

BOONE COUNTY COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING ON PROPOSED WIND FARM REGULATIONS
SOUTHERN BOONE COUNTY SCHOOLS, CENTRAL BOARD OFFICE
5275 W. REDTAIL DRIVE, ASHLAND, MISSOURI
(573) 886-4330

Minutes

6:30 P.M.

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Present: Southern Boone County Commissioner, Justin Aldred; Resource Management Director, Bill Florea; Resource Management Planner, Cece Riley.

This meeting is being held to discuss proposed Boone County Wind Farm Regulations.

Southern Boone County Commissioner Justin Aldred welcomed everyone in attendance and stated that this meeting is to hear public comments in relation to readopting the Boone County Zoning Regulations, conditional use permits for Commercial Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS-C), and Wind Energy Conversion Overlay Districts (WECOD). The Boone County Planning and Zoning Commission has gone through an extensive process of collecting public comment and research.

Resource Management Director, Bill Florea stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission held 14 work sessions between April 2019 and May 2021. During these work sessions, there were several guiding principles that emerged. A high level of community support for all proposed wind farms, a high commitment to public safety, health and welfare, minimizing impacts to non-participating properties and property owners, ensuring mitigation of any degradation of public transportation infrastructure, minimizing impacts to the natural environment, and ensuring a fair process.

Mr. Florea stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission took into consideration recommendations from the Columbia Commission on Energy and Environment. They based their findings on a document titled *A Method for Defining Wind Turbine Setback Standards* which is published in the Academic Journal *Wind Energy*. The Commission weighed a variety of different factors including safety, equity and community concerns.

Resource Management Director, Bill Florea gave a power point presentation which included a brief summary of the requirements for establishing a wind farm in Boone County. This presentation is available on the Resource Management website at: <https://www.showmeboone.com/resource-management/WECOD/>

Commissioner Aldred opened the floor for comments from those who would like to see revisions to the proposed regulations:

Jeff Aboussie, International Union of Operating Engineers, 330 Shetland Valley, Chesterfield, MO

Mr. Aboussie stated he is here to talk about wind farm construction as a whole and believes it is an intricate part of renewable energy. The Governor's Office has put a great deal of emphasis on work force development and the need to continue to look for way to increase people to get involved in job opportunities. Mr. Aboussie stated he would like to see some language that look at opportunities for developing wind farms to include apprenticeship language. An infrastructure bill was passed by the US Senate and it has language in it for renewable energy. We have witnessed a number of wind farms that have been developed over the past few years around Missouri and we have seen contractors come out of state and brought their workforce here and they have taken their money home and not spent it here. Taxation will be a benefit for this county, but we think that providing good career opportunities for young people to get started in this sector, which will be very prevalent in the next decade, is also critical. To touch on some of the downfalls that have happened on various other projects around the state, we've seen people get cheated out of a lot of money, some of our contractors were owed a lot of money and these people

have left and left our contractors holding the bag for millions of dollars, a couple of them have gone out of business. We believe to help prohibit that is to hire local, both from the contracting side as well as the employee side. It helps build good communities and pays great wages and benefits.

Mr. Aboussie submitted revisions to the proposed regulations.

Philip Fracica, Director of Programs for Renew Missouri, 409 Vandiver Drive, Columbia.

Mr. Fracica stated he is here to speak in support of the project but to also submit revisions to the regulations that Renew Missouri's legal team has put together. Mr. Fracica stated that wind projects can be good neighbors and good for communities and the State of Missouri; they can also create strong economic development opportunities locally. They can also be done in a way to address local environmental and safety concerns which is detailed in the revisions as well as some language around apprenticeships and local work force involvement on these projects. This could be a strong project for the county and we want to make sure the regulations moving forward are done in a good way that can help other projects and keep Boone County as an attractive opportunity for developers and growing clean energy in the State of Missouri.

Mr. Fracica submitted revisions to the proposed regulations.

Commissioner Aldred opened the floor for comments from those who would like to see the regulations adopted as presented.

Tom Weislocher, 11581 N Trimble Rd, Harrisburg

Mr. Weislocher stated he has followed the development process of the regulations and they have been very well thought out and researched. Mr. Weislocher supports adoption of the regulations as written and does not object to adding language in the regulations to facilitate the hiring of local people and creating job opportunities. There are many things about wind farms that Mr. Weislocher is opposed to and stated that if we have to have them then we should get the benefit of local people getting some of the jobs to keep the revenue and quality of life that it affords in the county. Mr. Weislocher is in favor of the wording of most of the distances even though some weren't quite what he wanted but understands the reason they were chosen. Boone County is already too densely populated to accommodate too many wind turbines but if we are going to regulate it, let's regulate it in the best way we can which we have done and let the wind developers decide if they want to develop here, somewhere else, or not at all.

Commissioner Aldred opened the floor for anyone with comments to speak.

Rex Smith, 12700N Route J, Harrisburg

Mr. Smith asked what enforcement mechanism is in the regulations that the County Commission can enforce if, for instance, they are tearing up the roads. We have heard testimony at other meetings where there was no way to enforce things like that.

Commissioner Aldred stated there are regulations written in regarding roads.

Bill Florea stated that the mitigation plan would include a mitigation agreement so it would stipulate the terms under which the wind farm company would be able to use the county roads. That would have an enforcement mechanism built into it; it would be custom designed for each different wind farm.

Mr. Smith asked if that would be enforced through the County Court.

Bill Florea stated it might be, but it might be an escrow account that the developer will fund. There are a lot of different ways it could be done.

Matt Enloe, Business Representative, International Union of Operating Engineers, 4201 Laura Ave, (city not provided)

Mr. Enloe stated we have 4200 members in the eastern half of Missouri, many of the members live in Boone County and have been a part of every major project from the hospitals to the bridges and roads. The importance of giving our members and any local resident the chance to work on a project like this is imperative. Mr. Enloe agrees with the apprenticeship language to encourage trades and skills.

Warren Wood, Vice-President of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, Ameren Missouri, 5300 E Hayes Rd, Columbia

Mr. Wood stated he lives on a small farm on an energy pipeline with a cell tower overlooking his house and a CAFO a couple of miles away. Mr. Wood understands the impacts of utilities on the quality of life in the country and sees it as a fair concern. Ameren Missouri views the regulations being proposed as an effort to ensure that wind energy projects are good neighbors to the community and Ameren agrees with that effort. Mr. Wood stated that Ameren is concerned about several aspects of the regulations being proposed. Renew Missouri is looking at providing some suggested changes to the regulations; Ameren has reviewed the changes proposed by Renew Missouri and find those to be good amendments in the direction of being able to be a good neighbor and yet not prohibit wind project construction in Boone County. As an electric service provider, Ameren is focused on affordable, reliable power and building that in Missouri, if feasible. As we look at future energy, we look at change in policy, the age of our generation mix now and we see wind energy as a very important part of that future energy in the State of Missouri. Looking at the setbacks and height limitations we think the Missouri Renew suggestions make it much more possible that a project can be built in Boone County. When you move down the path of forcing wind projects in the state you are also building more transmission which is also problematic for many of the communities of major transmission projects, if we can't build it here we have to transport it here to be able to serve the populations.

Tom Weislocher, 11581 N Trimble Rd, Harrisburg

Mr. Weislocher stated he had additional comments regarding height and setback requirements. The people that live in the area think that the height should be shorter and the setbacks should be further. The people that want to develop believes the height should be taller and the setbacks shorter. When we look at the history of wind development, not just in Missouri and not just in the United States, but in Europe where wind power took hold and they were held out as the example, why can't we do this in America? If we look at Germany, development has virtually stopped there and it is because they have modified their regulations on setbacks instead of 1000 or 2000 feet, they are now five miles in most areas and that makes it essentially prohibitive to build wind turbines there. This is why we have a German company coming to Missouri wanting to build here because we don't have that history and people are fairly naïve and don't know what it is like to live that close to a wind turbine. Mr. Weislocher stated he has heard people say the setback should be the fall distance. The regulations say 1750-feet and that was some effort of compromise to allow turbines to be built but also to protect property owners. When we listen to people that have lived near them and how it has affected their lives, which isn't apparent on day one, it seems to be an accumulation of experience, 1750-feet doesn't seem to be a large enough setback. At the Columbia meeting someone brought pictures of turbines around her home that were two to five miles away and they looked like they were right over her head. We are already looking at something a lot closer than that. Mr. Weislocher stated he has heard some of his neighbors say that if they build these they will have to move and take a loss on their property. Projects can't benefit everyone, there are going to be some losers and some winners. Mr. Weislocher doesn't want to be one of the losers and appreciates the Planning and Zoning Commission trying to find a fair solution. The priorities as a county government should be not the short-term benefits to a few but the

long-term benefits to the County. If we get a short increase in tax revenue will that offset people fleeing from Boone County to live elsewhere because their quality of life has been affected so much? If the setbacks and heights are changed it will cause a ripple effect and will affect everything else and several other things will have to change. All of that was taken into consideration when the numbers were decided upon. For Boone County, with our density and land layout, those numbers are where they need to be. Mr. Weislocher doesn't believe the intention is to drive these developments to other counties, the intention is to promote the safety, welfare and long-term prosperity of Boone County. We cannot juggle the numbers for special interest groups.

End of public comments.

The County Commission will hold another public meeting in Harrisburg on Tuesday, August 24, 2021 at 6:30 PM in the Harrisburg High School gymnasium. Consideration of the amendments to, or adoption of the proposed regulations will occur at a later date.

Meeting notes prepared by Paula Evans, Administrative Coordinator, Boone County Resource Management