



Proposed Sandy Point Windfarm Status Update

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Shelburne, Nova Scotia – In August 2021, the United Nations Secretary General, Antonia Guterres declared that the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report was nothing less than "**a code red for humanity. The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable**". Since then, the Nova Scotia Provincial Government declared in their October 12th, 2021, throne speech that "We will set aggressive targets that 80% of energy will be supplied by renewable energy by 2030", less than ten years from now. The Request for Proposal for tenders supplying 350 megawatts of renewable energy anticipated to be released shortly by the province is in response to meet these aggressive goals.

As we look back to 2008, the Municipality embarked upon an extensive community consultation program that provided the foundation upon which the Municipality finalized the Provincially mandated "Integrated Community Sustainability Plan" (ICSP). It's important to note that the citizens of that time recognized the importance of combating the climate crisis as the essence of the plan stresses that "As a community we need to learn how to live more sustainably and continuously evaluate the impacts of our actions – on our neighbours, our culture, our planet and our grandchildren." The plan not only provides a long-term vision for the community over a period of 20 to 50 years, but also provides specific short-term goals upon which subsequent Councils can build and enact municipal policy. Of the numerous topics addressed by the ICSP, the community clearly recognized the importance of promoting renewable energy projects:

"Our society's dependence on fossil fuels for our energy needs is not sustainable. To meet our energy demands, our society will need to transition from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy," and that "renewable energy and local economic development are mutually reinforcing goals and our residents recognize the potential renewable energy has to enhance our local economy. To benefit from this opportunity, we need to ensure we identify and encourage development of renewable energy projects, and create a facilitative policy environment for these projects."

One of the actions under renewable energy in the ICSP was to develop and implement a wind turbine by-law for the district by 2015. This was completed on time by the Council of the day who

set in place the regulatory framework by which windfarm developers would have to adhere. This includes utility scale projects greater than 2 megawatts. With a clear mandate established by our community to “identify and encourage development of renewable energy projects”, the Municipality provided its letter of support to Community Wind Farm. It’s important to stress that this is a letter of support in principle to encourage the development of renewable energy projects, as dictated by our ICSP and by-law, and that all proposed projects, including Sandy Point, are further subject to all applicable Federal, Provincial and Municipal regulations and by-laws. Support does not mean approval.

For purposes of clarity, it was Community Wind who stated that they had received strong support from the landowner base and in general, had received positive comments from the public, as was clearly stated in the letter of support. It’s further important to stress the letter of support is not required by the developer to submit a tender to the Provincial Request for Proposal. Revoking the letter would not prevent Community Wind from submitting a proposal.

In response to a request by the Stop Sandy Point Wind Committee for Community Wind to address their concerns regarding the proposed Sandy Point wind farm project, it was suggested that an effective way to answer questions may be to establish an advisory committee composed of Community Wind, the Municipality and representatives of the Sandy Point community. Although Community Wind and the Municipality agreed to participate on the committee, the Stop Sandy Point Wind Committee have elected not to participate at this time.

Warden Penny Smith commented, “I hope the Stop Sandy Point Wind Committee reconsiders their position as I believe it is the best platform to exchange concerns, answer questions and provide accurate and timely information, for the benefit of all stakeholders involved. Until such time as an advisory committee is established with all key stakeholders participating, the Municipality will continue to post relevant information on its website.”

In the case of the proposed Sandy Point windfarm project, there will be three regulatory approval milestones the developer will have to achieve before they will be able to consider building the project. The first is to submit a tender to the Provincial Government’s Request for Proposal, the second is to complete a Provincially mandated Environmental Assessment and the last is to submit a planning application to the Municipality as per By-law L101. Now is the time for the community to address their questions and concerns to Community Wind for inclusion in their upcoming Request for Proposal submission. Should Community Wind be awarded a Power Purchase Agreement, the next opportunity for community involvement will be during the yearlong Environmental Assessment process. The decision as to whether or not to approve the Environmental Assessment lies solely with the Minister of Environment. If the Environmental Assessment is approved by the Province and a planning application is received by the Municipality, it is not Council that makes the decision whether to approve or deny the development, this responsibility lies solely with the Municipality’s development officer, as set out in the By-law.

Warden Penny Smith would like to encourage everyone to take a closer look at where we fit in the bigger picture, “As our citizens recognized when we finalized the ICSP in 2010, we all need to do our part in helping our province achieve its net zero goals. When it comes to recognizing the

threat that the climate crisis poses to our planet and our community, we need to ask ourselves, are we part of the solution?"

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