

FAIR WIND

Your newsletter on industrial wind development in Jackson ME

Sustainability & Politics



Our planned focus for this issue was sustainability: Where does industrial wind fit in efforts to reduce carbon emissions?

We do cover this, but we also address another kind of sustainability: in politics.

The political shenanigans in Jackson continue. A new Appeals Board composed of close friends and family of Selectmen has been appointed. Selectmen with conflicts of interests continue to promote the wind development in their official capacity,

despite being told not to by legal counsel.

Are the politics of cronyism and vested interests sustainable in our town? Bill Maseychik discusses.

Sorry - no limerick this issue. But we have a poem we think you'll like. You'll find more reader feedback. And you'll see that we have a new look, thanks to upgraded software!

We wish you a great Memorial Day weekend.

Inside:



Jackson: Energy Independent, or Energy Colony?

2



Tax and TIF Talk

2



Reducing carbon dioxide emissions: What is industrial wind's contribution?

3



Community Wind: Real versus Greenwash

4



Leaseholders? Or lobbyists?

4



Reader Response

Back page

Our History and Our Future

The rich and powerful have been coming to Jackson for a long time. Daniel Webster fished here; our own Henry Jackson, George Washington, and Henry Knox were comrades-in-arms, well acquainted.

Many had plans for major developments but they met resistance from the start. Jackson wrote to Knox describing the people hereabouts. They had a special relationship to sustainability, he said. They simply wished to live off the land and subsist. They were not interested in developing Jackson or anywhere else. For them it was fine just the way it was. Early Jacksoners squatted and homesteaded, lived off wild game and foraged, and had small gardens.

Today we would say they were "energy independent." They had no desire to be surveyed or buy the land they lived on and used, much less pay rent or taxes.

It seems Jacksoners didn't change much in 200 years, at least as late as 1997. At that time, when our current Comprehensive Plan was finalized, Jacksoners were against major development. There was still that flicker of the life and spirit of the early settlers.

We seem to have come a long way from them since, though. The rich and powerful have arrived again, in the form of industrial wind companies. Many in town seem happy to surrender without asking questions, never mind a fight.

Our town politics suggest we're losing our independence. We're looking for energy from a clean source like wind turbines in a political atmosphere that is increasingly murky. Ironically, as we seek to be energy independent we grow politically dependent.

Continued on page 5

Jackson: Energy independent, or energy colony?

For many communities, an attraction of wind power is the concept of local energy independence. This appeal is not lost on wind developers, who play up energy independence when they are courting communities to host turbines. But, wait:

- The wind turbines will be owned and controlled by developers located in Portland, Houston or Massachusetts.
- The energy produced by the turbines will go directly into the grid owned by Central Maine Power. CMP is owned by Iberdrola, a Spanish transnational company.



Every time you turn on your lights, you send money to a Spanish transnational company!

- The wind developers will negotiate contracts to sell the power generated, probably to New Hampshire or Massachusetts.

We find this a bizarre concept of independence.

The truth of the matter is, wind development as envisioned by the developers would turn Jackson into an energy colony.

Our resources will be sold to the highest bidder (and subsidized with our federal tax dollars), with the developers riding the wind wave all the way to the bank.

Tax & TIF Talk

In Issue #2, we lamented that no one seemed to be able to give specific numbers on the tax benefits of an industrial wind project in Jackson.

Jackson resident Tom Olds wasn't satisfied with that. He has left no stone unturned to try to get some more solid numbers. After feedback from state and municipal tax experts on his calculations, he has a scenario that he thinks is pretty accurate.

Ten turbines valued at \$30 million and taxed at the full Jackson mill rate, would save a property owner

with property valued at \$100,000 about \$750 per year *for the first two years.*

After two years, Jackson would be re-assessed at a higher value. As a result, the county and school district would assess more taxes, and the state subsidy would decrease. *From this point onward, the same property owner would only save about \$175 per year.*

However, that same property could lose about \$25,000 in value (25% of \$100,000), if it is within sight of and within 1.8 miles of the turbines. (And the rest of us?)

So, how long before that extra tax money makes up for the loss in property value?

132 years. Yep, you heard right. *One hundred and thirty-two years.* Keep eating your greens, maybe you'll live that long.

But, never mind. What about a TIF? You know, Tax Increment Financing, a sweetheart deal that allows the wind developers to avoid paying a good chunk of taxes, and towns to avoid paying their fair share of the school and county budgets. Every wind project in Maine so far either has one, or the wind developers are negotiating them.

Tom Olds has also looked into TIFs in some detail. TIFs may shield the wind project's value from the school district, county and state. However, there are limits on how money from a TIF agreement can be used. It CANNOT be used for tax relief for residents. As Tom says, "our taxes don't go up, but they don't go down, either."

We hope to learn more from Brian Hodges of the Department of Economic & Community Development, who is scheduled to speak to Selectmen from Dixmont, Jackson and Thorndike at the Dixmont Town Office, Thursday 21 May, 6:30 pm. The meeting is open to the public.

We'll have a full report in the next issue.

Turbine tax math

START WITH:

\$100,000

(current property value)

ADD

\$6,400

(tax break next 30 years combined)

SUBTRACT

\$25,000

(25% loss in property value caused by turbines)

END WITH:

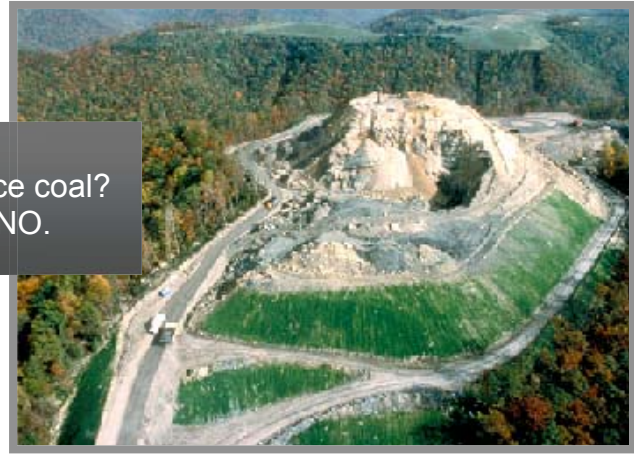
NET LOSS = \$18,250

Reducing carbon dioxide emissions:

Part 1: What is industrial wind's contribution?



Cefn Croes Wind Project, Wales, Cefn Croes Photo Gallery
<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~hills/cc/k>



Mountaintop removal to mine coal.
<http://www.climatechange.umaine.edu/Research/Contrib/html/22.html>

Will wind replace coal?
 In a word, NO.

Different people like industrial wind power for different reasons. The major appeal to environmentalists is the potential of wind power to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the primary pollutant responsible for global warming.

But how much can industrial wind power reduce CO₂ emissions? The answer depends on many factors.

What type of power source wind replaces. Wind will have a greater impact if it replaces coal, a big CO₂ emitter, than if it replaces cleaner power sources such as hydropower, nuclear, or natural gas.

Whether the grid can absorb the excess wind power. The grid can't store electricity efficiently on a commercial scale. Excess wind power therefore may not be usable, and may even overwhelm the grid, as it has in many locations.

The carbon emissions created because of back-up inefficiencies. Because wind can't predictably generate electricity when it is needed, power stations fueled by other sources (eg. coal or natural gas) need to be on standby when the wind doesn't blow. When run on standby, power stations are much less efficient, and can emit nearly double the usual amount of CO₂ per kilowatt-hour generated.

The Denmark story

Denmark is often mentioned as a success story for wind energy and CO₂ reductions. It generates 20% of its electricity from wind. Between 1990 & 2007, it reduced its CO₂ emissions by 23% and cut the share of coal used in the electricity sector by nearly half.

These are impressive reductions. But how much was due to wind?

Not much, according to Energinet.dk, the owner and operator of Denmark's electrical transmission grids. Energinet.dk says that most of the reduction in CO₂ emissions resulted from a conversion to less CO₂ intensive fuels such as natural gas, coupled with increased use of renewable energy sources.

It attributes the drop in coal use to an increased share of natural gas as a fuel for power stations, and to the conversion of several power stations to natural gas and biomass.

Furthermore, Energinet.dk **does not expect fuel use for power stations to decrease** much over the next decade, despite anticipated significant increases in wind power.

Denmark has a staggering density of wind turbines – on average, one turbine every 3 square miles. If we packed in turbines at the same density in Maine, we would have more than 11,000 turbines.

Yet the Denmark experience shows that even this massive investment in wind might not make a dent in CO₂ emissions.

We salute Denmark. It has done a remarkable job of reducing CO₂ emissions. However, wind appears to have contributed only marginally.

NEXT ISSUE: Part 2: What are the alternatives?

Read more: Environmental Report 2008 at:
<http://www.energinet.dk/en/menu/Climate+and+the+environment/Environmental+reports/Environmental+Report+2008.htm>)

Community Wind in Jackson: Real versus Greenwash

Community-owned wind power is being promoted as the next great thing for communities to increase their energy independence and lower their energy costs. Done the right way, community wind projects can do this.

Unfortunately, “community wind” – at least in name - is also being promoted by big wind developers. Why? It can help break down resistance to industrial turbines from local communities.

Wind developers often see local support for their projects wane when people learn more about the potential negative effects and questionable benefits of the projects. When this happens, they look to that age-old reliable persuader: The Bribe. This is nothing but greenwash.

Of course, the developers don’t call it that. They call it profit sharing. They offer up a small portion of ownership or profits from the development to the local community. They hope that when people see dollar signs, the resistance will crumble.

This is playing out in Jackson. Community wind is being promoted by none other than Selectman David Greeley, a wind leaseholder who will benefit financially from the wind development going full speed ahead.

Just a few months ago, Greeley, when asked about the possibility of community wind in Jackson, said it wasn’t realistic.

But now Greeley is actively investigating getting a municipal bond to help fund a “community wind” project.

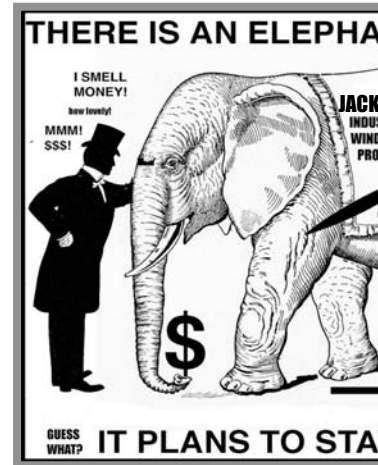
You may recall that Greeley was instructed by the town lawyer, Bill Kelly, to remove himself from Town affairs related to wind development.

It was therefore a surprise when Selectman Ludden opened the April 21 Selectboard meeting by asking Greeley, “Dave, bond, wind tower, whaddya know, anything?”

Part of Greeley’s response was, “I have not hired Sue Jones yet, so still negotiating that.” Sue Jones is a Freeport consultant specializing in helping develop community energy projects.

David McDaniel, a Jackson resident (and an early, vocal champion of community wind), expressed concern that Greeley was leading this process given his position as a wind leaseholder. He asked Selectmen to seek clarification from Bill Kelly about the appropriateness of Greeley’s involvement.

At the May 5 Selectboard meeting, Selectman Ludden said that she and Selectman Work had met with Bill Kelly, and Kelly had said that Greeley could explore community wind *in his capacity as a private resident*, but *not* as a Selectman.



Graphic adapted

What would a **REAL** community wind project look like?



Community wind at Findhorn, Scotland. Four small turbines, max. 150 feet tall, provide 75-100% of the electricity used by the 250 residents and the 4,000 annual tourists.

Photo: W.L. Tarbert

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Findhorn_wind_turbines.jpg

- We, not wind developers, would initiate it.
- We would choose it among other potential projects as a community priority.
- We would seek independent investors (these could include wind companies) willing to agree to the community’s conditions for development and profit sharing, as many other towns have done.
- We would look out for our neighbors. This could mean smaller and fewer turbines, responsible setbacks, and fair compensation to property owners who are unavoidably affected.
- We would establish a community electric corporation to sell power generated by the wind turbines. It could offer low rates to Jackson residents, offset by higher rates for electricity sold outside of Jackson.

Our History ... cont'd from first page

We elect about 9 town officials and our selectmen appoint about 15. If you add up all the people we elect, they represent about 15 years of service. But those our selectmen pick for us represent over 60 years of service. The argument has been made that we selected our officials to do just this: do the work and make appointments for us.



Adapted from Better Plan Wisconsin

It is possible to admire such loyalty while at the same time questioning the judgment of those who give their right to vote away. A cloud of unknowing surrounds the appointments process, though we do know that the planning and appeals boards contain plenty of family members, friends, and employees of our town officials. The criterion for selection is, otherwise, hidden from public eyes.

We talk about sustainability in energy but these tyrannies, even little tyrannies, are not sustainable. Early Jacksoners would not have understood our surrender of political

independence and our precious ability to make our own decisions.

We Jacksoners still seem to believe in trickle-down economics. Money will flow down from the wind turbines on the ridge like the waters of Penny and Great Farm Brooks. Certainly some of us will be enriched: one selectman has leased his own land to the developers; another is in the business of road construction which the wind companies will need; and a third promotes "free" public works without presenting a critical summary of the long-term vision or real costs of these works. But anyone who believes in trickle-down economics should really take a look around Jackson as it is now, and ask how this has worked in the past. Look at the ruins. As we once heard someone say, "The trickle down ends at the trick and people know that."

Jackson looks on the verge of becoming one big mill, a "mill town." That will give "mill rate" a new meaning, Common Hill will be Common Mill, and the ridge dwellers and leaseholders on our beautiful ridge will have at last achieved the "run-of-the-mill."

That will not be sustainable. Is it surprising that numbers of Jacksoners are secretly, quietly putting their houses up for sale?

Community Wind... continued from p.4

This clarification is useful. It means that if Sue Jones or anyone else is hired with Town money to work on "community wind", the contract should be discussed in public at Selectmen meetings.

And if Dave Greeley is negotiating only as a private citizen with Sue Jones, then naturally the money should come out of his private citizen's pocket, *not* the town's.

POST SCRIPT

At the May 19 Selectboard meeting, Selectman Ludden asked Greeley if he had anything to report on as a Selectman. Greeley responded, "The Sue Jones business." He then mumbled very quietly for a few sentences.

The Selectmen agreed to hire Sue Jones. When asked "what for", Greeley said, "She's a community wind specialist and we're consulting with her as to ways that the Town can become involved in the development from a financial standpoint."

When members of the public asked Greeley why he was still involved as a Selectman in discussing community wind, Ludden took offence. She said people should be grateful that Greeley was helping with this. She even joked, "Dave, please don't say Sue

Jones' name again. John [Work], would you say Sue Jones' name?"

Ludden also defended discussions on the issue that had been held outside of scheduled Selectboard meetings, saying that two Selectmen could discuss town business without the public knowing.

We disagree. Maine's "sunshine" laws state that all Selectboard deliberations must be part of a publicly posted, scheduled meeting.

Frankly, we don't care if Selectmen discuss day-to-day issues of running the town outside Selectmen meetings.

But when they repeatedly discuss a major issue like industrial wind development behind closed doors, we must speak up.

Private deliberations among Selectmen show disrespect for the countless hours devoted by many residents working in good faith to advise the Planning Board on a thoughtful, sensible approach to wind development. They also show disrespect for the many residents who have gone out of their way to attend every public meeting and ensure a public process.

Will Jackson residents continue to stand for this?

Just asking....

Will the wind turbines blow Jackson residents clear out of town?

We have spoken to three property owners in Jackson who, completely unsolicited, have told us they will try to sell if the wind development goes forward as planned.

If they can sell, that is. As discussed in Issue #2, views of industrial turbines, not to mention the noise they make, do not appear to enhance a property's value.

We are told repeatedly by Selectmen and the wind companies that the turbines will help our economy. How is driving productive and tax-paying residents out of town good for local economic development? And if property values decline, won't the tax base decline along with them?

Leaseholders? Or Lobbyists?

We have been suspicious for some time of the similar lines spouted from landowners in defense of their decision to lease their land to the wind companies. At first, we thought the wind companies had just given them talking points.

But a review of leases and lease proposals shows that the landowners may have agreed to more than just the use of their land.

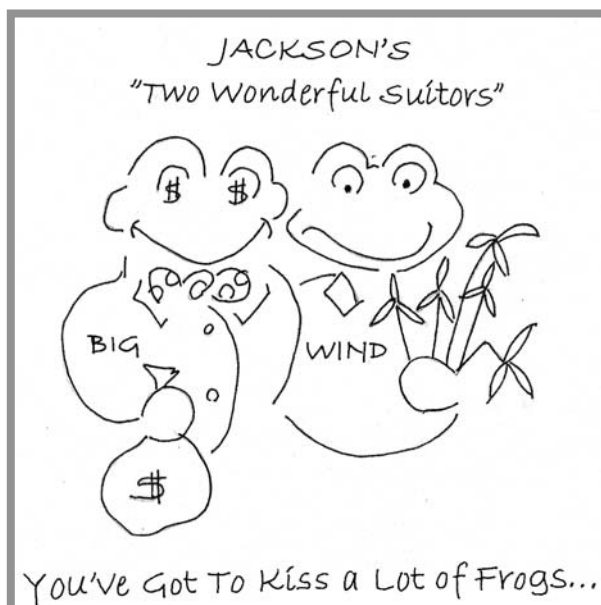
Citizens Enterprises Corporation, the same company that

Selectman Greeley has a lease with, included this sentence in its proposed option to lease the town property: "Owner shall cooperate with Optionee [the wind company] in Optionee's efforts to effectuate the zoning and/or permitting of or the Property for wind development."

Town attorney Bill Kelly said that this sentence was not acceptable. But were other leaseholders wise enough to get it removed from their leases?

Horizon Wind, which wants to develop a wind project in Aroostook Co, goes even further. The sample lease agreements it offered to potential leaseholders require them to: "support (and cause each Related Person of Landowner to support) Wind Company's or any Sublessee's position in regard to any requirement or condition of such permit, approval, authorization, entitlement or consent, including, in regard to mitigation, environmental impacts or monitoring and not to oppose (or permit any Related Person of Landowner to oppose), in any way, whether directly or indirectly, any such application or approval at any administrative, judicial, legislative or other level."

So if someone comes round your door telling you that the turbines are the greatest thing since sliced bread, ask them if they're just your neighbor (or Selectman), or a paid spokesperson for the wind companies.



Two frogs they would a 'courtin go
Upon the windmill hill, you know;

They brought their cash, their smiles, their charm
To every house, and hill, and farm;

To every place the wind doth blow
To woo the folk who lived below;

But not all fell beneath their sway,
Nor gave their hard-earned rights away;

They stood their ground with kith and kin,
And valued their copies of Fair Wind.

- KM

- WM

News Bites



Dixmont Selectboard extends moratorium on wind development; Jackson Selectmen waffle

The Dixmont Selectboard voted on May 19 to extend Dixmont's moratorium on wind power development for another 180 days. The decision followed a public hearing on May 18 where overwhelming support was expressed for an extension. Like Jackson, Dixmont has not completed the process of developing an ordinance to regulate wind development.

Jackson Selectmen, who have the authority to extend Jackson's moratorium, were asked earlier in May if they would be willing to extend it. Despite the fact that Jackson's current moratorium expires in early July, Selectman Ludden said she preferred to wait and see.

The Planning Board still needs to finalize a draft ordinance and conduct public hearings prior to a town vote on the ordinance. It is highly unlikely to be able to complete this work prior to the expiration of the current moratorium.

Lincoln town councilor revealed as paid lobbyist for landowners with wind leases

Lincoln Town Councilor Rod Carr recused himself from a vote awarding a tax break to First Wind, the developer of the Rollins wind project, after it was revealed that two different companies leasing land to the wind developer had paid him \$5000 for lobbying activities.

Carr claimed that he was involved in "only advising and assisting" on forestry issues - not lobbying for First Wind.



Paula Miller of Dixmont, on Route 7 just on the other side of the mountain, has named her farm. What more can we say?

Carr's current lobbyist registration shows that he expects to receive \$5000 from each of the two companies, H.C. Haynes Inc., and W. T. Gardner & Sons Inc., this year.

Sources: Bangor Daily News, April 14; lobbyist reports obtained from www.main.gov/ethics

Wind turbine interferes with TV reception

A wind turbine erected by a municipal government in Bangor, UK (Northern Ireland) has been interfering with television reception in nearby homes. Of nine complaints investigated so far by Ofcom, the UK's telecommunications regulator, eight were confirmed to be caused by the turbine.

"In some cases you could see the interference sweep down the TV screen in time with the rotation of the turbine blades," said an Ofcom spokesperson.

The municipal government is offering each affected resident £150 (about \$225) to help offset the costs of replacing their rooftop aerial with a digital aerial or satellite dish. They hope this will minimize or solve the problem. *[Guess they didn't consider the extra monthly charges for these services. Eds]*

Source: BBC News, May 18

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/8055487.stm

Professor Womersley's blog ruminations

Mick Womersley, who lives in Jackson and teaches at Unity College, has plenty to say about wind power in Jackson. From his blog (as in "web log", an electronic diary):

"Just recently, a group of our neighbors from Jackson, Maine published a newsletter and web page opposing the wind power developments proposed for the Mt. Harris ridgeline to the north. *[Note: Our newsletter is completely unrelated to any web site. Eds.] ...*

It is a very beautiful area, the scenic jewel of the Great Forest of Jackson and Dixmont.

There may be quite a lot of very large wind turbines on that hilltop soon. Our neighbors are really anxious, and many do not wish to see the turbines go ahead. They are asking a lot of very awkward questions at Town Meetings and in their paper and web site.

For my part, I think the company... should perhaps think about a few less turbines. While my neighbors might think about accepting a few, or even getting one or more that are owned by the community."

From: Renewable power in Jackson, Maine, Feb 14, 2009,

<http://ucsustainability.blogspot.com/search/label/wind%20turbines>

Reader Response

We got a lot of good reader response to our last issue, including three more donations. Whether you donated kind words or hard dollars, we thank you. Your positive feedback keeps us going. One person quietly handed us some cash and said she wished she could give more. We were very touched.

Some readers requested anonymity, so we gave anonymity to all. We hope this will encourage even more to speak up.

We do regret, however, that one of our Selectmen who did not like our newsletter did not wish to speak for the record. It would have been educational for all to hear our town's future discussed in his distinctive voice with its amazing expletives and folksy fricatives.

"[We] are grateful for all the work you are doing to help the town understand the consequences of the wind machines."

"Very, very good. Fair Wind is like fine wine: it gets better with age. ... Keep up the good work."

"I would like to acknowledge and commend the many hours of research, composition, travel, layout, mailing – and other time and energy consuming tasks you have invested in preparing Fair Wind for distribution. Thank you Bill, Kathleen, and Heather.



And a big thanks, too, to generous donors who are helping fund this endeavor.

As for critics of Fair Wind, should they make the same effort to distribute an informed publication, I'm sure your readers would be interested in reading that as well. One would only hope that it not rely solely on the pap provided by the wind power industry and investors, but would be independently researched."

"You're simply amazing - I don't know how you find the time to put a publication of this caliber together each month! I am recommending Dixmont include it as part of the info packet various individuals will be walking around to their neighbors."

"Your newsletters are excellent – keep them coming – put them in the Village Soup."

"Nicely done!!! I love it. Thank you so much for what you're doing to inform (even kicking and screaming) the residents of Jackson about Industrial Wind. No matter how they feel about this newsletter, it's hard to ignore ALL the facts!"

Heather, Kathleen, Bill – you folks did a great job on Fair Wind! Congratulations on an excellent piece of work.

Speaking of sustainability: Would you like to receive Fair Wind only in PDF form, at your email address?

This would save costs, and paper. If so, please let us know at: heatherselin@mac.com. THANKS!

FAIR WIND

P.O. BOX 254
BROOKS ME 04921
