

Clean And Green Energy Eyes Wind Turbines For Old Lyme

By DAVID HOLAHAN | Special to The Courant
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He lives in Old Lyme, and Timothy Londregan wants to build two 1.5-megawatt wind turbines on land that he owns in town, including one in the salt marsh behind him. The turbines would be 300 feet high. (STEPHEN DUNN / HARTFORD COURANT / March 10, 2009)

Timothy Londregan and his two partners in Clean and Green Energy LLC are proposing to erect a pair of 300-foot-tall wind turbines in [Old Lyme](#), just north of the town's business district. The \$7.7 million plan, one of just a few large-scale commercial wind projects underway statewide, would provide enough power for about 700 homes, Londregan said. The tallest structures currently in Old Lyme are 190-foot cellphone towers. If completed, the project would qualify for \$2 million in funding from the recently passed federal stimulus bill, Londregan said.

Q: Why did you pick Old Lyme, a fairly upscale burg, as the site for this project?

A: I owned the land already. I bought it to build an office building, which is fully approved and ready to be built. I live in Old Lyme. The rest of the land I own at the site is residual acreage, which I initially offered to sell to adjacent landowners and the Old Lyme Conservation Trust, at short money. They considered it but ultimately weren't interested.

Q: Old Lyme residents have a reputation for civic combativeness on issues like budgets and school projects. How do you plan to win them over?

A: This is very similar to cell towers. Everyone wants their cellphones to work, but they don't want a tower in their backyard. This project could get some similar reaction, unfortunately. I don't know anybody who doesn't believe in renewable energy. The great part about these turbines is that, visually, they are kind of cool. If you look at the steel-latticed electrical towers next to the Baldwin Bridge, those aren't pretty to look at. I think these turbines will be pretty to look at.

Q: Is there reliable data on wind speed and consistency in

A: There is a study done by AWS Truewind that maps wind availability for Connecticut and New England. But before you order your \$7 million of equipment you're going to want to do an on-site study. The traditional way of doing that is by putting up a meteorological tower and testing the wind for a year. But there is new technology that we are working with called SODAR, which is more economical and less obtrusive. The unit is 6-feet tall and sits on the ground. It works like sonar and costs about \$60,000. After we use it, we can lease it out for other projects. This is just the beginning. Our country is 20 years behind on renewable energy compared to Europe. It's really pathetic.

Q: How does your site rank in terms of available, consistent wind?

A: This is not wind comparable to Cape Wind, the project off the coast of Cape Cod, so we have been conservative with our numbers, estimating 35 percent of capacity production using existing turbines. But we also are looking at new technologies for wind turbines designed specifically for what in the industry is termed marginal locations.

Q: What approvals — federal, state and local — do you need to get?

A: We will need approval from the Army Corps of Engineers because part of our property is in a tidal marsh, which kicks it out of the local inland wetlands process. We also will have to go before the Connecticut Siting Council. We hope to be up and running by June 2011.