

Area residents ask town to look closer at Wind turbine proposal

By KATE DAY SAGER
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ALLEGANY

ALLEGANY — The majority of residents who attended Tuesday's public hearing on a wind turbine farm proposal in the town of Allegany spoke out against plans for the project.

The public hearing, which was called by the Allegany Town Board, drew about 25 residents.

The times of the hearing so close to the Independence Day holiday was brought up by area resident Barbara Miller, who told the board she believed even more people would have attended if there hadn't been a conflict with Fourth of July activities.

Town supervisor Pat Eaton replied that he would contact the town attorney to determine if an additional public hearing can be held on the matter.

The purpose of the hearing was for the town board to collect additional comments on an amendment to wind turbine regulations designed by the town Planning Board. The planning board also had held a public hearing on the regulations in March.

In July of 2006, the town board adopted a one-year moratorium that suspended activity regarding wind farms moving into agricultural-forestry zoned districts in the community until the town planning board could research the matter.

At Tuesday's meeting, several residents asked that the town board do further research on wind turbine farms before voting on the regulations.

Allegany resident Paul Kelly complimented the town board for their hard work but said he and his wife were "anti-windmill."

"I think you should put the matter off for at least 10 years," Mr. Kelly said. He said he believes a 1,000 foot buffer proposed in the regulations to separate the windmills from homes was inadequate. In addition, he said he believed wind turbines would create noise, affect bird life and lower property values.

Another resident, Don Black of the Allegany Wind Farm Committee, said he believes both boards need to put more research into the matter.

"I'll bet more engineering studies have gone into the intersection for Wal-Mart (proposed store expansion) than this," Mr. Black said.

One resident who spoke in favor of wind turbine farms was Ron DeMattio, who said he believes windmills are a better source of energy than oil and gas.

"This doesn't need to be made into a boogie man, it's a very elegant solution" to increasing energy needs, he said. "There's already a behemoth in place called the fossil fuel industry."

Olean resident Hal Jacobi said that while he doesn't live in the town of Allegany, issues created by wind turbines will be far reaching.

"I'm proposing to you to please study this longer ... we should be careful what we allow in," Mr. Jacobi said.

Barry Miller of the Concerned Citizens of

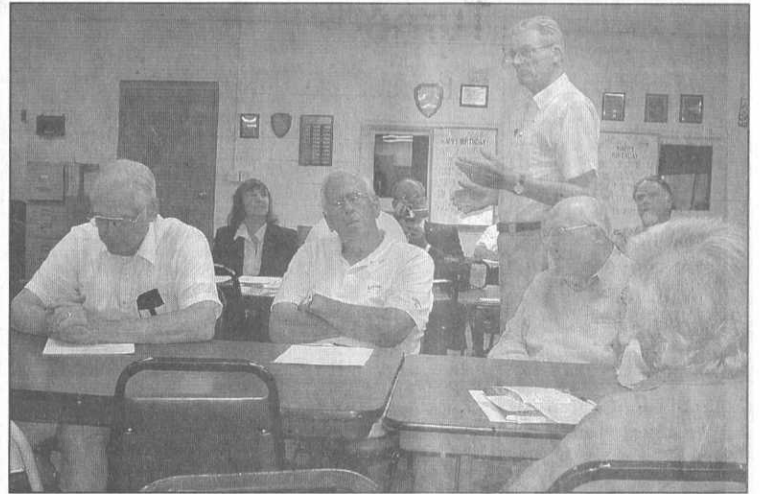
Cattaraugus County said he had worked with wind turbines in the past as an engineer. He noted that wind turbine companies planning to locate in the area should be looked into because many new wind turbines may have mechanical failures. He said one fault found with the machines are run-away blades that can come loose from the rotors and fly off the machines.

Also commenting was Gary Abraham, an environmental attorney, who said at the very least the town should place strict regulations on the amount of decibels it will allow from noise created by the windmills.

"You should consider the health, welfare and safety of the town residents and money (benefits) should be secondary," Mr. Abraham said.

A company interested in building a wind turbine farm, Everpower Renewables, has had representatives attend a few town meetings over the past year.

Andrew Golembeski of Everpower was at Tuesday's meeting but did not speak on behalf of the company. After the meeting, however, he said he believes there was a lot of



KATE DAY SAGER/Olean Times Herald

Hal Jacobi (standing) of Olean gives his opinion regarding a wind turbine farm proposal during the Allegany Town Board's public hearing Tuesday at the Allegany Senior Center.

misinformation provided at the meeting.

"At the last meeting I encouraged everyone to go and visit a wind farm, they'll find they are not noisy," he said.

In addition, he said that before a wind turbine farm would be located in any area there would be a number of studies conducted to determine effects on birds, as well as noise levels and environmental issues.

Mr. Eaton said residents can send in written comments regarding the wind farm regulations to the Allegany Town Hall until, Wednesday, July 18. He said the board will take those comments into consideration when the matter is voted on at the Tuesday, Aug. 21, meeting.