

Some skeptical of New Hartford windmill talks

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NEW HARTFORD- Frederick Scatko has mixed feelings about the possibility of a 60- to 80-foot-tall wind turbine being built near his Higby Road home.

"If I could get some power from it, I'd gladly have it there," Scatko said. And if he couldn't? "Then it'd be another story," he said.

The **New Hartford Central School** District is contacting Vestas, a Danish company that operates in Madison County, to ask the company to give a presentation about wind turbines. Some officials hope a turbine, placed on district property between Hughes Elementary and Ralph Perry Junior High **schools**, could provide an alternative energy source.

Superintendent Daniel Gilligan said the **school** is exploring different ways to cut utility costs, and the study is in its earliest stages. The cost savings the wind turbines would provide are unknown, he said. "We're just like any other **school**," Gilligan said. "We're trying to keep an open mind on how to save on energy." An 85-kilowatt unit would have three blades measuring 49 feet from tip to tip. Cost, efficiency and maintenance details of the turbines are unknown, and a presentation date has not been set, Gilligan said.

Board member Kevin Copeland has said a turbine could provide power for the elementary and middle **schools**.

Jerry Orsaeo, owner of Weichert Realtors Champion-Weeks, said he's pleased the **school** is trying to get energy from wind but wouldn't want a tower in his back yard. "I think it would be a detrimental effect if it was close to any housing," Orsaeo said. "It could affect the marketability if it was right on top of a home, absolutely. People don't like those things towering over their homes."

Breezy rural towns in Herkimer County have been split about whether to develop **windmills**. Sites near Waterville and Canastota have been home to the turbines for several years.

Using wind power is a good way to cut utility costs if the plan is feasible, **New Hartford** Town Supervisor Earle Reed said. "I don't know all the particulars about this, but it's interesting how some communities have wanted them and some haven't."

Higby Road resident Qinyang Sun may fall into the latter group. "The important thing is for kids to get a good education," Sun said. "I don't think it's necessary to build this."

Sun said she's unsure if the purchase would be the best use of tax money, and expressed concern about the noise.

The Rev. Wanda Weidman, pastor of the Moravian Church of the Good Shepherd, said the **windmill** proposal is interesting, but she wants more details. The church neighbors Hughes Elementary. "We're not for it or against it until we have more information," Weidman said.

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Turbines could sprout in Kirkland

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2 residents want **wind** power

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KIRKLAND- Owners of the Spring Farm CARES animal sanctuary on Route 12 want to cut costs by generating their own power.

They are seeking permission from the town Planning Board to build three 10-kilowatt **wind** turbines in a hay field on top of a hill. The turbines, attached to towers about 140 feet tall, would cut utility bills in half [UTF8]C296[/UTF8] from about \$1,700 a month to \$800 a month, Spring Farm CARES owner Bonnie Jones Reynolds said. "We need to become self-sufficient and not depend on the grid," Reynolds said. "We have to be thinking of doing these things ourselves."

Meanwhile, Cassandra Harris-Lockwood, who lives on the other side of town, is also asking the Planning Board to approve the installation of a **wind** generator, attached to a 75-foot tower, at her College Hill Road property. "I'd love to get off the grid," said Harris-Lockwood, who would use the **wind energy** to power her house and barn. "I'd like to erase my utility bills."

Safety worries

As **energy** users clamor for sources other than oil, requests to build windmills continue to sprout across the region and state. Some worry, though, about the effect the turbines may have on their safety and the landscape.

Reynolds' proposal will be the subject of a public hearing at 7 p.m. Monday at the town Municipal Building on Route 12B. The Planning Board also plans to begin discussing Harris-Lockwood's proposal.

Both proposals are much smaller than two Herkimer County projects. Forty-six **wind** turbines could go up in the Fairfield and Norway areas, while another 75 could be built in Warren and Stark. A 20-turbine **wind** farm already produces electricity in the Madison County town of Fenner.

Planning Board member John Hecklau said he is waiting to hear more about the Spring Farm CARES project. "We have heard from them, and it's much more a residential-scale project than a utility-scale project, not like what you see down in Madison or Fenner," Hecklau said. "But we haven't made any decision."

Some Spring Farm CARES neighbors said they were not worried about Reynolds' plans or the impact of having **wind** turbines nearby. "They'll be pretty set back, so I don't see why it would bother anyone," said Gina Quesnell of Route 12. "I don't know if it will affect other people living up there."

Installed by winter

If approved, the turbines at Spring Farm CARES could be installed by winter by Endicott-based contractor ETM **Solar** Works, Reynolds said. The company has installed **wind-** and **solar-energy systems** throughout the state, according to its Web site.

The New Hartford Central School District also is considering installing at least one **wind** turbine to create power for Hughes Elementary and Perry junior high schools, but first must find out if there would be enough **wind**.

Reimbursement incentives are driving many smaller-scale **wind**-power projects across the state, said Jennifer Harvey, senior project manager at New York State **Energy** Research and Development Authority. Homeowners who install **wind** turbines on their property can apply for reimbursement of up to 50 percent of the cost through the **Wind** Incentive Program, Harvey said. Farms, meanwhile, are eligible for up to 60 percent reimbursement, and **schools could see a return of 70 percent of installation costs, Harvey said.**

Lower utility bills

"We have more and more people taking advantage of it," Harvey said. "You lower your utility bill, and you're not as vulnerable to potential" **energy** price increases.

Fourteen installations have been completed since the program began, and another 14 applications from around the state are waiting for approval, Harvey said.

Longtime College Hill Road resident Mike VanStrander has powered his house with a 12-kilowatt **wind** turbine for 25 years. VanStrander lives across the road from Harris-Lockwood. He said he sells excess power to National Grid, and his last three utility bills ranged from \$10 to \$22 per month.

"My reason for doing this was, as much as anything, around the issue of sustainability and better use of **energy**," VanStrander said. "It wasn't like I was out to get a cheap electric service."

IF YOU GO

What: A public hearing on three proposed **wind** turbines to be built at Spring Farm Cares on Route 12 in Kirkland.

When: 7 p.m. Monday.

Where: Kirkland Municipal Building, Route 12B.

Why: Spring Farms CARES owners said the **wind** power generated will cut their utility bills in half and be a more reliable and renewable source of power.