

Letter raises issues in ordinance review

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

The chairman of the Chowan County Planning Board in a letter to the county commissioners March 3 insisted the planning panel "will not agree to be limited by artificial and arbitrary constraints" in its review of the county's wind energy ordinance.

The letter from Planning Board Chairman Lou Sarratt goes on to cite some specifics:

■ We will not agree to be limited by artificial and arbitrary constraints on this effort (e.g. restrictions as to who we can consult with).

■ We will not agree to be held to a higher threshold in our reevaluation of the existing Chowan County wind law that what was es-

tablished at the time of its creation.

■ We will not be using as a template other ordinances that have likewise been written by the wind industry, for the benefit of the wind industry.

■ We will pay close attention to wind ordinances (anywhere in the U.S.) that have been carefully and independently researched.

■ Finally, we will commit to recommending an updated wind ordinance that is written for the protection of local citizens, businesses and the environment.

"Of course our work here is predicated on the assumption that the Chowan County Commissioners, and the county's other staff, are likewise committed to protect the health, safety and welfare of all local citizens,"

the letter states.

Shortly after the letter was sent, planning board members Jim Leggett, William Monds and Bobby Winborne sent emails to the board - copied to the Chowan Herald - questioning whether the letter should have been sent without a vote of the full board.

"Who originated this letter?" Leggett asked. "Why was I not informed of it before sent out? I am not in total agreement of everything written, especially paragraph one and item #1. Why did we not see a draft of the letter?"

Leggett raised those questions during Thursday's meeting of the planning board.

Sarratt said the board could schedule a discussion of those issues for its March

31 meeting. He also said the letter reflected his personal opinions as one member of the board.

During the meeting Thursday night, local resident John Sams asked Sarratt whether he thought 30 days was sufficient time to research such a complicated topic.

"Is that enough time?" Sams asked.

Sarratt said that while he doesn't think 30 days is sufficient time to review the ordinance, the Planning Board can't take a vote to change the timeframe established by the county commissioners.

"We are going to do what we have been directed to do and we are going to do the best job that we possibly can," Sarratt said.

Chowan County Man-

ager Kevin Howard said last week that the county commissioners were awaiting the report from the Planning Board once the 30-day period was up. He said he had not received any communication from the Planning Board that would indicate that board would not be presenting its report within the 30-day timeframe established by the commissioners.

Sarratt's letter states that the county's wind ordinance, adopted in June 2011, "was basically a document written by wind energy lobbyists, for the benefit of wind energy developers." The letter cites as a basis for that claim the use of the model ordinance from the N.C. Wind Working Group as a basis for the local ordinance.

Lyra Rakusin, senior clean energy training specialist at the N.C. Clean Energy Technology Center, wrote a letter in response to Sarratt's letter.

Rakusin's letter states: "The letter in question inaccurately portrays both our role facilitating the NC Wind Working Group and the process of developing the model wind ordinance by suggesting it was driven by a wind lobbyist without the input of other stakeholders."

Sarratt said this week that the reason the planning board's ordinance review is focusing on other county and municipal ordinances rather than the model ordinance is that they have been through the same kind of review process that the planning board is tasked with doing.

Planner Holland not renewing contract with county

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

After nearly four years as a contract planner for Chowan County, Landin Holland announced last week he is not planning to renew his contract with the county.

Holland said in a statement to the Chowan County Planning Board during the board's meeting Thursday that he had come in as an emergency measure during the county's financial crisis. He thanked the board members for the opportunity to work with them on planning matters in the county.

Holland, who lives out of town, told the Chowan Herald on Monday that it was time for the county to consider someone who would



Landin Holland, the county's contract planner, has announced he will not renew his contract with the county.

be able to spend more time in the community working on planning issues. The workload has increased because of large projects such as Riversound and the proposed Timbermill Wind Energy Project, he said.

"You just kind of know when it's time," Holland said.

He indicated there were no negative feelings on his part or on the part of county officials.

"We all agree this is

healthy and good," Holland said.

Holland pointed out his family's business, Holland Consulting Planners, would continue to work with the Town of Edenton.

Holland Consulting Planners has a contract with the county at \$30,000 a year and has always worked within the budget, without requesting any kind of budget amendment, Holland said.

"I think it served its purpose," Holland said of the contract.

But with a big project on the horizon, the county wants someone who can be in the community more, Holland said.

Holland has worked in his family business, Holland Consulting Planners, since 1999. According to

information on the company's website, his work is focused mainly on land use planning, urban design and hazard mitigation. He has administrative planning experience on Unified Development Ordinances, Hazard Mitigation Plans, administration of flood recovery projects, and assistance on or supervision of CAMA Land Use Plans.

He holds a master's degree in public administration and a dual bachelor's degree in geography and urban planning from East Carolina University, and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Holland told the planning board at its meeting Thursday that growing pains come with adopting countywide zoning as the

county did in 2006. The county has made a lot of progress in tweaking its ordinances, he said.

He said he would update the new planner on issues currently before the board.

Planning Board Chairman Lou Sarratt thanked Holland for his service as county planner.

Holland said he hoped by at least the April planning board meeting that a new planner would be on board and that he would be able to attend the meeting with the new planner.

Jim Leggett, a planning board member and former chairman, thanked Holland for providing good leadership for the county's planning efforts.

Holland thanked Leggett for his service as chairman.

Citizen calls for turbine moratorium

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

A Chowan County resident has requested that the county impose a moratorium on wind turbine activity, but county officials are not considering a moratorium at this time.

The county has been advised by its attorney, John Morrison, that there is a very high threshold for imposing a local moratorium under a 2006 state law. The current ordinance in Chowan County regarding wind turbines does not meet that threshold for a moratorium, according to Morrison.

The moratorium has been

requested by Peter Lolkema. Lolkema sent the request by email to county commissioners and planning board members, and also made the request in person at Thursday's planning board meeting.

"Please accept, by receipt of this communication, a formal request to have a moratorium be placed on all wind turbine activity in Chowan County until a comprehensive engineering study can be conducted," Lolkema said in his statement. "This study should include the impact such turbine installations would have on the safety, health and welfare of me and other residents of Chowan

County."

Lou Sarratt, chairman of the Chowan County Planning Board, said this week that based on Morrison's explanation, a moratorium requires due diligence by county officials before it can be sought.

Sarratt said the planning board's current process of reviewing the existing ordinance is part of that due diligence. Depending on what happens with that review, a moratorium conceivably could be considered at a later time, he said.

But it's not appropriate to move in the direction of a moratorium until the ordinance has been reviewed and suggestions have been made to the county commissioners regarding the ordinance, according to Sarratt.

County Manager Kevin Howard said this week

that the current situation does not seem to meet the threshold for seeking a moratorium as described by Morrison.

Lolkema's statement cites a number of things he sees as critically important and as currently lacking.

Among the items he cites: No clear definition of the financial impact of turbine installations; no definitive data on the effects low frequency modulations produced by turbines have on humans and other mammals; no clear accounting of tax dollars paid to wind turbine developers in the form of subsidies; no clear reason for the county considered for a wind farm site when it falls within the lowest wind power rating in the state and nation; no published studies of the impacts on wildlife, tourist traffic or property values.

CRIMEWATCH

Edenton Police

ARRESTS

- March 12 — Pamela Elaine Brothers, 42, of East Church Street, was arrested for assault with a deadly weapon.
- March 11 — Vondell Norman, 58, of West Gale Street, was arrested for failure to appear.
- March 9 — Stephanie Michelle Byrd, 43, of Vann Street, was arrested for failure to return rental property.
- March 9 — Dybenz Kenyi Roulac, 17, of Paradise Road, was issued a citation for possession of one-half ounce or less of marijuana, a Schedule VI controlled substance.
- March 8 — Brian Marquis Bentley, 30, of Blade Street, was issued a citation for driving with a revoked license while impaired.
- March 8 — Marcus Elijah Powell, 27, of West Carerret Street, was arrested for simple physical assault.
- March 8 — Durrell

Lamonte Welch, 24, of Johnstone Street, was issued a criminal summons for failure to pay fine for vicious dog ordinance violation.

- March 7 — Eric Tyrell Holley, 29, of Chambers Ferry Road, was arrested for simple physical assault.
- March 7 — Reginald Hamilton Roberts, 21, of Blade Street, was arrested for trespassing.
- March 7 — Perez Agustín Hernandez, 30, of Paradise Road, was arrested for impersonation and possession/manufacture of fraudulent ID.
- March 6 — Edessa Rascoe Holley, 68, of Houghton Road, was issued a citation for failure to stop.

INCIDENTS

- March 12 — Larceny of motor vehicle on Oakdale Drive.
- March 11 — Injury to personal property on Bond Street.
- March 10 — Larceny on West King Street.
- March 6 — Hit and run on Virginia Road.

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