

An Explanation of the Quincy Wind Ordinance
Written by Larry Chretien
April 28, 2009

On April 15, 2009, Mayor Thomas Koch introduced an ordinance to the City Council that would regulate the construction of wind turbines in the City of Quincy. The following summarizes what the 9-page ordinance would accomplish:

A “Site Plan Review Permit” is required for the construction and/or modification of wind facilities where the height of the wind turbine is less than 250 feet. The process for Site Plan Review is already established in the Quincy Zoning Code, but several additional items for review have been added for the case of wind facilities (i.e. computer visualizations, setbacks, etc.).

A “Special Permit” is required for the construction and/or modification of wind facilities where the height of the wind turbine equals or exceeds 250 feet. This process is also already established in the Quincy Zoning Code. The Special Permit Grant Authority has the authority to impose reasonable conditions upon the proposed application (i.e. height, setback, etc.).

In both cases, Site Plan Review and Special Permit, applications would be reviewed by the Planning Board.

Wind facilities would be permitted in any zoning district, with the exception of Residence A, Residence B, and Residence C districts, subject to approval of the Planning Board under conditions detailed in the ordinance.

The applicant shall provide at least six sight lines (computer visualizations), including from the nearest building with a view of the wind facility for pre- and post-construction view representations.

Wind turbines shall be set back at a distance equal to 1.1 times the overall blade tip height of the turbine from the nearest nonparticipating residential or commercial structure and the nearest property line and public or private right of way line. The Planning Board would have the discretion to waive the setback provisions to the extent that that a non-participating property owner provides written consent.

The applicant has the burden of proving that the project would not have significant adverse impacts in the form of shadow and flicker.

The wind facility must conform to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection’s Noise Regulations.

The facility must be removed at the end of its useful life or is abandoned. The Planning Board may require the applicant to provide a form of surety to cover the cost of removal.