

Neighbors Oppose Tech Park Turbine

Voice Concerns About Noise And Possible Health Problems

By CHRISTOPHER KAZARIAN

The biggest challenge to the proposed 1.5-megawatt wind turbine in Falmouth Technology Park may not come from the 14 local, state, and federal agencies that Notus Clean Energy LLC needs approval from.

Instead it may come from nearby residents who are concerned that the machine will negatively impact their views, lower their property values, create noise pollution, and potentially cause health problems to those in the neighborhood.

Last night at Webb Research Corporation in Falmouth Technology Park, more than two dozen residents came out to glean more information and voice their concerns regarding the possibility of erecting a wind turbine here.

As Colin P. Murphy of Blacksmith Shop Road, Falmouth, said, "I don't want to hear it or see, and I don't think I should be bothered with it." This was a sentiment shared and expressed for much of the night by several vocal opponents of the project.

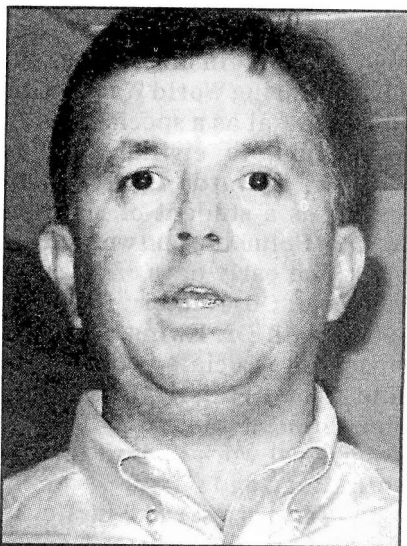
Megan C. Amsler, the executive director of Cape and Islands Self-Reliance Corporation, began the meeting with a brief introduction on wind power and the benefits of this renewable energy. Although not affiliated with the project, she was met with a steady stream of questions and interruptions as several residents opposed the idea of a wind turbine being placed near their homes.

She explained that wind is one of the Cape's best assets in terms of renewable energy. The costs of putting up a turbine, she said, are going down with the federal government providing a number of incentives coupled with a growing demand for the product.

There are several in the area, she said, including a 10-kilowatt

turbine at Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School and a 660-kilowatt turbine at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. To get a sense for what the one at the technology park will look and sound like, Ms. Amsler said, residents may want to visit the Town of Hull, which has two turbines, one of which is 1.65 megawatts.

Ms. Amsler said that many of the concerns raised by residents are often raised by other communities attempting to erect a tur-



Daniel Webb, owner of Webb Research Corporation and Notus Clean Energy

bine. However, she said, most are unfounded.

As an example, she said, during a windy night, ambient noise will overpower anything heard from a turbine.

However, several residents challenged this assertion. Mr. Murphy asked if Ms. Amsler lived near a turbine and what recourse residents would have, if indeed, they could hear the turbine late at night. "Can we call the cops? Who is going to come out at 11 PM

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to shut it down?"

Loretta O'Brien of Blacksmith Shop Road said the state's noise regulations are insufficient to compensate for sounds that could be annoying to neighbors.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has ruled that a sound source is in violation of its policy if it increases the ambient sound level by more than 10 decibels. "Nine decibels can be very noisy," she said.

She was concerned that Falmouth Technology Park is already noisy, the result of Associates of Cape Cod Inc., and the turbine will only make the situation worse.

The objections continued when Daniel H. Webb, owner of Notus Clean Energy and Webb Research, delved into the background and specifics of the project, who will benefit, and why he wanted to erect a wind turbine in technology park.

He said there were several reasons for putting up a turbine, including the ability to provide power for his business, Webb Research, which has 32 employees and was founded in 1982.

Because of the size of the turbine, he said, power will be sent back to the grid. It will be a potential way to make money off the turbine, but more importantly, he said, it will help offset the carbon emissions that others are

putting into the atmosphere.

He said the turbine will produce enough power to supply energy to 476 homes and is predicted to prevent emission of 1,029 tons of carbon dioxide annually as well as 3,253 pounds of sulfur dioxide and 1,000 pounds of nitrous oxide per year. While it may not change the world, he said, it is a way for his company to make a positive difference.

Yet many residents maintained that Mr. Webb was simply looking for a way to make a profit.

Lawrence V. Worthington Jr. of Blacksmith Shop Road, said he was disturbed by the fact that Mr. Webb was discussing this with residents now. "Why appear before the community now when this is almost a done deal?" he asked. "Why not do a group canvass of the neighborhood before delving into research. You are going to profit yourself on this. You are doing this like the town does everything else. That is what really galls me. You didn't ask me."

Mr. Webb challenged this and said that there are still numerous boards he needs to seek approval from. In the best-case scenario, he said, the turbine could be put up in 2009, but he anticipated it would take longer. Throughout the process, he said, residents can bring forth their concerns to the permitting agencies.

John J. Ford of Blacksmith Shop Road was concerned that the turbine could pose potential health risks to residents. He asked whether the turbine will emit low frequency noise or tonal noise, which could cause vibroacoustic disease.

Robert A. Shatten, principal of Boreal Renewable Energy

Development, the company that performed a feasibility study for Webb Research's plan for a wind turbine, said that the machines will not emit tonal noise.

Another resident of Blacksmith Shop Road, Todd A. Drummey, brought forth research he conducted while searching the Internet. Citing several sources, he said turbines should be placed anywhere between a mile to 1.5 miles from a residence to compensate for negative health effects. This turbine will be .3 miles from the nearest home, a cause of concern for Mr. Drummey.

While he appreciated these concerns, attorney Robert H. Ament of Ament and Ament, who is representing Notus Clean Energy in the permitting process, asked residents to think about the benefits of this project.

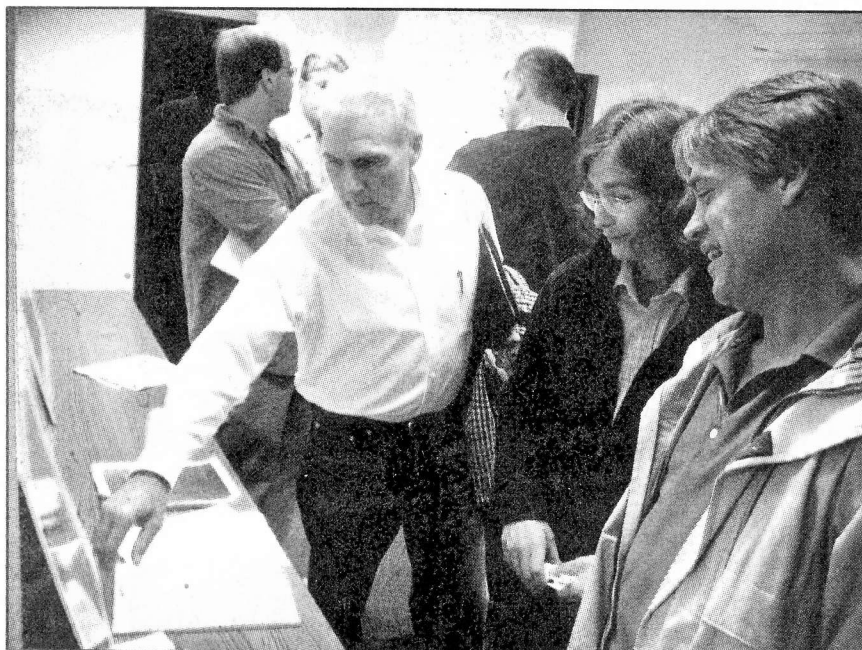
"This is obviously something very new to us," he said. "The concerns being raised are valid, but all I know is we have got to get started somewhere."

In weighing the negatives against how most residents receive their energy in Falmouth, he said, "I hope I see these all over the place. I hope Falmouth is a leader and I hope they all can be one-third of a mile from the closest home."

If one were built near his home, he said, "as I look up to it, one of my thoughts would be, that is beautiful."

He asked residents to contemplate this as the project moves forward, yet many still were hesitant to accept the idea of having such a turbine near their homes.

Residents interested in finding out more about this project can visit www.notuscleanenergy.com.



CHRISTOPHER KAZARIAN/ENTERPRISE

John Ford, Jill Worthington, and Todd Drummey, all of Blacksmith Shop Road, view a map showing where the proposed wind turbine will be visible to residents. All three raised concerns about the project throughout the night. The meeting was held last night at Webb Research at Falmouth Technology Park.