

Hammond Nears Wind Ordinance Decision

By **MATT MCALLISTER**

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HAMMOND - A final version of the town's wind ordinance may be coming in as little as a month.

The Town Council on Monday discussed health and safety setbacks proposed by the wind advisory committee. Town Supervisor Ronald W. Bertram and councilmen Dr. James R. Tague and spent the evening attempting to find a happy medium between the existing setbacks established on the original wind law and those proposed by the most recent wind committee.

Two setback standards, including how close wind turbines should be allowed to Hammond Central School and the distance they should be set back from the St. Lawrence River, dominated the evening's conversation.

Currently, the under-moratorium wind law contains setbacks of "the greater of one and one-half times the total tower height or 500 feet," from site boundary property lines, public roads, the nearest edge of the wind overlay district, nearest off-site residence and any non-turbine structure or above-ground utility.

The wind committee has suggested changing all of those setbacks to "six times the total height of the proposed" turbines.

Using Iberdrola Renewables' proposed 476-foot-tall turbine as an example, the existing setback distances put such a turbine 714 feet away from the above-mentioned objects. The wind committee's suggestions, meanwhile, put the same turbine 2,856 feet away.

While Mr. Bertram and Mr. Tague said they were in favor of a compromise and agreed upon four and a half times the turbine height from site boundary property lines and public roads - a total of 2,142 feet for the Iberdrola-proposed turbines - Mr. Delosh preferred sticking with the wind committees 2,856-foot number for public roads.

"I would err on the side of caution," he said.

He said he had read about debris being thrown 2,500 feet or more from turbines.

While the proposed setback for site boundary lines was changed to four-and-a-half times the total height of the turbine, consensus couldn't be reached on the setback from public roads.

Mr. Delosh, an employee of the Hammond Central School District, was also adamant about keeping turbines a safe distance from the school.

He suggested a 6,000-foot buffer zone around the school. He said in Chateaugay, no turbines sit within a mile of the school, while in Lowville, turbines are at least three miles away.

Both Chateaugay and Lowville sit amidst operational wind farms.

"There's no more important place," he said. "We have 350 kids there, day in and day out."

The trio settled on a 5,000-foot safe zone proposed around the school.

A one-mile setback was proposed for all turbines along Route 12.

The proposed setback for non-turbine structures and above-ground utilities was changed from six to four-and-a-half times the total height of the turbine, and setbacks from both state and federal wetlands remain at two times the total height.

A June 6 meeting was scheduled to continue working on wind committee suggestions, with the expectation that Joseph W. Russell, town attorney, would have an update on a proposed real property value guarantee agreement in the law. Mr. Russell is working on revising the agreement, which would require a wind developer to pay a homeowner looking to sell for any loss of property value due to turbine proximity.

That meeting is at 7 p.m. in the Hammond Public Library.

With Mr. Russell's revisions to the real property value guarantee completed, the town council would be prepared to move forward with a public hearing on the law within a couple of weeks, Mr. Bertram said.