

Wind energy study gets support from state

By Michaela Kennedy

The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources recently gave thumbs up to the island's pursuit of a wind energy generation program. The unofficial nod followed town council approval for \$15,000 to be spent on a wind turbine feasibility study.

State Energy Commissioner Andrew Dzykewicz said the scale and scope of a wind energy program is appropriate for Jamestown and for the state, Committee Chairman, Don Wineberg told the Wind Energy Committee at its Oct. 16 meeting. Wineberg, met with the commissioner after the committee gave a presentation to the town council earlier this month. "He was really enthusiastic," Wineberg said.

According to Wineberg, the state office has a revolving fund to promote energy in Rhode Island, and could provide an interest-free loan to pursue the study. If the project failed to move forward, the money would not need to be paid back. As much as \$35,000 might be available for the town to use.

"It's in a segregated fund, and is there when we need it," Wineberg added.

During their meeting, Dzykewicz brought up energy efficiency, and suggested the town become more vocal about energy efficiency measures, Wineberg noted. "I realized maybe our charge should be changed," he said. Currently, the committee is directed to focus only on harnessing wind energy possibilities.

The Wind Energy Committee went on to discuss procedures for the feasibility study. Members agreed to make a list of tasks that spanned the scope of the project, and then look at each element separately. Committee member Abigail Anthony suggested making a cost estimate for each task. "How much of the feasibility study do we want to do ourselves to save money?" she asked.

Anthony used a meteorological (met) tower as an example. She noted that members of the committee had the expertise to do the data analysis if a Met tower were installed for a year. Met towers

are designed to measure the wind resource of an area before a wind turbine can be built. "The met tower is necessary," she said.

Committee member Clayton Carlisle pointed out that a met tower might be a part two of the feasibility study. He questioned what elements should be included in the first part. "We can take things out of the scope as we go on our way," he noted.

Anthony offered to put together a list of elements for the study. Committee member Michael Larkin and volunteer Joseph Logan agreed to join Anthony in a subcommittee to produce the list. All committee members agreed to attend the next meeting with ideas for sites for potential evaluation.

In a talk about additional funding, Carlisle noted he was researching local funds, such as the Champlin and the Rhode Island Foundations. "Many of the funds have deadlines in May, so we would have to wait for the money," he explained.

Wineberg commented on how wind energy projects have become mainstream, hinting that money may be available from more traditional funds. "Wind is no longer edgy," he said.

Alexander Pichs from WindSmart offered information to the committee about the approaches of other communities to wind projects. Typically a town would do all elements of a feasibility study at one time. Then it would set the stage for implementation, he noted.

Pichs also noted that turbine

manufacturers had backorders which took anywhere from 16 months to three years to deliver. "They are catering to the larger projects now. Money that was available for Portsmouth is no longer available," he warned.

Pichs said that a company like General Electric might be interested, "but they have so much demand from wind farms that they're not interested in small projects."

The idea of working together with other communities was brought up, but Pichs pointed out that towns were at different points in their plans. "It's difficult to do collaboration," he said.

Anthony went on to report that she attended last month's Conservation Commission meeting. The commission asked to collaborate with the wind committee when environmental impact is considered. "They want to help," she added. The committee decided to invite the commission to the next meeting, scheduled for Nov. 20.

Wineberg said all work done should be documented, adding, "It's very convenient when we need to explain things," he said. He suggested including the commission on the request for proposals development committee. "We need to get the RFP out," he concluded.

Bunkley exhibit closes Oct. 27

The Conanicut Island Art Association, in conjunction with the Jamestown library, is currently hosting a showcase of work by Jamestown artist Jeanne Bunkley. The art will be on display in the library's new exhibit area through Oct. 27, during normal library hours.

Bunkley is a member of the Art League of Rhode Island, the New England Printmakers Guild, and was a founding member of the CIAA. She studied art at the National Academy of Design, the Art Students League, the Hinna studio in Rome, the Grand Central

School of Art and Design, and with various artists, including portrait artist Jerry Farnsworth. During her training, she was a recipient of the William H. Fogg Memorial Scholarship. Her work has been widely exhibited, and is included in private and public collections, including the Naval War College Museum.

The retrospective features several of her larger paintings and a selection of her charcoal portraits. During the 1970's, Jeanne sketched many Jamestown men, and the result is an interesting visual record of that time in the island's history.

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