

DWPI responds to corridor concerns

Dufferin Wind Power's director of development, Rebecca Crump, says the company has gone as far as it can go with its "very strong offer" for a required easement for a transmission line on the rail corridor.

In a phone interview Tuesday, Ms. Crump said DWPI has considered all the concerns that have been expressed about the power line, and has been able to satisfy most of them.

Since the last council meeting, she indicated the company has made additional concessions. She declined to specify what those were, saying she respects the councillors and wouldn't reveal the items before the council viewed them.

(On Wednesday, county staff were preparing an addendum to Thursday's agenda. The addendum wasn't publicly available at the time. Deputy Clerk Michelle Dunne said the council would be meeting in camera prior to the 7 p.m. open meeting. That was the extent of information available.)

"I think we did a good job," Ms. Crump said, and the company has done all it can to avoid expropriation proceedings. Now the decision is with county council.

She said she hoped for an agreement Thursday. If not, DWPI would have no choice but to proceed with expropriation. "We have already applied (for authority to expropriate). There's a March 10 oral meeting."

Failing an agreement, could DWPI not revisit its onetime plan to take a low-voltage line across county to Mono?

"We dropped the 69kv proposal, and have concentrated solely on the corridor. We are constructing a wind farm and have to be able to send the power somewhere,

"We do have a timeline. If an agreement is not reached, we have to pursue expropriation." Ms. Crump reiterated that DWPI understands the county's concerns and had made concessions and put forth what it considers a generous offer in response to the concerns wherever possible.

DWPI has the Ontario Energy Board's leave to construct the proposed 230kv fibre-optic power line on the rail corridor. The Environmental Review Tribunal has dismissed appeals of the construction.

The addendum to tonight's special county council meeting, issued at about 2 p.m. Wednesday, includes several items that appear to satisfy some of the concerns expressed by councillors, and some demands outlined by Jane Pepino of CORE.

Financially, DWPI is offering up to \$500,000 to cover some or all of the costs of fencing if neighbouring farms ask for fencing within two years of the agreement. The company has also offered to pay for legal costs incurred by the county to date.

On fencing, CAO Sonja Pritchard points out that Section 20 of Line Fences Act requires that fences be built by owners of rail corridors if requested by farm operators. She says half of the 31.5 km of the corridor line is adjacent to farm operations.

On farming, some if not most of the adjacent farms are actually dissected by the corridor. DWPI would now undertake not to interrupt farm crossings in planting and harvesting seasons.

There would be "transition stations" as required for movement of the line into and out of the ground. DWPI is agreeing that there would be no transformers along with route.

The stations would be within the easement, and would not interfere with recreational or future rail use of the corridor.

A clause was added indicating DWPI has undertaken studies to gather information with respect to the potential impact of species at risk.

Nothing has been added to the agreement with respect to third party use of the transmission line. Dufferin Wind's position is that any potential third party use of the line

in the future would be governed by the IESO (Independent Electricity Supply Operator) and provincial regulations at the time a request is made. Other insertions include restrictions to hours of operation, immediate issuance of permits, and access to the corridor, among other details.

By Wes Keller