

Committee finishes first year of wind energy pursuit

By Michaela Kennedy

The Jamestown Wind Energy Committee spent its final meeting of the year looking at an initial draft request for qualifications (RFQ) to find a consultant for a wind power feasibility study. The request, scheduled to be announced in January, is a result of the committee's determination that Jamestown has viable wind resources to generate energy, and that professional advice is needed to create the means.

The wind committee spent most of its Dec. 18 meeting in review of the request, which will solicit proposals from architectural and wind energy firms. Proposals are expected to offer the committee professional services that can help provide a detailed study for possible wind power generation.

Committee members discussed specifying a number of sites to evaluate. Concern was brought up about whether the number of sites requested to be identified would affect how much money was dedicated to exploring each site. They agreed the study should include identifying and ranking the top 10 or more sites suitable for analysis.

Chairman Don Wineberg hinted that decisions on how many sites to examine could be made after proposals were submitted. "If the proposals come in beyond our budgets, then we can cut back. I think we know Jamestown better than the consultants do, so we can help to direct them towards possible sites," he said. To date, the committee has been allocated \$25,000 by the Town Council towards wind power investigation.

The committee created its own list of possible sites for wind

turbines last month. Committee member Bob Bowen pointed out that the top five sites marked by committee members were "strong" possibilities, and the second five sites, totaling ten, were significantly weaker possibilities. "They're being hired to be our consultants, to work together though this with the committee," Bowen said about potential bidders.

In outlining the four stages of the process, the committee also agreed the public should become involved when the first list of sites from stage one is formed. "The difference between the first and second stage is the qualifying and narrowing of choices," Committee member Clayton Carlisle noted. "After stage one, we can recommend doing a more detailed analysis on two or three (sites)." Consultants should include presentations at public hearings in their bids, Wineberg added.

In the bid request, the committee will ask consultants for a scope of work and a completion date of the study. The RFQ is expected to be finalized and publicly posted by the end of January. Wineberg targeted spring of 2008 for completion of the feasibility study.

The wind study so far

The project to produce sustainable energy began over a year ago when two independent groups of local residents met to explore the possibility of generating electricity from wind on the island. The investigations were spurred by the town's rising electricity costs and "carbon footprint" associated with burning fossil fuels and natural gas. A carbon footprint, a phrase coined in British media in

recent years, refers to the amount of carbon dioxide that is emitted into the environment by a person or industry.

Wineberg remembered his own interest was sparked on a sail around Jamestown. When the boat passed Fort Getty, one crew member suggested it would be "a great place" to put wind generators. Wineberg informally mentioned it to the Town Council. "They seemed enthusiastic about it," he added. The committee was formed by the council last April, with an initial budget of \$10,000 to start the ball rolling.

As the committee did its research, it quickly realized that a comprehensive study was in order. With an encouraging nod from the energy resources office at the state level, the committee made a presentation to the council early in the fall, and the council approved an additional \$15,000 to be spent on a wind turbine feasibility study. About the same time, state energy advisor Andrew Dzykewicz told the committee that a wind energy program would be appropriate for both the island and the state.

Wineberg mentioned that all of the consultants he has met so far have said aesthetics is the number one issue. Aesthetics include close and far views, possible noise pollution, and shadow flicker from turning blades. The panel harbors a worry that people may not want windmills near their homes. Wineberg was pleased to add, however, that no complaints from residents have been heard. "We have not received one critical comment yet about placing wind power in Jamestown. I hope worries about NIMBYism are wrong," Wineberg said.

Wineberg went on to say that he did not foresee money as being a problem in developing wind power generators. Additionally, a number of developers introduced themselves, saying that projects of one, two or three turbines are

much easier to get built than big farms. "There are lots of tax incentives. This is a Jamestown project, and the town is healthy financially."

Another obstacle will be to get a good net metering law, so the town gets a fair price for the electricity. Under net metering, excess electricity produced by the wind turbine will spin the existing home or business electricity meter backwards, effectively banking the electricity until it is needed by the customer. This provides the customer with full retail value for all the electricity produced, according to the American Wind Energy Association.

The committee exudes confidence that they are on track for meeting their initial goals. "We made a decision early on to do our work thoroughly and well," Wineberg said. "We are as deliberate as possible. Our job is to engage in a process and not to accomplish goals at this point. The quality of

the process that we've engaged in makes sure the process is defensible and transparent." Wineberg explained that the committee is exhausting a list of possible questions that may arise in order to have accurate and detailed information for the town.

Committee members all feel they are working well and close to their own expectations. Some members have expressed regret that, due to conflicting schedules, collaboration with the Conservation Commission has been difficult. The two boards regularly share information, however, and plan to hold at least one joint meeting in the next few months.

The wind committee says the upcoming year is going to be an exciting one, learning about all the possible sites and making recommendations to the town. "I look forward to the day when we are worrying about delivery for blades, maybe by 2012," Wineberg said.

North Kingstown High School honor roll

The following Jamestown students were named to the North Kingstown High School Principal's Honor Roll for achieving an academic average of 90 or better for the first quarter.

From grade 9: Carla Aveledo, Trevor Bobola, Caia Diepenbrock, Eric Holtzman, Kaitlin Marquis, Catherine Matley, Kayla Miller, Romil Patel, and Jacqueline Tanguay.

From grade 10: Erin Anding, Eliza Chase, Caitlin Downing, Sarah Gooding, Rory Kirby, Emily Lester, Allison Smith, Alice Toll, and Christopher Wright.

From grade 11: Tatjana Bokaemper, Kendra Davis, Emily Falces, Sarah Pease, Alexander Seidler, Nathaniel Vigneault and Michael Wright.

From grade 12: Ashley Amiot, Samantha Androozzi, Erin Brennan, John Chase, Christopher Clark, Jon-Michael Degidio, Michael Donnelly, Sydney Ferguson, Alexa Furtado, Jason Gorelick, Peter Imbriale, Emily Miniutti, Kate Moreau, Benjamin Nadeau, Natalie Pruell, Ashley Smith, Justin Sularz, Molly Welsh, and Courtney Westall.

The following students were named to the Honor Roll for achieving an academic average of 85 or better for the first quarter.

From grade 9: Matthew Baptista, Casey Brown, Kellie Brown, Samantha Bucklin, Jena Cabrera, Carl DeVellis, Madeline Doherty, Liliane, Flour, Julia Hansen, Morgan Lopes, Chandler Neale, Benjamin North, Noah Robinson, Megan Salt, Steven Santos, Michael Schnack, Ryan Southworth, Cameron Toppa, and Henry Vogel.


From grade 10: Thomas Abbood, Kathryn Bednarczyk, Allison Bryer, Vincent Claro, Madeline Crabtree, Sarah Croak, Sara Crowell, Victoria Dolce, Quinn Earley, Hannah Farrelly, Megan Greene, Ramon Ibarlucea, Robert Kowolchuk, Erica Lush, Samuel Lutyens, Clay McKenna, Harrison Mielde, Benjamin Normand, Cory Rosa, Hillary Schumacher, Michael Spahr, Dylan Walsh, Jacob Wigton, Kyle Wright, and Marjorie Zwolinski.

From grade 11: Colleen Bailey, Camille Baker, Cheryl Barber, Andrew Bretti, Jessica Bucklin, Alexander Clarke, Matthew Hamel, Victory Lambert, Mariel Mastrostefano, Kelsey McDonough, Ryan Morris, Hadley Neale, Kathryn Safford, Caitlin Salt, Eric von Hohenleiten, and Alyson Yeomans.

From grade 12: Leah Baines, Ashley Britton, Wyatt Dunn, Rory Farrell, Caitlin Kelly, Lucy Lutyens, Nolan McCaffrey, Daniel Page, John Perrotti, William Reardon, Kyra Reppe, Michael Robinson, Jordan Segal, Ryan Spahr, Brett Uttley, Adriana Vorse, Jeremy Wigton, and Neal Yeoman.

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