Queens Coast
SEEK NATURE'S REWARDS

Region of Queens Municipality Public Hearing
Large Scale Wind Farm Development by Development Agreement
Tuesday, March 12, 2024
Council Chambers, 249 White Point Road, Liverpool
9:00 a.m.

Minutes

Members of Council:	Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair Deputy Mayor Jack Fancy Councillor Kevin Muise Councillor Ralph Gidney Councillor Vicki Amirault Councillor David Brown Councillor Carl Hawkes
Regrets:	Councillor Maddie Charlton
Members of Staff:	Cody Joudry, CAO Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning & Development Heather Cook, Communications & Engagement Coord. Christine Watson, Admin. Assistant, Planning & Dev.
Members of the Public:	25

Call to Order

Mayor Norman called the Public Hearing to order at 9:00 a.m.

A. Remarks

Mayor Norman stated the purpose of the Public Hearing is to provide any interested person an opportunity to present an oral or written presentation to Council of Region of Queens Municipality with regard to the intention to enter into a development agreement with Mersey River Wind Inc. to allow for the establishment of a 33 turbine generator wind farm development on portions of properties identified as PID #'s 70247176, 70247192, 70247184, 70247200, 70264213, 70225420, 70225404, 70247218, 70247168, 70032982, 70260575, 70248695 and 70166988.

Mayor Norman reviewed the procedures for the Hearing which were provided on the agenda.

Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning & Development, stated an application was received to enter into a development agreement that would allow for a large-scale wind turbine generator development on 13 parcels of crown land located west of the Mersey River in Milton.

The properties are zoned as Inland Rural (R5) under the Land Use Bylaw which does not permit large-scale turbine operations as or right, but under the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Policy 4-29 allows Council to consider such uses through a Development Agreement process.

As with all Development Agreements, the MPS also establishes a number of criteria that Council needs to take into consideration when evaluating proposals and are included under Policy 6-21, which has been included in the staff report.

There are 13 parcels of crown land which are currently vacant wood land. The Proponent intends to lease a portion of the subject properties to facilitate the development. An Order in Council was approved on November 29, 2023. The distance to the nearest dwelling (a camp) is under a kilometer.

The Proponent has established a website and all pertinent details are included.

Access to the site is off River Road in Milton and will utilize a network of existing logging and NSPI service roads.

As required under our Policy, the applicant is required to hold public meetings to outline the project and two were held; on March 25, 2022 and August 10, 2022. In total over 50 people attended the meetings. In February 2023 the Proponent held a public meeting with the local Indigenous community and 40 people attended.

As part of any large-scale turbine project the Province requires a full environmental assessment be conducted to see how it would impact the local environment and the report was submitted to the Department of Environment and Climate Change and received approval on March 27, 2023.

The Proponent has also received permission from NAV Canada on December 2, 2021.

As part of their environmental assessment, the Proponent has outlined a program for decommissioning the generators and will be included as part of the Development Agreement.

Potential Options:

1. Maintain status quo (deny request); or
2. Enter into a development agreement with Mersey River Wind. Inc. to allow for the establishment of a 33 turbine generator wind farm development on the 13 parcels of land.

Staff reviewed the application and are of the opinion that the Provincial terms and conditions set out in the lease agreement and the Environmental Assessment approval that the applicant needs to comply with that sufficient terms can be incorporated within the Development Agreement to mitigate any potential issues within the surrounding community and are in support.

The Planning Advisory Committee also met and discussed the application and are also in support of the proposal.

Mitch Underhay, Mersey River Wind Inc., 379 Bedford Highway, Halifax – Mr. Underhay stated this project is the first of its kind in Nova Scotia to be able to sell electricity directly to consumers rather than just Nova Scotia Power. This is through the renewable to retail program that was put in place in 2015.

The benefit of this project will be through a number of ways including a number of construction jobs, approximately 100 temporary jobs that will lead to 6 – 8 full time positions for maintenance, tax revenue income for RQM which will be approximately $1.1 to $1.2 Million per year for the duration of the project.

Since the application was submitted, there was the possibility to increase the hub height of the turbine by 15 meters which was new from the manufacturer, but has not been confirmed. As part of the package there is a section on sound and shadow study which have been redone with the higher hub heights. These were shared with the Cody Joudry, CAO, and Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning and Development, to determine if it is a substantial change. We do not feel it is a substantial change to the project.

Mayor Norman asked if going from 105 to 120 meters if there would be a significant impact to the shadow flicker results. The information in the package states the limit is 30 minutes per day total. Mr. Underhay stated the difference in the shadow flicker is the limit is 30 minutes per day on a non-participating receptor, so the area in which there is a 30 minutes shadow per day is enlarged slightly but does not fall on any new receptors.

Director MacLeod stated that on the information provided, there appeared to be little difference between the two projections. This will be something the Province will evaluate as part of the environmental assessment that was submitted to them and will need their approval to move forward. We do not have any requirements around that in the Development Agreement.

Joel Westin, 3173 Highway 3, Brooklyn – Mr. Westin stated he is President and owner of Bridgewater Ready Mix as well as President of Liverpool Ready Mix. Liverpool Ready Mix is in the final stages of reopening to service Queens County, which is an investment of upwards of a million dollars excluding trucks.

Bridgewater Ready Mix supports the Mersey River Wind Project as it will be a great benefit to the community by adding jobs, providing energy solutions that protect the environment and making electricity more affordable for thousands of customers.

Bridgewater Ready Mix has a staff of 12. Liverpool Read Mix, once reopened, would be an additional two to three jobs. The Wind Project will be an economic driver for this area supporting existing businesses and attracting new ones. Liverpool Ready Mix is a case in point.

Both Bridgewater Ready Mix and Liverpool Ready Mix are committed to being Renewable to Retail customers of the Mersey River Wind Project and are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of their products and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Renewable energy is paramount to achieve this. It is also key for all of use to reduce global warming. In addition, the project proposal is sensitive to the surrounding area and will use existing roads and power lines to reduce build impact.

On January 1st Nova Scotia Power increased its rates on average by 6.5 percent. For many that increased caused hardship. To bring down those prices, to make energy affordable for customers and businesses we need competition. Mersey River Wind, upon completion, will be capable of producing enough energy to power tens of thousands of homes in addition to numerous businesses.

Kent Nickerson, General Manager, South Shore Ready Mix, and President, Atlantic Concrete Association for the Maritimes. He stated he is present to extend their industry support for the Mersey River Wind project.

This project is large and our industry has a vested interest, it will require a significant amount of concrete. As Mr. Westin mentioned, it helps open a concrete plant that has been closed in this community since 1992.

Nova Scotia Power has announced a curtailment of coal fired power generation by 2030. A project like this will help achieve that environmental goal.

A project of this magnitude will help to sustain the economic well-being of this region and will provide a green renewable source of electrical energy, the first of which can be purchased directly by the user.

B. Closing Remarks

Mayor Norman stated Mersey Wind River have made several presentations to Council, held meetings in Milton as well as with the Indigenous community, all of which were well attended.

This proposed project will be discussed under Item 7.1 on the council agenda.

C. Adjournment

Mayor Norman declared the Public Hearing adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Darlene Norman

Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair

Cody Joudry, CAO

Date Approved: MARCH 26, 2024