

August 10, 2017

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held August 10, 2017
in the Washington County Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager
Linda Belfiore, Downeast Wind
Paul Williamson, Downeast Wind
Michael Hinerman, EMA Director
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO Administrator
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Mike Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Dean Preston, U.T. Supervisor
Sharon D. Strout, Registry of Deeds
Jill Holmes, Treasurer**

Commissioner Christopher Gardner was not present.

Commissioner Cassidy called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. for a presentation on an update to the APEX Wind project.

Paul Williamson presented a summary of the progress since his last conversation with the Commissioners. The project, Downeast Wind, now includes a potential build-out into Township 24 as well as the initial placement of 15 turbines in Township 18 and 15 turbines in the Town of Columbia. The towers would appear to be scattered in order to take advantage of the prevailing wind patterns along the ridge. An area would be cleared, construction would commence in a one-acre circle and the land would be re-claimed so the impact to the blueberry ground would be $\frac{1}{4}$ acre. He also indicated that Apex would like to begin discussions regarding the establishment of a tax increment financing arrangement (TIF) and a community benefit agreement. Knowing the County would want to have legal representation to review the agreements, Apex offered "...to pay the County's legal fees that are reasonably related to the County's consideration of these requests".

The suggested timetable included a mid-to-late September start of discussions and an anticipated six-week period, the permit application

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to be submitted to DEP later in 2017. The Commissioners asked that the UT Supervisor and County Manager be the contacts for the discussions going forward with Apex and report back to the Commissioners.

Dean said he had met with Paul a month ago. From a citizen's perspective, he thought there was a solid plan that addressed some of the visibility lines; took into consideration the two eagle's nests thus adding to the setbacks from residences. Apex is planning a meeting with residents soon. Commissioner Crowley asked about job creation. Apex estimated 70 FTE during construction and 8 FTE on-site to operate the project, all based on modeling data. When Commissioner Crowley asked about renewable energy credits, Paul explained that the Maine PUC had approved the selling of power to Bangor Hydro at below market wholesale rates and retaining the energy credits which could be sold to a third party. The State of Maine allows that to occur. Paul said there seemed to be no organized opposition so far; some individuals had been asking hard questions and that was helpful.

Night time lighting was mentioned. The FAA has approved radar activating lighting, in fact that was expected as a requirement of the permit. This would light the towers if a plane were within a ten-mile radius of the towers. The impact to birds was another question. There have been more than 250 studies done that show a documented mortality of 0.05% of each species of small songbirds. No raptor deaths were documented. The studies have shown the mortality rate to be statistically insignificant over all.

Abutters to the project would be receiving notices soon regarding the project. Charles Rudelitch, Executive Director of the Sunrise County Economic Council offered assistance as well. There will be continued involvement with the LUPC who manages land use in the UT.

ADJOURNMENT

3:35 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.