

Deputation to Council For September 29th 2009

Good evening members of the council. My name is Lynn Stein and I work with my husband James Hartford, with RE/MAX Hallmark Realty.

I am here this evening as a resident of Prince Edward County and as a local professional real estate salesperson. My husband and I live on North Big Island Road in Sophiasburgh.

Elizabeth Crombie, who is standing next to me and some other Realtors are very concerned about the placing of industrial wind turbines in Prince Edward County and the effect it will have on the desirability and value of homes and property here.

I would also like to introduce Daniel Harvey AACI, the owner of Prince Edward Appraisal Services Limited, and an Accredited Appraiser with ---years experience here in Prince Edward County. Dan will speak to the effect of visual desirability and noise on property value.

One of the most basic rules of property appraisal deals with locational obsolescence. Land fill sites, heavy industry, hydro or rail corridors (transmission towers are typically approximately 125 feet tall, versus turbines being 400 feet tall) would all be examples.

Locational Obsolescence according to the Ontario Real Estate Association's Real Estate Encyclopedia is "The loss in value that a structure incurs as a result of negative environmental forces beyond the boundaries of the property."

We and many other Realtors have had personal experiences with buyers who have now declined to invest in Prince Edward County as a result of the "possibility" of wind turbines here. The reality of the turbines will only increase this.

We are required to disclose any knowledge of a proposed development that could impact a buyer's decision to purchase. The Seller places himself at risk if he does not disclose.

We as Realtors, have become increasingly knowledgeable in the past few months of the areas that have been noted as having proposed wind turbine projects, I have had only one who was interested in looking in those areas, and was unconcerned, and commented that they might get a better price.

The reasons for rejecting the areas are concern that it is **not prudent investment**, and more recently concern of health implications has been brought to my attention.

In some cases, if they are looking to move here from elsewhere, they have decided to "give The County a miss," simply because they don't want to look at them or hear them, or jeopardize their investment. View adds value to rural property. Take away the view and you take away the value. The noise takes away the value. In some cases it renders the property unsaleable, and for those who experience health issues, it makes the home unliveable.

One of the most basic rights of property ownership is **the right to quiet enjoyment** of your property. These Wind turbines will affect the enjoyment and value of properties by altering irreparably the quiet and the landscape.

A few excerpts from some of the letters agents and clients have written to me, follow.

Some have declined to have their names publicized as they are concerned for their relationships in their community. This is yet another concern the council may wish to consider.

Mark Pniewski- RE/MAX writes of his experience in a community that already has them:
"Public general opinion on environmental impact and health of communities living close by (turbines) remains also strongly negative. ...one example... on a property near Caledon, Ontario where a newer rural home lost more than 40% of its value after the construction of the wind turbine....despite the discounted price my clients decided to withdraw their offer and the house stayed on the market unsold only to be rented out later by the vendor."

A Picton agent writes

"I just wanted to let you know that I seem to have lost yet another potential sale, to a couple who were considering buying a waterfront lot near little Bluff. I disclosed the map of wind energy projects and that was the end of their search here in The County.....this is the third occasion....I also understand it's happened with (another agent) here in our office as well. ..."(Picton agent asked his name not be used)

Chris Hazelton Royal LePage writes

"This will have a major impact on the local economy in general...I believe there should be a moratorium...until the long term health effects and economic impact...have been thoroughly investigated"

There are many more letters from Realtors expressing concerns from health to economy to dismay at the destruction of their own property values. Letters from clients and neighbours who have spent their life savings and fear their homes will be unsaleable. A neighbour on Big Island who has experienced health problems on her short visit to Wolfe Island, who fears she may have to move.

A letter from a nurse declining a purchase on Big Island due to the turbines and her concern for health.

Kaitlin Group who became aware of the potential of wind turbines in the summer of this year writes
"The spectre of these installations...causes me great concern. The health impacts of these turbines are not yet fully understood, and the incompatible aesthetics in such close proximity to the urban areas does not seem logical.

I fear that the potential of these installations would be considerable detriment to our project which is poised to bring the benefits of growth and economic stimulus to The County.

Furthermore, the presence of the turbines would be counter-productive in an area that draws so heavily on its serene and pastoral landscape to support its tourism industries...."

And most telling is the man who sold his property recently on Big Island, at a loss, *"There is too much risk in Prince Edward County right now. Perhaps they don't build now ... or decide that Big Island is not right for turbines. But if I build my home I'm exposed. I'm in a situation I don't want to be. Better to cut my losses now."* (from the Wellington times August 19th 2009.)

There are a number of studies that have been done in areas that have had the experience of having these 400 foot tall wind turbines installed in their midst.

One such study can be downloaded at

<http://www.cwestonline.org/downloads/0008-AGO-WIND-TURBINE-IMPACT-STUDY.pdf>

This study states that

- 1) sales within the wind turbine influence area sold for less than those outside the area
- 2) there were substantially less sales within the turbine influence area than outside it
- 3) the impact of the wind turbines decreased land values anywhere from 19% to 74% with an average of negative 40% values at one of the wind farms and an average of 30% at another.

The loss of property value will have a huge impact on all the business that rely on home building, improvement, landscaping, and the business of daily living. There will be many jobs lost.

We have special natural beauty here. Gorgeous farms, fields, towns, waterfronts and views...night skies, with the brilliance of stars unmarred by lights. This causes people to appreciate, want to preserve it, invest, improve their homes, and lands, build businesses, employ people, purchase the services of the builders, the hardware stores, the grocers, the coffee shop gal, the gardeners, the plumbers, the gas stations and so large and thriving economy has been built.

A drop in value of properties in The County, due to the destruction of the beauty, will result in a loss of all the trades and work that would sustain the jobs of the people.

I urge the council to consider the negative consequences these industrial wind turbines will impart.

Lynn Stein
RE/MAX Hallmark Realty Limited Brokerage