

County to get windier

Board looks to approve wind farm permit for Sugar Creek farms

By Janeen Burkholder The Courier Posted Jun 17, 2011 @ 06:00 AM

LINCOLN — The Logan County Board on Thursday approved a conditional use permit for a proposed wind farm.

The Logan County Regional Planning Commission previously reviewed plans for the project, approved it and passed it to the Logan County Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for public hearings. The hearings were held last week and the ZBA voted to approve the permit so long as the developers comply with 29 conditions.

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.

It will be the second wind farm in Logan County, joining Rail Splitter Wind Farm that is operating in the northern part of the county.

The conditions include a variety of stipulations, including final approval of a mitigation plan that satisfies the National Weather Service, preservation of an historic home in the project area, and the filing of a de-commissioning plan when the turbines come to the end of their expected lifespan of 30 years. All of the conditions were previously acknowledged and agreed to by Springfield Project Development.

Company representatives expect that once the conditions are met, a final permit will be sought next year, when fees to the county also will be paid.

In other business, the board also heard details of a transportation plan from Angela Stoltzenburg, director of the Lincoln-based Community Action Partnership.

CAP already provides rides for senior citizens, but the program she described, a joint effort between Logan and Mason counties, would provide transportation for everybody, by donation for seniors and a fare for all others.

The service would be provided regardless of the reason: for medical appointments or shopping or any reason. Service even would be available for people wishing to travel to nearby cities, such as Springfield, Pekin, or Peoria, for about \$10 one way. The service would require some advance planning: a phone call to request the service 24 hours in advance is requested.

Planning began in the spring of 2008 when a Transit Partnership Group was formed to tap federal money for such a program. Though grant money would be funneled through the county, CAP would run every aspect of the program. The mode of transportation likely would be mini-vans such as CAP uses now, or perhaps a small bus might be employed.

As part of the planning process, a survey was conducted that showed 77 percent of 1,490 responding, would use the service for medical needs; 68 percent said they would use it to go shopping, and 43 percent said they would use it to visit family and friends. 36 percent said they needed medical transportation outside their county.

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