

Board votes for turbines

Protestors rally, Allegany Senior Center packed as board approves wind overlay district 4 to 1

By Kate Day Sager
Olean Times Herald

ALLEGANY — Four years of community protest against a wind turbine farm in the Chipmonk and Knapp Creek areas were overlooked Monday when the Allegany Town Board voted 4 to 1 in favor of allowing the project to proceed.

Votes in favor of the wind overlay district, which allows the 29-wind turbine farm to be constructed by EverPower Wind Holdings Inc., were cast by Town Supervisor Patrick Eaton and town board members John Hare, Hans Sendlakowski and Ray Jonak. The lone vote against the project came from board member Jim Hitchcock. Several people applauded and thanked Mr. Hitchcock after he cast his vote.

The vote came after an hour-long rally attended by hundreds of protesters in front of the Allegany Senior Center. They held signs such as "RIP Allegany, 5 in a Room to Decide Her Fate," and "Mr. Eaton, Too Bad You Won't Be On The Town Board To Spend This Blood Money Come November." They also chanted "vote no" and listened to a song about wind turbines by Barbara Dyskant. The group heard from town of Howard residents Donna Marmuscak and Jerry Hedman who said a 29-wind turbine farm is currently being constructed by EverPower in their community. Ms. Marmuscak said her community also fought against the project to no avail.

After the vote, rally organizer, Kathy Boser, said they had expected this outcome because the "writing was on the wall."

On the web

Visit www.olean-timesherald.com for video footage of the vote and protest.



Photos by Breanna Famer/Olean Times Herald

ABOVE: Members of the Allegany Town Board discuss the wind-turbine farm that was later approved for the Chipmonk and Knapp Creek areas.
RIGHT: Protestors rallied before the Allegany Town Board meeting to urge the board to vote against the project.

Also at the rally were approximately three dozen or more proponents of the project who wore fluorescent yellow shirts. Those with the group said they were construction workers with Labor Union 621 in Olean. Their signs all read "Wind Makes America Strong."

Ronald Williams, a union worker from Allegany, said he and the others from the union were showing their support for the project because of the jobs it will provide.

"We're construction workers and we need the work," Mr. Williams said. "We feel the work is a good opportunity, and is economically good for everyone. We're just trying to make a living like everyone else."

Andrea Quinn, secretary for the labor union and a resident of Allegany, said she believed the wind project is a "small step as far as our

environment is concerned but a big step for Allegany.

"We can set a precedent for the area," she said. "We can start here and go across Cattaraugus County, Allegany County and Chautauqua County" with wind farms.

Providing security at the event were officers with the New York State Police, the Cattaraugus County Sheriff's Office and the Allegany Village Police. Police would only permit 194 people in the meeting because of space constraints. Consequently, a number of the opponents of the project were made to wait outside.

Inside the packed room, the board heard comments from Dan Spitzer, the town's con-

Please see **Wind**, page A-2



WIND

Continued from page A-1

Carrollton, Allegany residents to protest project transport route

sulting attorney for the project. He said the host-community agreement would provide the town with \$500,000 before construction begins. In addition, the annual host fee will be \$285,000 a year with increases from inflation.

Road-use agreements for the town of Allegany were also provided in the overall agreement. Mr. Spitzer said the town of Carrollton would have to establish its own road-use agreement, as its roads are expected to be used for transporting the materials. He said the city of Olean's roads would not be used for the project.

The town board also listened to an overview of the project read by consultants Cami McGraw and Dave Britton with Conestoga-Rovers and Associates. The consulting company has advised the Allegany Planning Board on the project for the past several years.

In reviewing the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) report, Ms. McGraw said that contrary to comments about the project, blasting was not anticipated for the project. In addition, she said there were pre-surveys done on the water wells in the wind farm area. If there is any disruption with the water sources to residences, the developer would have to provide temporary water to residents if needed, as well as a permanent solution at the developer's expense, she said. The report stated that very few residents will experience shadow flicker greater than 20 hours a year. If this should happen, the developer would

CARROLLTON — Residents of the towns of Carrollton and Allegany are requesting the help of the community in protesting the use of Church Street and Nichols Run for the transport of wind turbine materials.

Mike Lippert of Nichols Run said he his hopeful residents will attend the 6:30 p.m. Sept. 7 town of Carrollton meeting to protest the use of the residential road for transporting 8,500 truckloads of wind turbine materials.

On Monday, the Allegany Town Board approved the construction of a 29-wind turbine farm in the communities of Chipmonk and Knapp Creek. The wind farm will be constructed by EverPower Wind Holdings Inc. of New York City. EverPower officials have stated that the town of Carrollton road is the primary route of transport considered for the project.

Mr. Lippert and others in his neighborhood have signed a petition against the proposed route, pointing out flaws in the road such as a sagging culvert as well as safety concerns with the large loads traveling on the narrow road. Town of Carrollton officials have met with EverPower officials to discuss details for a road-use agreement along the proposed route.

have to mitigate the problem, or shut the turbine down. Ms. McGraw also read a report on bird and bat disturbance that could occur from the wind turbines, and noted that the planning board determined that it wasn't "biologically significant."

Sound levels were reported to have met "conservative" standards, and the visual impact study of the 500-foot tall turbines stated they will be seen in various locations throughout the community.

As it became apparent that the board was in favor of the project with unani-

mous votes cast in favor of the SEQR report and the host-community agreement with EverPower, a number of opponents left the room in disgust. One woman could be seen weeping at a table. Other opponents who stood in the outside parking lot could be heard booing through the walls when they learned of the vote. The construction workers applauded the town board and shook their hands.

Outside of the meeting was a different story for one town official. As a planning board member walked out the front door, a man standing

near the parking lot screamed at him.

"Get out of here, just get out of here," the man screamed at the top of his lungs as the planning board member hurried to his vehicle.

Later, Mr. Eaton refused to comment to the Olean Times Herald about the project approval. When asked what he will do if he isn't re-elected in the upcoming election, he said "I have a job that I like to run, believe it or not."

Mr. Hare, who is also running for town supervisor, said he hasn't considered how his vote will affect his campaign.

"The election process this fall has absolutely no bearing about what we did tonight," Mr. Hare said. "If it hurts me, I guess I have to live with it."

When asked about the couple of hundred people who rallied against the project, he said "No matter what I did, there were going to be people on both sides of the issue dissatisfied with what I did.

"There is no one who worked more diligently, to check the facts and ask the questions ... (to ensure) this would be as tight and restrictive as it could be," Mr. Hare said of his research on the project.

Kevin Sheen, senior director of development for EverPower, said his company was pleased with the town board's vote.

"We're happy that the town board chose to support the project; we think it will be good for the community," he said.

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