

EASTERN SHORE POST

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Commissioners Told ‘An Ill Wind Blows No Evil’

By Ron West

The Northampton Planning Commission continued its study of how best to harness the wind. Speaking for *Delsea Energy*, **Deborah Renz** fielded questions regarding a proposed MET tower, designed to provide wind energy data, which could be used to determine the most efficient sites for wind turbines. Renz said the MET tower would use a solar panel to help connect it to a satellite uplink.

David Long noted that the introduction of wind turbines could give local farmers a shot in the arm. “Data shows that the winds near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay could provide enough power to make wind turbines cost-effective,” Long said, noting that the turbines could produce power with wind speeds of at least 6 miles per hour, which is often found on the lower Shore. Long stated that the introduction of wind turbines could produce new jobs.

The commissioners worked to set height and setback restrictions for wind turbine towers for commercial and residential uses. Commissioner David Kabler expressed reservations on the towers, noting that they are noisy and unsightly and pose a potential danger to migrating birds. Commissioner Roberta Kellam also voiced concern over the dangers to birds. Commissioner Robert Meyers stated that not all towers are noisy and that noise is dependent on the design of the tower as well as its windfoils or blades.

Prior to concluding their meeting, the commissioners agreed to begin working on a review of the county Comprehensive Plan, beginning with their Dec. 1 meeting at the former middle school in Machipongo.