

To: Highland County Board of Supervisors


From: Chair, Highland County Planning Commission

Subject: Virginia Code Section 15.2-2232 Hearing on Highland New Wind Development LLC
Proposed Wind Energy Power Generating Facility

Date: April 20, 2006

1. Pursuant to Section 15.2-2232 of the Virginia Code, the Highland County Planning Commission conducted an advertised public hearing for planning determination on April 18, 2006. The purpose of the public hearing was to receive public input in determining if the Highland New Wind Development LLC application for a wind energy generating facility on Tamarack Ridge and Red Oak Knob is in substantial accord with the adopted Highland County Comprehensive Plan.
2. Subsequent to the closing of the public hearing, the Planning Commission both continued its meeting and delayed its vote on the issue until April 19, 2006. This continuation was made so the Planning Commission could consider the comments received at the aforementioned public hearing and review those respective pages of the Comprehensive Plan. Each Planning Commission member provided comments on the issue at the April 19, 2006 meeting, and later determined by a three to one vote that the proposed Highland New Wind Development LLC initiative was substantially in accord with the Highland County Comprehensive Plan. Determination of being in substantial accord was made because of factual reasons provided in not less than 19 points covering 18 separate pages in the Comprehensive Plan, and the Staff report presented prior to the public hearing which was based on research and numerous site visits to the proposed project location.
3. The following provides factual reasoning drawn from the Comprehensive Plan as referenced by the three Planning Commissioners who determined that the proposed facility was substantially in accord with the plan. While the majority of the following are direct quotes from the Comprehensive Plan, others provide the theme of the particular section.
 - A. Page 5- Today's View-Tomorrow's Vision
 - A lack of growth can mean a loss of economic opportunity and stagnation.
 - The theme of economic opportunity.
 - B. Page 6- Strategic Questions
 - Are we maintaining a strong tax base?
 - Are we encouraging new locally owned, small business /industry?
 - C. Page 7-Land use/Environmental Balance
 - Growing within the limits of our resources is a key concept in our attitudes about balancing development with the natural environment.
 - Air quality, too, is essential to maintaining the health and beauty of the County.

- D. Page 21- Community Development
-Figure 1-3, Population Distribution and Density- The proposed site is the 2d least populated of four Population Density areas in the County.
- E. Page 65-Economy
-How can Highland County capitalize on economic opportunities without sacrificing the rural character and beauty for which it is well known?
- F. Page 89- Goals
-Ensure that new business and industrial development occurs in suitable locations and is compatible with the County's environmental, scenic and rural character.
- G. Page 105- Government and Finance Goals
-Increase the County's financial resources.
- H. Page 105- Recommendations
-Investigate ways to increase the Tax Base through local/regional economic development.
-Analyze the development of alternate sources of revenue.
- I. Page 127- Utilities
-Generally, development should occur where the services can be provided at "least cost", or where they can be installed and function without additional costs or failure in the future.
- J. Page 142- Atmospheric Quality
-Clean industries supported in first three paragraphs.
- K. Page 163-Goals/Recommendations
-Preserve and protect Atmospheric quality in Highland County vicinity.
-Seek the establishment of clean industries that do not produce harmful emissions.
- L. Page 169-Land Use
-It is the responsibility of the community, through its elected officials to decide which areas of the County should be conserved for various reasons and which areas are appropriate for development...
-The Land Use Plan is designed to be flexible enough to accommodate changing local conditions, regional trends and different expectations of growth.
- M. Page 187-Goals
-Steer the location of any new development to correspond with existing or planned public utilities; the proposed project is adjacent to the only existing Kv line in the County.


Jim Cobb, Chair