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DWP wind farm wins REA approval

Dufferin Wind Power (DWP) has reached a milestone in the long road to feeding its first kilowatt of energy from its proposed 100MW wind farm in Melancthon, but there remains a long distance to go.

Lyndsay Miller at the Ministry of Environment (MOE) said Tuesday that the project had received the REA (renewable energy approval). But that approval is subject to a 15-day appeal period, which could mean that it would be subject to review by the Environmental Review Tribunal (ERT).

Even then, DWP's application to the Ministry of Energy for leave to construct a 230kv power line along the rail corridor has yet to be granted despite the environmental approval, and there is significant public and municipal opposition.

As well, Melancthon Township Council is meeting today (Thursday) with its solicitor to review, among other things, details of a roads agreement with DWP. That meeting is within the council's regular agenda but is likely to go behind closed doors, although Mayor Bill Hill wasn't prepared to say as much.

The mayor did point out that DWP has yet to finalize an agreement with Dufferin County for use of the rail corridor. Any agreement reached would be for an easement along the exterior of the corridor, and not on the former rail bed, which is said to leave the corridor open to multiple uses or even to be restored for railway use.

Should leave to construct be granted, and should the county and DWP not reach an easement agreement, it is understood that DWP would have cause to expropriate.

Following is the ministry's EBR posting:

A Renewable Energy Approval (REA) has been issued to Dufferin Wind Power Inc. to engage in a renewable energy project in respect of a Class 4 wind facility consisting of the construction, installation, operation, use and retiring of up to 49 turbines, 18 rated at 2.75 MW generating output capacity and 31 rated at 1.6 MW generating output capacity, with a total name plate capacity of 99.1 MW and a total expected generation capacity of 91.4 MW. The wind facility will be connected to Hydro One's distribution system.

This Class 4 wind facility, known as the Dufferin Wind Power Project, consists of areas required for the wind facility components, as well as for the transmission line. The wind facility is located in the Township of Melancthon, Town of Shelburne and Township of Amaranth, County of Dufferin.

?The REA requires the proponent to construct, install, operate, use and retire the facility in accordance with specific terms and conditions. The terms and conditions, as summarised below, require the proponent to:

?construct and install the facility within 3 years of the date of the approval; construct and install the facility in accordance with the documentation considered for the issuance of this approval; properly decommission the facility upon retirement of the facility; comply with the ministry's noise emission limits at all times; carry out an acoustic immission audit of the sound levels produced by the operation of the equipment; carry out an acoustic emission audit of the acoustic emissions produced by the operation of the wind turbine generators; manage stormwater, and control sediment and erosion during and post construction; carry out specific items if foundation dewatering or water takings by tanker exceed 50,000 litres/day; implement the pre and post construction Natural Heritage monitoring program, which includes bird and bat monitoring; create a community liaison committee with members of the public and the Company; undertake ongoing Aboriginal consultation; prepare a Traffic Management Plan to be provided to the upper and lower tier municipalities and enter into Road Users Agreements; properly address any archaeological resources discovered; maintain records of the operation and maintenance of equipment and inspections and complaints related to the facility; notify the ministry of complaints received alleging adverse effect caused by the construction, installation, operation, use or retirement of the facility; and notify the ministry prior to a change of ownership.?

The EBR says that the renewable energy project ?has been approved in accordance with the requirements of Part V.0.1 of the Environmental Protection Act and Ontario Regulation 359/09.?

By Wes Keller