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Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2015 11:57 AM
To: Springer, Darren
Subject: FW: Irasburg story in Cal. Record

Here is the Cal. Record story. Also pasted below is the comment from David B. on the VTDigger commentary

Irasburg Wind: Selectmen To Complain To PSB Over Blittersdorf Wind Test Towers

Notification About Kidder Hill Test Towers Would Have Moved Town To Action, Selectmen Say

By Robin Smith - Staff Writer

IRASBURG -- The select board will file a complaint with Vermont's utility regulators about wind test towers on Kidder Hill, saying they were put up without permission and that left the town in the dark about potential wind projects there.

The hope is that the Vermont Public Service Board will do more than penalize property owner David Blittersdorf for not getting a certificate of public good for the wind test towers. The selectmen want the PSB to put a hold on his plans for two industrial-grade wind turbines for Kidder Hill to give the town time to update the town plan to ban such wind projects.

A citizen opposed to the two 493-foot-tall turbines has already filed a complaint, the selectmen learned Monday.

The board voted to file the complaint after hearing from Dr. Ron Holland, an Irasburg resident who was a member of the original Lowell Six protesters on the Lowell wind project site.

Holland said that the legislature decided in 2010 that all wind test towers need a certificate of public good.

Blittersdorf has said he didn't have to get a certificate because he was only considering small windmills for a net-metered project at his cabin on Kidder Hill. He said he decided on industrial-grade commercial turbines when he saw the wind capacity on Kidder Hill and knew that modern technology would produce enough electricity at slower wind speeds.

If Blittersdorf had applied for a certificate, the town would have been automatically notified three or four years ago that someone was considering a wind project on Kidder Hill, Holland said.

The town, in a letter approved unanimously by the three-member select board, is asking the PSB to initiate appropriate legal action over the lack of the certificate of public good.

Selectman Brian Fecher said the complaint is one of the efforts that the board will undertake.

"We want to make sure everything is done" to challenge Blittersdorf's project, he said.

The board itself cannot do anything that would actually stop the project, Selectwoman Robin Kay said. However, there are actions that might raise concerns by the PSB.

Along with holding a town vote against a wind project, one of the suggestions raised at a meeting last week by opponents is to put language in the town plan against industrial wind projects.

No Zoning

One of the problems that Irasburg faces in trying to oppose Blittersdorf's project is that the town currently has no zoning. And without zoning, the town has little say on what property owners can do.

While the PSB is not required to consider a town's plan or zoning when it comes to energy projects, they can be a part of the discussion.

Until recently, Irasburg didn't want zoning as a matter of property rights.

"Irasburg always prided itself as a town without zoning," Fecher said.

Without zoning, property owners in Irasburg have the right to develop their land the way they see fit. Many rural small towns in this part of Vermont did not want zoning until faced with unexpected or undesired growth.

Coventry, for example, did not add zoning until recently as more people moved in and the landfill grew in size.

Irasburg is working on creating a town plan with zoning bylaws but they are not in place, selectmen said.

Fecher said that the town of Irasburg might have moved quicker to introduce zoning and update the town plan if residents had known years ago that Blittersdorf might want large wind turbines.

Without an application for a wind tower certificate -- which requires notification to the town -- that left the town of Irasburg out of the loop, without information that was crucial, the selectmen said.

"He's had five years to develop his plans, we've had five weeks," Fecher said.

Blittersdorf is expected to file a preliminary notice of his project soon, kicking in 45 days of notice to the town before he files a formal application for the two turbines to the PSB.

That is not enough time for the town to vote on zoning and update the town plan.

The selectmen hope that the PSB will see that the lack of notice for the wind test towers was wrong and put a stay on Blittersdorf's application -- giving the town time to oppose it.

Blittersdorf is facing the same complaint over test towers elsewhere in Vermont.

Let's be clear who Mark Whitworth represents, Energize Vermont, which is an anti-wind and anti-solar group. Their solutions to our energy problems are non-starters and are not based

on facts. As far as the met tower on my land in Irasburg, I installed it to measure the wind for the log cabin I then built that is powered by two small wind turbines. I applied and received a CPG to net meter the wind turbines and they now supply the electricity to my cabin. The met tower did not need a local permit because Irasburg does not have zoning. As the product designer/founder of the world class wind measurement tower and data logger company (NRG Systems in Hinesburg), it was a given that I would measure the wind for my home wind turbines as I have spent over 30 years in that business. Also, at the time in 2010, I was not in the wind farm development business and was developing the AllEarth solar tracker. I built Georgia Mt. Community Wind 2 years later. Mark, your allegations are wrong – you owe me an apology.

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