

Libertyville curbs wind power

By Mick Zawislak | Daily Herald Staff | August 12, 2009

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The lone wind turbine in Libertyville has riled neighbors and created enough negative energy that the village board decided to put the brakes on any plans for new ones.

While applications can be made, no building permits or zoning certificates for additional turbines will be issued for six months, the village board unanimously decided Tuesday.

Trustees also directed the village's plan commission to consider possible changes to the guidelines that govern electric power-generating facilities.

The existing turbine, which became operational this spring at the Aldridge Electric headquarters at 844 E. Rockland Road, will not be affected by the moratorium.

Votes Tuesday were anti-climactic, as board members informally agreed two weeks ago to take the steps following pressure from residents near the Aldridge turbine, who formed Citizens to Protect Libertyville.

"It will give us time to get our own experts involved and do some studies," said Dave Gates, spokesman for the group.

Gates and others are plaintiffs in a case against Aldridge claiming the 120-foot turbine has disrupted their lives because of noise and other factors.

A temporary injunction was granted and later modified to allow the turbine to operate from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays only.

It has remained largely idle, however, and the blades of the turbine have been removed to be coated with non-reflective paint, but it will be put back in service.

Company CEO Ken Aldridge said Wednesday he has tried to work with neighbors and was surprised that "four people convinced a judge this was a nuisance."

He also said the majority of residents in town favor clean energy alternatives and was disappointed the new village administration was swayed by the small group.

Residents said there has been a significant amount of new data regarding turbines since the Aldridge proposal was approved.

Wepler said the board that approved the proposal had good intentions but agreed a review of the rules was needed to determine the best locations with the least disruptions.

"We just need to see that it's done right," he said. "I think we have more information now."

Libertyville joins Bannockburn, Lincolnshire and Wadsworth in imposing moratoriums, and a county wide task force is studying wind power regulations.

Aldridge says he plans to operate the turbine and may pursue others.

"I'll go for permits to put in two more turbines and I'll fight them over it," he said.

During the meeting, Wepler said any applications would require a detailed review.