

Saturday, November 23, 2013

Editor, The Chowan Herald

The Chowan County Planning Board recently approved a Text Revision to the county zoning ordinance that would open the door for construction of a "Wind Farm". This farm would be constructed along the Perquimans-Chowan border in the northern part of the county by the Apex Clean Energy company.

Despite the stated objectives of the zoning ordinance, which include, among other things, the preservation of the desirable features of the county's appearance and character, and the protection of the natural environment and other valuable resources, such a wind farm would involve construction of giant wind turbines with blades reaching as high as 600 feet. Compare that to the height of the Washington monument, which is 555 feet. Despite a very slick presentation, the Apex company glossed over some aspects of the project. Their presentation claimed that the turbines would be unobtrusive and almost invisible, yet an object 600 feet tall can be seen for 30 miles - one would be able to see them from Pea Ridge!

Apex did admit that there would be bird kills and other environmental impacts, but they didn't touch on the extent. On November 22nd a story appeared in USA Today stating that Duke Energy has been fined \$1 million for bird kills from its wind farm in Casper, WY and Altamont Pass, CA. What Apex glossed over was that at 20 revolutions per minute the tip of a 150 foot blade would be moving at 214 mph. This has proven to be deadly for birds, including eagles, and bats. I recently returned from a cross country trip where we saw the Casper farm as well as one near Tehachapi, CA and one owned by Apex outside Oklahoma City - they are a blight on the landscape.

It is claimed that wind turbines produce "green" energy, which they do, but, since wind energy is intermittent and unreliable while the demand for electricity remains fairly constant, they do not reduce the need for sufficient coal, gas or nuclear powered generating capacity to supply the total demand for electricity. Further, they are uneconomical to build unless subsidized by the government - your taxes - and the cost of the power produced is about 16 times the cost from natural gas generation.

The action of the Planning Board is advisory and approval of the zoning change will require action by the County Commission. I urge the Commissioners to deny this change and urge Chowan County citizens to strongly oppose the construction of this "Wind Farm".

James Robison  
124 Bayview Trail, Edenton  
482-2274