

## Giant windmills eyed on river

Pair of 370-foot, \$8.25M wind turbines planned at Turkey Point. County waste panel also moves on railyard land.

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Turkey Point

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The breeze at Turkey Point along the Susquehanna River is strong enough to keep a planned \$8.25 million wind turbine project there moving forward.



By late 2010, two wind turbines could be standing along the Susquehanna River at Turkey Point.

This morning the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority board approved an application for a \$175,000 state grant to help pay for continued study of the wind-to-energy project it intends to build with PPL and Turkey Hill Dairy.

The application marks the beginning of a phase that will study the economics of situating two, 1.5-megawatt wind turbines, each about 370 feet high (counting blades), on the edge of the Frey Farm Landfill.

"We've determined after 16 months of studying the wind characteristics that that site can support a wind project," said James Warner, the authority's executive director.

Also this morning, the authority board formally agreed to sell 8.8 acres of land it owns behind the Lancaster Post Office for \$110,000 so Norfolk Southern can move its nearby rail yard to the site.

Shifting the rail yard is a key element in the expansions plans of Franklin & Marshall College and Lancaster General Hospital.

While the sales agreement on the authority's former dump comes as some work has already begun on the rail yard project, construction of the proposed wind turbines won't begin until March 2010, at the earliest.

The authority has been measuring wind speed around a temporary tower erected on the site and has determined that at 300 feet above the ground, average wind speeds are 13 miles per hour, enough to keep the turbines running at 30 percent capacity, Warner explained.

Since the beginning of March, the authority also has been counting birds of prey in the area for a required study of how

they might be affected by the huge windmills.

In the plan as now conceived, the waste authority would partner with PPL, which would lease the windmills, and nearby Turkey Hill Dairy, which would buy electricity.

"Because we've determined the wind is viable, now we need to go forward and begin formalizing what this partnership would look like," Warner said.

Determining the terms of the partnership will be key to making the project work, especially since without Turkey Hill formalizing its interest in buying the electricity, the project wouldn't make sense, Warner said.

Warner said the wind turbine project would be eligible to receive \$2.4 million in federal stimulus money, boosting the economics of a project he said "looks fairly attractive."

The project has been scaled back from projections of a year and a half ago because tax breaks would not be so generous with a larger project, Warner said this week.

The waste authority's plan is not the only proposal for wind turbines along the Susquehanna River. Early last year a developer floated the idea of building a giant windmill next to a proposed 18-story business and residential tower in Columbia.

For the waste authority project, Warner said the \$175,000 state grant it is seeking would be a boost to further study. But if the grant is not forthcoming, the project won't be shelved.

Warner said the current timeline for the project has construction beginning in March 2010 and wrapping up six months later.

Warner added that in the coming months the authority would be meeting with residents who live near the proposed wind turbines to give details about the project and show how they would be visible from various points.

Opposition from neighbors has been a hallmark of the proposed relocation of the rail yard, although no one spoke against the plan at this morning's meeting.

While the waste authority is providing the key piece of land for the new Norfolk Southern rail yard, it is not involved with subsequent development plans.

The existing 25-acre rail yard, stretching from near Clipper Magazine Stadium to near Dillerville Road, separates the former Armstrong World Industries site from the main campus of the college at College and Harrisburg avenues.

Its relocation opens the tract for other uses. The college and the hospital are working cooperatively to redevelop the 45-acre area in the northwestern edge of the city.

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