, Incorporated.

Mr. Utt thanked the Planning Board for meeting for a second time to review their request. He introduced his team and stated that were headquartered in Charlottesville, VA. They presented a Powerpoint describing the project, location, and their company background. He stated that the piece of property they were looking at straddled the Chowan and Perquimans county line. He stated that they had a land agreement contract in place with the property owner, Weyerhauser. He stated that there were certain components they looked at in selecting a piece of property; is there was transmission nearby, what is the land use like, is it compatible with a wind farm, and environmental considerations both on the ground and in the air. He presented a map that showed the different project locations that they have throughout the country. He stated that they looked at these projects as long term investments and that they would have long term

staff on this project. He stated that the wind turbines had been getting higher over the years and that that is why they were asking for a height allowance increase. He stated that the increase that they were requesting would be a ceiling they could use and know that they could not go any higher than that. He stated that the maximum height would be for the tip of the blade at its highest point and not the hub. He stated that the piece of property they were looking at was about 8,000 acres in Perquimans County and about 2,000 acres in Chowan County. He stated that they would like to construct the project in 2016 to give them time to do the studies, engineering work, and get the permits. He stated that they were at least a year away from coming back to the County with a permit application. He stated that the project could be constructed in a time period of 6-9 months. He stated that there would be about 100 construction jobs created during the building of the project. He stated that there were safety records available for the industry and that there has been no known negative effect on property values in the area of these projects. He stated that sound and shadow flicker would be taken into account in the construction and planning of the project. He stated that they try to use areas where people do not live and that they maintain the proper setbacks from residential areas. He stated that they would be glad to answer any questions.

Mr. Leggett stated that he would like to give the Board the opportunity to ask some questions.

Mr. Leggett asked if 600 feet was the height that would be required for the project.

Mr. Utt stated that they viewed the 600 feet as a ceiling and that was the direction that the technology was headed. He stated that the standard today was close to the 500 foot range but that they've seen that increase over time. He stated that 600 feet would be consistent with what Perquimans County has in their ordinance.

Mr. Williams asked about the 100 jobs that would be created. He asked if those jobs were located on site or if they were jobs that would be created in the community through businesses supplying raw materials.

Mr. Utt stated that number only took into account the jobs created at the project site. He stated that about 40% of the jobs would be people brought in by the construction company that had experience in constructing these types of projects and that the remaining percentage would be hired locally. He stated that the materials that would be used would largely be purchased locally as well as local equipment rentals.

Mr. Leggett asked if the project had been approved in Perquimans County.

Mr. Utt stated that the project has not been approved yet but that Perquimans County already had the ordinance in place that would allow the construction of this type of project. He stated that they were not at the stage of asking either Perquimans or Chowan County to approve the project yet. They were determining if the County criteria was such that it would allow the construction of the project.

Ms. Kersey asked if there was another wind farm in the United States that had 600 foot wind turbines.

Mr. Utt stated that there was not one. He stated that there was not one built to that height yet but that was the direction the technology was going. He stated that the higher turbines would allow them to make use of higher winds at a higher altitude.

Mr. Sarratt asked if they had plans to expand.

Mr. Utt stated they would be interested in expansion in Chowan County in the future but that they were looking at just the one project at this time.

Mr. Sarratt expressed concerns over the location and possible expansion.

Mr. Utt stated that the setback standards would limit locations where other wind farms could be located.

Mr. Williams stated that a Conditional Use Permit would have to be issued to construct a wind farm on this site or any site.

Mr. Utt stated that was correct. He stated that they were not asking for approval of the project at all at this time. They were asking Chowan to update its standards in the Wind Ordinance that were put in place in 2010. He stated that they were asking Chowan to bring their ordinance in line with Perquimans so that the two counties were the same.

Ms. McKinney expressed concerns over the possible height of 600 feet. She asked for an estimate on how much the height of the turbines was increasing each year.

Mr. Utt stated that the industry was already constructing larger blades that would require higher bases. He stated that the 600 feet was a ceiling or maximum height that the turbine could be. He stated that they would like the most flexibility to achieve the highest efficiency in this project.

Ms. McKinney stated that this area receives Category 3 hurricanes and expressed concerns over possible safety issues.

Mr. Utt stated that they've had turbines that have gone through tornadoes. He stated that the turbines were designed to handle difficult situations such as Category 3 hurricanes. He stated that they were designed to handle sustained winds for a 10 minute period at 130 mph. He stated that when the winds got above 60mph the blades would stall.

Mr. Williams asked how deep the foundation went.

Mr. Utt stated 9 or 10 feet deep and the diameter may be up to 60 feet. He stated that there was approximately 60 trucks worth of concrete per foundation and about 60 tons of steel reinforcement in each foundation.

Mr. Leggett asked if the foundation could be removed in the future if the project was discontinued.

Mr. Utt stated that usually the first 4 feet were shaved off the foundation so the land could be used but the rest would stay.

Ms. Kersey expressed concerns over the possibility of the turbines being visible for miles around.

Mr. Utt stated that they felt like the tall trees in the area and the distance between Edenton and the turbines would minimize the visibility.

Ms. Kersey asked how the sound would affect surrounding areas.

Mr. Utt stated that the ordinance addresses that as far as the allowed amount of noise that can be produced. He stated that the turbines are not that loud and that you could sit at the base of the turbine and have a conversation.

Ms. Kersey asked where the power that was generated went.

Mr. Utt stated that the power would go to Dominion Power and be distributed from there. He stated that the electrons would go to where they were needed the most nearby.

Mr. Winborne questioned the blade material and the sun reflecting off of the blades. He asked how the towers would be lighted.

Mr. Utt stated that they were painted an off-white color to dampen the flicker effect and glare. He stated that it was not a reflective or high gloss paint. He stated that a red strobe light would be put at the top to light the towers at night. He stated that the wind farm would be filed with the FAA so pilots would be aware that there were turbines in the area.

Mr. Nixon asked if the site would be clear cut.

Mr. Utt stated that the site would not be clear cut. He stated that they would strategically cut out the trees where each turbine would go.

Mr. Nixon asked if hunting in the area would be affected.

Mr. Utt stated that the only time hunting would be restricted was during the construction process. He stated that Weyerhaeuser wanted that addressed as well to make sure the project was not disruptive to hunters and wildlife.

Mr. Leggett asked if they thought that tourism would be affected.

Mr. Utt stated that they thought that tourism would be affected positively. He stated that they would like to have a kiosk where tourism could pull off the road and look at the project and get information about it. He stated that in other areas they have had school groups go out to the site to learn about wind energy.

Mr. Williams asked about tower access.

Mr. Utt stated that the towers had a door but that it could not be accessed by the general public.

Mr. Williams asked what was done with the soil that was dug out to make way for the foundation.

Mr. Utt stated that it was put back on top of the foundation and graded into the surrounding soil.

There being no further questions for the applicant, Mr. Leggett asked Mr. Holland if he had anything to add.

Mr. Holland stated that he would be sending the Planning Board members the actual text amendment documents for their review before the next Planning Board meeting. He stated that they would be voting on the proposed text amendment at the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.
