

March 12th Wind Energy Text Amendment Working Group
Meeting Notes

Members of Working Group present:

Cindy Chapman, Bud Dasenbrock, Gary Hellerich, Marilyn McNabb, Lucas Nelson, Tony Oberley, Tom Schuerman, Curtis Schwaninger, Greg Schwaninger, Ed Swotek, Joe Wood, Matt Bauman, John Blas, John Hill, Dale Linsenmeyer, and Paul Meints. Approximately 23 members of the public also joined the meeting.

Meeting Summary

Overview of the Working Group and process: Staff, working group members and members of the public in attendance all introduced themselves. Steve Henrichsen with the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning (LLCP) gave an overview of the process noting that:

- Members selected by the LLCP are being joined by people selected by Gage County to explore the same topic. So the two groups will function as one big group.
- The role isn't to review the special permits by Volkswind that are in process. The point is to help the LLC Planning Department draft new text for Lancaster County. In addition, Gage County may also consider changes to their regulations.
- The public is welcome at all the meetings, but the purpose is to specifically work with a smaller group. It would be too difficult to have 30 to 50 people every week and many different people at every meeting. So the room is set up for the 19 Working Group members to meet around one big table with plenty of room for members of public to listen and view any presentations. At the end of the meeting will be an opportunity for members of the public to express comments on matters discussed during the meeting.
- The LLCP staff hope that over the next 7 to 8 meetings it get consensus on many points to help draft a revised Commercial Wind Energy Facility zoning regulations. However, we may not reach complete agreement. No vote being taken at the end of the process. Our goal is to find points of consensus and get comments on a draft to be created and presented by the LLCP at the last two meetings.

Background on current text and previous events: Sara Hartzell with the LLCP went over specific events from the past year in Lancaster and Gage County relating to the Volkswind applications for wind turbines. The Lancaster County wind regulations came forward and were in place in 2011. Matt Bauman, Gage County Supervisor, and member of the group, gave a quick history on the Gage County regulations which were adopted in 2010 with the assistance of a planning firm, Hanna Keelan and Associates.

In 2012 Volkswind got approval for a meteorological tower in Lancaster County to begin monitoring for a potential wind energy farm. In 2013 and 2014 LLCP staff met with Volkswind and discussed revisions to the LLC regulations. Volkswind proposed some amendments which were discussed with staff and were submitted in October 2014. After there was concern expressed about the process, Volkswind agreed to withdraw the text amendment in January 2015 so a new process could begin. The LLCP proposed a process that begins tonight and asked Gage County to join after it was learned they might start a similar process.

Volkswind still has seven specific special permit applications in Lancaster County on hold. Sara explained these special permit applications were waiting for the new text amendment that the Planning Department would draft. Based on that revision, the special permit applications might have to be revised to meet the new proposal. The LLC was starting with a clean slate in terms of the text amendment. The revised text would ultimately have a public hearing before the LLC Planning Commission and the Lancaster County Board. The final version is ultimately up to the County Board.

Ground Rules for the Meetings – Sara Hartzell then went over the rules for conducting the meetings. We certainly want to respect all views. There are many different viewpoints on the group, some pro, some con, some in between and some just learning about the whole topic. Not everyone has the same background information. Sara will run the meetings, and we may occasionally decide we need to move to the next topic due to time limitations.

Volkswind description of typical wind turbine project: Staff explain that they asked Volkswind to go over typical projects so everyone had the same information about a wind “farm.” Group member Joe Wood gave a presentation and answered several questions. (The presentation is available on the Planning Department website under the March 12th Meeting heading.) Group members had some discussion about several points in the presentation.

Identification of concerns about wind projects for future discussion: The group then started with a list of some topics previously identified and listed by Sara and Steve. Group members then added topics or questions they wanted addressed. Here is the list of topics identified as a result of the discussion.

- Economic implications for land owners & surrounding community
- Environmental implications of wind turbine projects
- Shadow flicker and ice throw
- Important view corridors
- Noise and health concerns about wind turbines
- Setbacks
- Impact on development and subdivisions
- Impact on property value of adjacent land
- Enforcement of local regulations
- Does it make a difference about costs in a public power state?
- Where do wind energy taxes go?
- Signal interference
- Decommissioning of wind towers
- Lighting of towers
- Design strength of a tower
- What is actual energy generated annually by a turbine compared to potential output?
- Emergency response to a tower fire
- Does ownership change impact operation?
- Public road improvements needed for construction
- Examples of regulations from other communities
- Is wind a mineral right?
- Examples of wind associations of property owners (such as Saline County)
- What if tower needed to be increased in height or altered due to technology change

- Provide an example of employee safety manual for a tower
- Do developers carry liability insurance
- If there is an accident, is the County liable?
- When is fencing necessary?

Set future meeting dates: The group then discussed and agreed on the following dates (the locations were announced several days later.)

Thursday, March 26 th , 6:30 p.m.	Roca Community Center
Thursday, April 9 th , 6:30 p.m.	Cortland Community Center
Thursday, April 16 th , 6:30 p.m.	Roca Community Center
Thursday, April 30 th , 6:30 p.m.	Cortland Community Center
Thursday, May 7 th , 6:30 p.m.	Location to be determined
Thursday, May 21 st , 6:30 p.m.	Location to be determined

Open for comments from the audience on the matters discussed this evening: Several members of the audience took the opportunity to ask questions, make comments or offer suggestions for future meetings.

Steve then explained that there was the intention to have a LLC staff member attend to take general minutes. Unfortunately staff didn't get that setup in time, so there wasn't anyone at the meeting to take minutes. At future meetings, there will be a LLC staff member attending who would take notes and develop a meeting summary. It would not be a verbatim minutes of everything said, but we would try to summarize the comments and discussion.

The meeting summary for the March 12th meeting is provided by Steve Henrichsen from his notes.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:12 p.m.