

South Bruce Peninsula joins anti-turbine chorus

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By Rob Gowan

South Bruce Peninsula has declared the town it is not a willing host to industrial wind turbines.

But Mayor John Close says that the resolution may not carry much weight because the Bruce County official plan states the county is in favour of alternative energy sources.

At a meeting Tuesday, South Bruce Peninsula council passed a motion similar to ones dozens of other municipalities across the province passed in declaring they are not a willing host to industrial wind turbines.

Close said he wanted to make it clear that both the county and the town official plans trump any resolution council makes.

"Right now we are facing the problem of do you put the cart in front of the horse," said Close. "You should be amending the official plan so that we can clear this question up once and for all."

Close said the county official plan is up for review this year or next and he expects the clause relating to alternative energy sources will be reviewed.

"Personally, I don't know where we would stand if challenged on this because our official plan is very clear," Close said. "If a member of the province were to ask me what our official plan states, I would unfortunately have to say we are in support of alternative energy sources. It sort of really has put us into a problem."

The move comes after Premier Kathleen Wynne said in a speech this spring that wind energy projects would not be imposed on municipalities that are not willing hosts to such developments.

Northern Bruce Peninsula passed an unwilling host motion a few weeks ago. Georgian Bluffs, Arran-Elderslie, Sauguen Shores, Brockton, Chatsworth, West Grey, Grey Highlands, Meaford and Kincardine have also passed unwilling host motions.

South Bruce Peninsula, Northern Bruce Peninsula and several other area municipalities also passed resolutions last year opposing industrial wind turbines.

About 40 residents in the SBP council chambers on Tuesday applauded when the town passed the resolution. Ana Vukovic, a former councillor, said she was happy the resolution passed. "The Bruce Peninsula is beautiful country. All of us come here for the beauty of it," said Vukovic. "We don't want this monster hovering in the municipality. It is not just the turbines, it is the transmission lines. They are just about as ugly as the turbines."

At least two companies have announced plans to erect wind turbines on the Bruce Peninsula. Tribute Resources has said it wants to put up 125 turbines in South Bruce Peninsula. Preneal Canada hopes to put up to 75 turbines in Northern Bruce Peninsula.

Vukovic said there are also concerns over health impacts and the decline of property values.

"I was in real estate for 15 years and people keep away from just the transmission lines because they have concerns for their kids," she said.

The province's Green Energy Act took away municipal control over placement of wind turbines and left it to provincial authorities. Municipal support for projects counts in an evaluation process when assessing which projects proceed first.

Vukovic said every municipality in Bruce County has passed a motion similar to the one passed by South Bruce Peninsula on Tuesday, which sends a message to the province.

She said the official plan can be dealt with when the time comes.

"The official plan is a public document . . . so the people have input on the official plan before it is passed by the council," said Vukovic.