



Daniel Webb of Webb Research explains his plans for a wind turbine at the historical commission.

Webb Research Gets OK To Erect Wind Turbine

By MARK A. BROWN

The Falmouth Historical Commission gave Webb Research Corporation the green light to move forward with plans to erect a wind turbine next to its facility in Falmouth Technology Park.

The commission unanimously approved the project, which it reviewed to assess its visual impact on the West Falmouth Historic District. Daniel H. Webb, president of Webb Research, presented the plans along with his sister, Rebecca A. Webb.

The turbine will be about 340 feet high, taller than the one erected earlier this year at Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Buzzards Bay.

State law calls for the applicant to illustrate the impact in one of two ways. The first, called a balloon test, involves placing a tethered balloon at the proposed site and then viewing it from various locations within the district. The second, a computerized photographic simulation, is the method Mr. Webb chose. "The balloon method would have required us to have our consultant on site on the same day with no wind, which we don't think is practical," he said.

Mr. Webb said the consultant studied the impact of the tur-

bine at three sites: On Route 28A just north of the Getty station; on Old Main Road, North Falmouth, just north of Pine Street; and at Bourne Farm at Route 28A and Thomas B. Landers Road.

Mr. Webb said they included the North Falmouth vantage point to ensure it wouldn't be an issue with the historic district there.

Leslie C. J. McDonald, a commission member, objected to the size of the proposed turbine. She asked Mr. Webb why two smaller turbines couldn't be used. "You are bringing something in that is so far out of scale with all of Cape Cod," Ms. McDonald said.

Mr. Webb explained that the efficiency of wind power increases exponentially the higher it is placed above the terrain. "To use shorter towers would make it economically unfeasible," he said.

He also cited other imposing Cape structures such as the Mirant Canal Plant in Sandwich and the 500-foot-tall WCIB radio tower on Spring Bars Road.

James D. Bowers, commission vice chairman, said that high-voltage transmission lines and towers that span parts of the Cape pose a greater visual impairment than any wind turbine. "Nobody really notices them anymore. They're everywhere," he said.