

AWEM/Oak Creek Project in Logan Co to See ZBA Decision Soon

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After hearing two nights of testimony this week from the developer and residents, the Logan County ZBA is set to make a decision next week whether to recommend approval of the proposed Sugar Creek wind project.

A story in the Lincoln Courier provides a general background on the project:

Sugar Creek Wind One and Two are joint developments between Springfield-based American Wind Energy Management Corp. (AWEM) and Oak Creek Energy Systems of California, known together as Springfield Project Development. A third entity, The Wind Company of Austria, also has joined the partnership.

Sugar Creek Wind One, the first phase, is expected to consist of about 116 turbines located over about 16,500 acres in the Sheridan and Corwin townships in western Logan County and bounded by Illinois Route 10 to the north and county road 1400N to the south.

Stan Komperda, who is in charge of the projects' development for Springfield Project Development, presented the overview of the first phase project, which is expected to generate some \$1 million in taxes and another \$1 million in payments to land owners on whose property turbines will be sited. Komperda also noted that other tax revenue will be generated from the construction and the new jobs that will be created.

The cost of the project is about \$400 million. Construction is expected to take 12 to 24 months, and begin in late 2012 or 2013, said Komperda.

Springfield Project Development also plans Sugar Creek Wind Two, located in the Middletown and New Holland area and Elkhart and Middletown, and also Sangamon One in Sangamon County.

Though some residents expressed limited skepticism and concern about the project, news reports and developer accounts indicate the hearing was largely orderly and reasonable. According to [**an extensive article in the Lincoln Daily News**](#), the developers outlined their plans to meet or exceed many county and state regulations:

Project manager Stan Komperda began by saying that the location is good because of the nearby electrical grid access and good wind.

The county ordinance calls for turbines to be set back 1.1 times their height in feet from any primary structure. The company optionally chose significantly larger setback distances of 1,500 feet, with most at 1,750 feet.

Side agreements with local entities include repairing any damaged field drainage tiles and roads, as well as coordination, cooperation, special training and planning with local fire, weather and emergency experts.

There would be \$9,500 per turbine escrowed, plus lots of copper for scrap metal in the project to cover decommission costs.

The Lincoln Daily News piece includes extensive discussion of the developers' work to achieve regulatory compliance with state and federal regs as well, click the link for more info. The next steps for the project will come in the next few weeks, the article states:

[Doug] Thompson, acting as spokesman for the appeals board, closed Tuesday's meeting by saying that the board would take all the information and public comments into consideration. Some questions were raised that would need to be answered.

The zoning appeals board would resume next Wednesday and possibly be ready to make a recommendation to the Logan County Board, which makes the final decision on whether to grant building permits.

The county board meets as a whole the next night, June 16. If it has the recommendation of the appeals board, the county board could begin discussion, and a decision could come as soon as the board's adjourned session on June 21.