

Time to Complete the WECS Text Amendment

What was the nine month public hearing in 2013 for?

You may recall that in December, 2012, the County Board sent the setback portion of their Wind Energy Conversion Systems text amendment back to the ZBA for more input from the public at the suggestion of the state's attorney, Michelle Courier.

The County Board's two main questions were:

- 1) Does the evidence support setbacks from property lines?
- 2) Does the evidence support a multiplier as well as a number for a setback?

Did the evidence presented support the County's text amendment?

On December 17, 2013, the ZBA Board members voted 4-1 that the evidence which was presented during the public hearing process with regards to the setbacks for wind turbines **supported** the County's Text Amendment to their Wind Energy Conversion System (WECS) Zoning Ordinance.

What happens next?

On January 15, 2014, the Boone County Board will vote on whether or not to adopt their Text Amendment.

Why amend the WECS Ordinance rather than wait for the special use process?

As we heard from the Boone County staff, zoning ordinances are written to promote orderly development in the county. So that when people consider moving, locating their business, or investing in property, a county which has orderly development, one which protects its citizens' health, safety and general welfare including their property values, is a more desirable county to live, work and invest in.

There are many other issues that will be dealt with during the special use process including bird and bat studies, noise studies, shadow flicker studies, watershed studies, road agreements, and the list goes on including the finalization of the specific placement of each turbine.

But setbacks which are in the form of a multiplier allow the ordinance to easily adapt to growing turbine heights. Also setbacks which are from property lines rather than foundations of homes bring our wind ordinance in line with all of the other Boone County zoning ordinances which already measure setbacks from property lines and better protect from potential safety hazards.

Who gave input during the public hearing?

There has been an overwhelming response from the public in Boone County including municipalities, townships, businesses, agri-tourism businesses, and citizens. Neighbors have worked with neighbors. Compromises have been suggested. The voices of 1,300 residents and landowners who support the County's Text Amendment have given their input.

We also heard expert testimony from outside Boone County including Certified Real Estate Appraiser -Michael McCann, Aviation Expert - Jerry Lay, Author of Illinois Pollution Control Board Noise Standards-George Kamperman and colleague Richard James, Chief Engineer Xylene Power - Dr. Charles Rhodes, Pipeline Safety Engineer Consultant - Richard Kuprewicz, Audiologists - Dr. Alec Salt and Dr. Jerry Punch, Medical Doctor -Dr. Sandy Reider, Psychiatrist - Dr. William Hallstein, Wisconsin State Senator - Senator Frank Lasee, Armstrong Township High School Superintendent - William Mulvaney, Manufacturers' of wind turbines -Nordex and Vestas, and living testimony by Ted Hartke - California Ridge Wind Project, Vermilion County, IL, Cary Shindelacker - Lake Winds Energy Park, MI, Gerry Meyer - Forward Wind Energy, Fond du Lac, WI, Alyssa Ashley -Shirley Wind Project, WI, Kendall and Kathy Guither and Barb Drapier - Big Sky Wind Project, Bureau County, IL, and Kim Schertz - McLean County, IL.

When was the last time that Boone County Board members heard from 1,300 of their residents and landowners on any one topic?

In recent past, the County Board has heard from approximately 125 residents with regards to the Plote Gravel Pit case. Regarding the mulch fire, the County heard from many people, maybe 100, 200 or 500. But in this case 1,300 people took time to give their input.

What is so important that 1,300 people would give their input?

- Simply stated, these people believe that their property rights begin at their property line - Not at their front door.

What setbacks are included in the Text Amendment?

1. Setbacks for municipalities
-The setbacks that the County is recommending adopting would protect Boone County municipalities with a 1.5 mile setback so that they can grow in the future and so that their residents will not be negatively affected by the noise, shadow flicker, blade throws and fires which are not uncommon with industrial wind projects. According to Boone County staff this 1.5 mile setback will apply to Sharon, WI as well.
2. Setbacks from property lines
-The text amendment would also stipulate that placement of turbines should be setback from landowners' property lines rather than from existing homes. This is consistent with our county code which establishes setbacks from property lines as precedence for the protection of the neighbor.
3. Setbacks based on multipliers
-Setbacks for turbines would be based upon a multiplier, so that as turbines increase in height, the setback distance would also increase. This is important as the first turbines put up in Illinois in 2003 were just over 200 ft. tall and currently a developer in central Illinois is considering putting up 600 ft. tall turbines.
4. Setback for oil pipeline
-The text amendment would also have a setback from the oil pipeline which runs through Boone County to help protect it from the stray current which is lost and/or dumped during the transmission of energy as well as the possible collapse of the turbine.
5. Setback for restricted landing areas, regional airstrips and airports
-Lastly, the text amendment would include a setback for restricted landing areas, regional airstrips and airports. Evidence was submitted during the public hearing showing that Boone County is a popular destination for pilots. Tall structures in general are a safety hazard to pilots upon takeoff and landing and safe setbacks are necessary for aviation safety in Boone County.

Did the Sierra Club ask you to sign their petition?

The Sierra Club sponsored by their office in Chicago has come to Boone County. They are tricking people into signing their petition by asking them if they believe in green energy. What they do not tell you are that they support Mainstream Renewable's recommended setbacks which will use non-participant's property for their noise, shadow flicker, blade and ice throws.

In fact many people who live outside of Boone County would have no problem using 12,000 acres of Boone County's rural places for their utility closet, just like they want our water. As Boone County residents, we must prize our farmland just like we do our water. We must put into place responsible setbacks so that we don't sacrifice our farmland and water for the betterment of others but rather be good stewards and the resources in a responsible manner.

How are the Hartke's doing?

Many of you have been following the Hartke family story and praying for them. You met Ted Hartke when he drove all the way from Vermilion County, Illinois to speak during the May, 2013 public hearing. He and his young family have been forced out of their home because the wind turbines in Vermilion County, Illinois were improperly sited. They would like to thank you for all of your continued support and prayers. To follow their story and read the January 5th Chicago Tribune article, "Let the Wind Subsidy Blow Away", go to www.FairWindEnergy.org.



Hazard sign installed in the Spring of 2013 in Bureau County, IL. The sign is approximately 1500 ft. from nearest turbine.



Objection forms submitted into evidence at the October ZBA meeting and presented to Boone County board members in November.



After months of struggling with sleep deprivation, the Hartke family (Vermilion County, IL) finally abandoned their home in December, 2013. They now live in a double wide mobile home.