

Thank you for your interest in the work of the Alternative Energy Committee.

We have created this document as there is misinformation surrounding our work.

The Alternative Energy Committee:

The AEC was created by a vote at Town Meeting in Spring of 2005. The committee's first meeting took place in August 2005. All members are placed on the committee by a vote of the TROKIA and serve one year appointments.

The Wind Energy By-law:

The idea that CCI Energy wrote the by-law is incorrect.

The idea that CCI Energy was *intimately* involved in writing the by-law to benefit themselves is also incorrect.

The AEC and The Planning Board, the two Town Committees responsible for creating the by-law were directed by discussions held with Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) and with other towns in Massachusetts who were working to develop wind energy and were struggling with zone laws. We felt the best way for Cohasset to go forward was to write a comprehensive by-law that addressed wind energy equipment. The open and public process for writing the by-law ensured all town residents were granted equal access and opportunity for input.

The bulk of the wording was taken from two public documents we found in our research:

- I. **The Cape Light Compact draft for wind zoning by-laws**
- II. **The Model Amendment to a Zoning Ordinance or By-law: Allowing Wind Facilities by Special Permit:** *Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources, Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.*

The process of writing the by-law began in late 2006 and took more than a year with input from: The AEC, The Planning Board, The Board of Selectman, The Advisory Board, The Zoning Board of Appeals, Town Council, local residents, and The Mass State Attorney General's Office. Additionally, CCI Energy and a Cohasset resident who is assisting in the financing of The Cohasset Heights Wind Project offered comments. Although those comments were offered, it does not mean they were accepted. Non-resident comments are common, the by-law writing process for the downtown district also received input from developers or parties who may or may not live in town. The height and the set back statements were **NOT** provided by CCI Energy or the company financing the project.

There were several open meetings that took place while crafting this law. Our conversations were long and detailed; large turbines vs. house hold size, commercial vs. government owned, selecting only parts of town vs. having an overlay covering all of town. The Board of Selectman originally withheld support over the wording with regard to small turbines, which we then removed. Additional wording was added to ensure turbines would not fall across residential property lines if there were a tower failure.

At the 2008 Spring Town Meeting, I personally spoke and stated that with the by-law passage the town would see two projects before the Planning Board in short order, one town owned unit proposal and another proposal from the team involved with the Cohasset Heights Wind Project. The town owned proposal would reflect plans for installation at either the High School Middle School *or* the Transfer Station based on pending passage or failure of the Green Communities Act. The by-law passed by unanimous voice vote.

The CCI Energy project had been known to The AEC, The Planning Board, The Board of Selectman and The Town, in general, for over two years, as Mr. Sweeney had approached and outlined his ideas clearly. In fact, there was an article in the Mariner regarding The Cohasset Heights Wind Project at the time the MET Tower was erected on site in 2006.

The bylaw passed in March 2008 and CCI Energy applied for a permit in August 2008.

Cohasset vs. how Hull works:

For over three years The AEC has stated publicly by way of our meetings, letters and conversations that in order for Cohasset to own and operate a turbine that would directly lower the *electrical bills* for individual households or residential properties, we would have to change not only state but federal law. Wind turbines in town *can and will* have an impact on our *municipal energy purchase price* which will stabilize our town budget and either lower or help maintain current property tax levels.

The Town of Hull has a Power & Light Municipality; they own and maintain the electrical system (grid), as opposed to National Grid owning and maintaining the electrical grid. How this currently benefits Hull is that Hull's Light & Power Company can place and operate a turbine(s) and the power generated from that turbine is sold directly to their customers. For Hull, this currently means lower electrical bills compared to National Grid. However Hull Light & Power recently voted to raise the electrical rates in 2009 in order to rebuild their reserve fund which was depleted in the construction of Hull 2. As well, Hull Light & Power does not pay property tax to the town and there is a move now by town leadership to charge \$365,000 on Power & Light equipment to help off set the budget short fall forecasted in 2009.

The idea that Cohasset could create a municipality so we could own our grid was discussed, but there is no legal method in place at this time to make that happen.

The Cohasset Heights Wind Project will offer two financial benefits to Cohasset:

The CCI Energy project will benefit Cohasset through property taxes and through lowering the town's electrical costs, which are currently greater than \$750,000.00.

First, CCI Energy will be paying the same property tax rate that all businesses do. The total cost of the project is expected to be between \$8 – 9 million. The AEC does not know how much of the construction cost will translate into assessed value for property taxes but if we took a dollar value of \$6 million, the town could realize over \$70,000.00 in new property taxes.

The second benefit to the town is CCI Energy has made it clear in all of their presentations and conversations that they wish to sign an energy purchase and sale contract with the town. This contract is possible under the rules of the **Green Communities Act of 2008**. This law was written so towns like Cohasset would see a benefit from projects like CCI Energy's Cohasset Heights Wind Project. Under this law the Town of Cohasset can purchase energy directly from a turbine and that energy is sold to us at a rate below the retail rate we are currently paying. It could also lower our delivery and transmission costs which make up one third our total expense.

Cohasset recently received a rate increase of 30% from our current supplier; this means that our town budget needs to absorb over \$200,000 in added costs. In negotiating with CCI Energy, the town's goal is to lower its cost for electricity. It is a direct benefit to Cohasset as we will have tax dollars available for other needs. It is in CCI Energy's best interest to sell to The Town of Cohasset as their only other option is to sell back to National Grid at a lower wholesale rate.

Lowering our electrical cost has a direct impact on our town budget.

Town owned Turbine:

The AEC continues to work with the MTC on a town owned turbine. The MTC has currently provided over \$30,000 in grant money for the study of wind in town and we have been granted an additional \$100,000 in funding for a detailed site-feasibility and financial study. The site study will produce a report similar to the one CCI Energy submitted to The Planning Board addressing the key issues of wildlife, flicker, noise, etc. The financial information will take the form of a detailed spreadsheet outlining purchase price, bonding options and annual operational expenses which will provide a clear understanding of the cost prior to our moving forward.

Once this report is complete, we will present to The Board of Selectman, The Advisory Board, The Town Manager, and The Capital Planning Board. We hope to see this report in mid-2009, but do not have a firm timeline from MTC.

Moving forward on a turbine for the town will require a vote for bonding at Town Meeting. The current cost for a modern turbine is \$2 million dollars per mega watt installed (on average) and the wait time is 18

– 24 months. If we were to move forward on a Cohasset owned project, we would be looking at 2011 – 2012 before we would see a project realized.

Other ideas:

The AEC has continued to look at a variety of energy production and conservation systems in our ongoing effort to lower the cost we pay for lighting, heating and cooling of our town buildings.

Some of the technologies we have investigated include:

- Solar PV (Electricity production)
- Solar Hot Water
- Solar Hot Air
- Under Water Turbines
- Geothermal
- New Insulation Technologies
- Modern High Efficiently Boilers
- Energy Audits of Town Buildings
- Thermal Imaging Studies of Town Buildings
- Air Exchange Systems
- Solar Lighting
- LED Street Lighting

We remain open to all new ideas and suggestions and welcome town residents to come to our meetings. We normally have “open floor” time at the end of every meeting. We hold meetings normally on the 3rd Tuesday of every month. Time and location are posted well in advance and available at Town Hall.

Thank you, in advance for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Andrew Willard
AEC, Chairman