

Decision, hearing dates scheduled for wind project

The two requests made by Highland New Wind Development LLC for constructing an industrial wind utility on Allegheny Mountain have been scheduled for a county board vote and a public hearing, as follows:

Zoning amendment request

■ ***Monday, Jan. 10 at 7:30 p.m., Highland Modular Conference Center, Monterey:***

Supervisors will vote on HNWD's request for a zoning amendment to Highland's ordinance. The developer has asked for an amendment that would change ordinance language to create an additional exception from the general height limits for wind turbines constructed as part of commercial wind projects.

Currently, structures such as silos and church spires are allowed to be higher than the general 35-foot limit as long as they are not more than 200 feet high. Any structure taller than 200 feet requires the approval of the county and the Federal Aviation Administration.

In addition to the company's request, the county will also consider its own new language drafted by the county attorney. Those options include adding language that either does not permit wind turbines in Highland at all; allows turbines under 200 feet, and those over 200 feet with only FAA approval; or allowing turbines more than 200 feet tall with FAA approval and county approval.

Conditional use permit request

■ ***Wednesday, Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m. at the Highland County Courthouse, Monterey:***

Supervisors conduct a public hearing on HNWD's request for a conditional use permit to build and operate a 50-megawatt wind plant on Allegheny Mountain in an agricultural zone (A-2).

The application, made last July, includes several proffers from HNWD that address the height of the turbines, the existing transmission line to carry the power, signs associated with the project, auxiliary buildings, and security. Also, the company agreed that no building permit could be issued for the facility until all required state and federal approvals had been obtained.

Supervisors will have 60 days from this date to vote on the request (until March 27).

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