



Hessel Citizens Say 'No' to Wind Turbine at Marina

By Mark Tower

Residents of Hessel in attendance at the Clark Township Board of Trustees meeting Thursday, November 19, voiced a resounding "no" to the idea of a donated wind turbine to help mitigate energy costs at the Hessel Marina, but the windmill's proponent, Mike McMaken, said he would continue to work with the township to look at alternative energy sources that can save money.

At the meeting, the township also voted to purchase a new work truck, hired Rudy Sherlund to push back snowbanks at the Hessel airport, and changed winter meeting times to 7 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Mr. McMaken, owner of McMaken carpentry in Cedarville and its recently created subsidiary, Green Energy Solutions, offered the township a vertical axis Windspire unit, similar to those along I-75 at Sea Shell City west of Cheboygan.

Mr. McMaken encouraged the township to take advantage of this opportunity, since, he said, many grants are now available for municipalities to improve marinas already making use of "green" types of energy.

"It's an opportunity for you to get your foot in the door for something that is a renewable energy source for that dock," he said. "Is it going to make a ton of power? No, it's not. That is not the purpose; it's to offer that open door for grant money that is going to better that marina."

The originally proposed location for the wind turbine was a grassy area halfway between the

gazebo and the main marina building, Mr. McMaken said. The unit could be expected to provide \$200 to \$400 in energy savings each year in that location, he said, and would cost the township between \$1,200 and \$1,500 to hook up to the electrical grid. The cost of the wind turbine and installation, which Mr. McMaken offered to donate, would range from \$10,000

to \$12,000, he said.

Residents at the meeting spoke out against the proposal, saying the wind turbine could threaten the safety of marina users, may involve maintenance costs to taxpayers, would not save much energy, would not fit the aesthetics of the area, and could threaten community events held near the marina.

Chuck Neal, whose property is adjacent to the marina, raised questions about the low level of savings the turbine may provide, the questionable safety and feasibility of putting such a unit in a densely used public area, and expressed concern about how well the technology has been tested.

"I don't think we've got the horse and the cart in the right

place," Mr. Neal said. "We need to get more information before we make a decision."

Along with other area residents, he said he had visited identical units near Sea Shell City and was concerned about how low to the ground the moving parts are. If the turbine is placed at the marina, he said, someone passing by with a fishing pole could easily get entan-

gled in the rotors.

Mr. McMaken offered to install the wind turbine with a longer center pole, which he said would keep it out of reach of anyone's fishing gear.

Jack Otstot, a resident of Cedar Street near the marina, raised questions about the noise and aesthetics of adding such a structure to the marina, and also said it could reduce community space in an already-cramped public area.

"Space is at a premium down there," Mr. Otstot said. "I think it's great that he is donating the wind turbine, but maybe that isn't where it should go." Mr. Otstot went on to suggest that Mr. McMaken and the township consider placing the wind turbine instead near Cedarville's waterfront.

He also asked the township board of trustees why an ordinance to regulate the construction of wind turbines has not yet been addressed.

Township Clerk Mike Miller said the creation of a wind energy ordinance is in the township's master plan, but has not yet been addressed by either the planning commission or the board of trustees.

Cedarville resident Linda Hudson, also in attendance Thursday night, voiced her opposition to placing the wind turbine on Cedarville's waterfront.

"I don't see why it needs to be put out there in everybody's faces," Mrs. Hudson said. "I'm not against wind energy, I just wouldn't want it there."

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Students Experience County Government



Participants in the 4-H Capitol Experience program visit the Mackinac County offices to learn about their functions Thursday, November 12. The students from St. Ignace, Cedarville, and Engadine high schools also sat in on a commission meeting later that evening. The county commission tour was part of the Capitol Experience's pre-conference activities. The students will travel to Lansing to learn how state government works. Pictured (front, from left) are Jeff Bomber, Kayla Miller, Christine Fan, Shantel Anderson, Mallory Ramelis, coordinator Paula Ramelis; (back) Commissioners Carl Frazier, Mike Patrick, Dawn Nelson, and Calvin McPhee, Michael Ramelis, Charlie McConkey, and Commissioner Lawrence Leveille.

Fire Committee Discusses Protection Contract

By Michael Ayala

Devising a fire protection contract and evaluating billing formulas for fire suppression and hydrants were the subjects discussed at a meeting between the City of St. Ignace and the townships of Moran and St. Ignace Thursday, October 29. The two townships receive fire protection service from the city, but have lacked a formal contract since 1989, and the formula for billing has not been changed since 1966, according to City Manager Eric Dodson, so a new committee has been formed to address these issues.

He, along with Councilman Don Gustafson and Mayor Paul Grondin of St. Ignace, Trustee Mark Spencer and Treasurer Susan Dionne of Moran Township, Clerk Donna Harju of St. Ignace Township, and St. Ignace Fire Chief John "Bucky" Robinson discussed what they believe should be included in the

protection contract. Both townships said they are satisfied with the service but are concerned about the billing formula.

The formula takes into account each municipality's population and state equalized value (SEV), and determines the percentage it should pay of the total shared cost to provide fire service. The two percentages are averaged and applied to the total operating costs. Other factors such as building and equipment fees are factored in, as well.

Mr. Spencer suggested the formula be changed to 40% SEV, 40% population, and 20% cost of fire service responses. The committee decided to entertain the idea and determine how that could work.

A major portion of response costs, Mr. Dodson said, arises from distance. In some cases, a fire may be a half hour away or longer.

Revising the SEV portion may be

a good idea, Mr. Dodson said. No matter how much a house may be worth, it should take the same amount of effort to control a fire.

"Hydrant rental" billing was another topic of discussion. Mr. Spencer said he wants to know how the city arrived at a \$200 rental fee per hydrant when Moran Township owns all 49 of its hydrants.

Mr. Dodson explained "hydrant rental" is a misnomer. Billing is not assessed for the hydrant, but for maintenance and for the water and pressure supplied to the hydrant. The name may be changed to "readiness to serve" in the future. A breakdown of how the \$200 charge is assessed will be detailed at a future meeting.

The committee will meet again next month to further elaborate on the formula and contract.

Supervisor Dale Nelson, the second representative of St. Ignace Township, did not attend the meeting.

Mackinac Island Wins Foundation Lawsuit

By Karen Gould

A lower-court ruling that a foundation for a new house be filled and covered has been upheld by the Michigan Court of Appeals, ending a 10-year battle by the City of Mackinac Island to get the owners either to complete the house or put the lot back to its natural state.

The decision, issued by the court October 22, was discussed by the city at its Wednesday, November 18 council meeting and requires Len and Sue Webster to restore their property in Hubbard's Annex, which the city claims has become an eyesore and public safety hazard.

Also at the meeting, Council referred to committee a request to assume the liability on a cement base for a wooden stairway to the East Bluff, and took no action on letters from Save Our Island toward efforts to stop demolition of McNally Cottage, or the group's \$10,000 pledge to help defend the

city in any lawsuit against a proposed city moratorium.

For years the city has contended the Websters' house foundation has been a public nuisance. Following the appellate court ruling, the Websters have two options to remedy the matter, said Tom Evashevski, the city attorney. Based on the circuit court's decision, the Websters are required to remove approximately feet from the top of the foundation so nothing will be above the ground, fill the foundation with dirt, and cover it with grass, if they want to try to save it for future use. They also could remove the foundation and fill in the hole.

"Whichever option they choose is supposed to end up looking the same," said Mr. Evashevski; "flat and covered with grass. That's basically it."

Also, during the appeal process, the city required the Websters to file a \$30,000 cash bond with the coun-

ty to be used to restore the land, said Mr. Evashevski, in the event the Websters do not.

Cement Step Easement

The Rowe Terrace Condominium Association does not want the liability that comes with public concrete steps on its property, and hopes the city will assume the responsibility. The association offered an easement to the city for the steps, and the city council referred the matter to the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee.

The oversized concrete steps serve as a base to a wooden stairway that leads from the top of Church Street to the East Bluff.

Over the years, Mackinac Island State Park has constructed and maintained the wooden stairway.

"We know where the land on a portion of the steps are located, the bottom

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Mackinaw City Officials Learn About Open Meetings Act

By Jonathan Eppley

Mackinaw City public officials will be heading back to school in 2010. The village is planning a training session about the Open Meetings Act and public meeting procedures to take place sometime after the first of the year. Members of the Village Council, Planning Commission, economic development corporation, and other village public bodies are all encouraged to attend.

Village Manager Jeff Lawson said it would be a good idea for new and current members of those boards to have a refresher course on the proper lines of communication for public officials. The decision to open the training to other municipalities would be up the Village Council.

"Training sessions are not unusual on different topics," he said. "We've had joint meetings in the past about different types of training. Issues have come up before and we've had joint boards and commissions come together here to train or we've gone to other places, like over in St. Ignace when they had their training" on the Open Meetings Act in February 2008.

With three new members serving on the council, it is an opportune time to offer the training, he noted.

New members on the village council are Steven Celez, Michalak, and Richard Perlick.

Mr. Lawson recently spoke to village attorney Tom Evashevski with questions about the act proposed by the Village Planning Commission. Mr. Evashevski recommended the training session, which he will likely facilitate.

"The best way for everyone to get answers is to go through the training, hear everything at the same time, and ask questions. It's very difficult to cover all aspects of a written document and summarize it in a few phrases," Mr. Lawson said. "It's really a training item."

Discussion about the Open Meetings Act was raised at the planning commission meeting Thursday, November 12. The commission is concerned that the act could limit a commission committee's ability to communicate while gathering information for a wind turbine ordinance.

Commission Chair Rob Most questioned what the committee's limitations are on communication

outside of a public meeting. He wants a clearer definition of what is legal and what is not.

"My goal in bringing this up is for us to follow the law, but to find any way possible that we can follow the law and do our work more productively and quicker not in the sense of just getting it finished, but being able to work with each other and get things done in different ways besides only being able to dialogue with each other only sitting at this table," he said. "We want nothing more than to stay within the law when we do our job."

Citizens have a right to know what's going on in government by opening to full public view the processes by which elected and non-elected officials make decisions on citizens' behalf. This right is protected by the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act. The decisions, and deliberation toward those decisions, of elected officials are made in meetings that are open to the public, under the Open Meetings Act. Notice of public meetings must be posted publicly at least 18 hours prior to the meeting.