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## DA, state officials looking at wind issues

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The Telegram

**BURKE** - The District Attorney, New York State Inspector General and the New York State Attorney General have started investigations related to members of the Burke Town Council and its wind ordinance, and similar issues across New York State.

**'There are a lot of issues related to wind energy and the regulation of it around the state.'**

**- Derek Champagne, Franklin County District Attorney**

"My office is currently examining concerns brought to my attention," Franklin County District Attorney Derek Champagne said. "The State Inspector General has asked to have information for-

warded to her office."

Complaints of impropriety caught the attention of the District Attorney.

"A number of citizens have contacted my office regarding Burke and other towns and their wind energy regulations," Champagne said. "Because of the on-going investigation, I really can't com-

ment on specifics."

Champagne and Assistant District Attorney Glenn MacNeill attended a meeting in New York City on Thursday to discuss the issue with state officials.

"There have been several complaints referred to my office,"

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Champagne said. "I met with the Attorney General in New York City and the New York State Inspector General. We had a face-to-face meeting and several conference calls, and we are essentially jointly examining details brought to our attention."

Champagne said he discussed concerns that are being expressed around the state regarding the complexities and dynamics of small communities having to develop their own ordinances regulating wind energy facilities.

He said he has also talked to the state officials regarding concerns brought to him by area residents in relation to the state Public Officers law.

"The Attorney General's office has made it clear that the Public Officers Law, which has been widely discussed by a number of individuals, only applies to state employees," Champagne said. "However there are other regulations that my office, the Attorney General's office and the Inspector General's office are looking at. There are a lot of issues related to wind energy and the regulation of it around the state."

Citing the on-going investigation, Champagne said he could not elaborate on the specific concerns or any possible violations.

Residents in Burke have raised questions about the ethics of town board members regarding their actions on the proposed ordinance regulating wind power.

During the public hearing on Jan. 17, focusing on the 90-day moratorium on the proposed law regulating wind power, a majority of the public who stood to speak made three requests: that a moratorium of 90 days be extended to at least a year, that CJ Madonna be replaced as Burke's attorney in the matter, and that the two board members who reportedly have relationships with wind energy companies recuse themselves from any votes regarding the matter.

Court filings show relationships between Jericho Rise Wind Park LLC and Burke Town Councilman Arnold Lobdell, and between Councilman David Vincent and Noble Chateaugay Windpark LLC. Lobdell declined to com-

ment on any possible conflict of interest, stating that responding would only fuel more personal attacks on his character.

"The issues are what needs to be debated, not beliefs," he said. "I don't want to debate them in the newspaper. I want to debate them in Burke's town hall."

Vincent echoed Lobdell's sentiment and stressed the need to focus on creating a fair wind ordinance for Burke.

"I would rather concentrate on the wind law instead of allegations made by certain people," Vincent said.

Burke Town Supervisor Darrel Bushey declined to comment, instead deferring to Madonna, who did not return several phone calls.

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