

'Highlanders for Responsible Development' plans 2nd meeting

BY ANNE ADAMS • STAFF WRITER

MONTEREY — A newly formed group of county citizens, Highlanders for Responsible Development, met Monday night just prior to the county board's meeting in Monterey. About 40 residents and landowners continued their discussions on how to form a non-profit organization to assist Highland supervisors with development issues by volunteering their expertise.

As reported last week, the group has formed an interim board of directors, and anticipates formalizing its mission statement and objectives soon. Its interim executive board consists of president, Charlotte Stephenson; treasurer, Steve Fullerton; and secretary, Patti Reum.

Stephenson wrote a letter to supervisors last week introducing the group. At the county board's meeting Monday, supervisor Robin Sullenberger said he would keep an open mind about the offer of assistance, and asked county administrator Roberta Lambert to find out more about the kind of help its members could provide. He said supervisors and Lambert were

certainly overworked and he would be hard-pressed to reject any service of volunteer skills.

"I think the county can build a database of all the individuals, residents and landowners," Lambert said. "I think it's a very much needed reference. There are a lot of people in the county we could turn to for help but we're not aware of who they are."

Highlanders for Responsible Development evolved from a handful of citizens who began to gather in opposition to a wind utility proposed for Allegheny Mountain, and that is still an issue it will address. Members Monday further discussed how county officials might proceed with the wind facility request for operation, and were updated on the drive to gather petition signatures opposing the project.

Some had visited Sen. John Warner's staff last week to discuss the potential effects of wind energy in Virginia, and others suggested meeting with representatives from Congressman Bob Goodlatte's staff this week to outline their concerns.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, Jan. 19 at The Highland Center, 6 p.m. HRD welcomes new members.