Call to Order: Chair Martin opened the public hearing at 6:02 p.m. The first order of business was to explain to the audience the rules established for holding the meeting. Ms. Martin then asked for questions or comments from the audience.

Dan McKay: Mr. McKay stated that it was important for citizens to have input into the ordinance process. Selectman Clarke replied that due to timing constraints, it had not been possible to discuss the ordinance with the public with the November 2, 2010 general elections coming up.

He also stated that 90-95% of other towns that have wind power projects, require a one-mile set-back from residences; this one says a 4,000’ set-back requirement.

Selectman Donahue stated that the town could not gear the project to just five (5) landowners and “torpedo” the whole project. Five people could not govern the entire town.

Dr. Albert Aniel: Dr. Aniel felt that the noise requirements were not strict enough as there has been testing done that disproves the State standards. When it is quiet at night, noise from the wind towers can spike from 30 decibels to 45. He felt the town was short-changing the citizens with this issue.
Dan McKay: Mr. McKay spoke of noise and how it can be very disruptive up to 7,000 feet. Mrs. Clarke responded that there were no guarantees, but all the turbines are “up wind” of homes and are buffered by a hill. Mr. McKay asked if the town had adequate insurance coverage and if Maine Patriots was a Limited Liability Coverage company. Mrs. Clarke stated that the town’s Wind Power committee had not skewed the ordinance one way or the other, but that it does give the town some control if a project were to take place. The Town Manager stated that towns are protected under the Tort provisions. Ms. Martin added that several samples of ordinances from other communities were used to create Dixfield’s.

Additional discussion followed regarding the guidelines used and if Patriots Renewables had input into the ordinance. The only thing Patriots provided was a map of the proposed area that the project would encompass. This came in very useful in determining the setback requirements. 98% of the residences lie beyond a mile from the proposed project.

Income from the project was also discussed, and Mrs. Clarke stated that it depends on the method the town chooses as to the amount of benefit Dixfield would receive.

Tony DeSalle of Roxbury: Mr. DeSalle was disturbed by the 4,000’ setback requirement and that it was not far enough away. Selectman Donahue agreed with Selectman Clarke that four people was not a fair depiction of the town’s wishes in dictating if the project would go forward or not.

Selectman Clarke: Mrs. Clarke stated again that the greatest number of votes (pro and con for the project) will be at the November 2, 2010 general elections. More Dixfield voters will be casting votes at this election. Depending on the outcome of the vote, the Board has two options:

1. Re-write the ordinance, or
2. Allow the project to go forward

The ordinance has been critiqued by the town attorney and AVCOG and it has been written as objectively as possible and was not biased one way or the other.

Dr. Albert Aniel: Dr. Aniel stated that he did not see a lot of Selectmen at the various wind forums held throughout the area during the past several months. Mrs. Clarke reported that the committee had attended all but one and that they had attended a forum on wind tower sounds in Phillips. The committee also had to gear the ordinance to the topography of Dixfield.

Tom Michaud: Tom Michaud of East Dixfield felt that wind power was good for “off shore” projects, but not for the interior of Maine, ruining the views and upsetting the balance of wildlife. He feels that Maine is about hunting and fishing as well as recreational areas. Property values will decline due to wind towers. Selectman Clarke stated that property values are not necessarily impacted by the projects and that we do not know what the implications will be. He wanted to know if anyone would be compensating his loss and suggested the Board read Power Hungry by Robert Bryce.
The hearing came to an end at 6:40 p.m. as no other questions were asked of the Board.

There will be a Public Hearing on Wednesday, October 20, 2010, at Ludden Memorial Library at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the proposed amendments to the town’s Comprehensive Plan. *The location has been changed from meeting at Dirigo High School to the Library.*

Patriots Renewables will be hosting an open session to discuss their proposed project on Thursday evening, October 28, 2010, at Dirigo High School. The time to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlotte M. Collins  
Secretary/Deputy Treasurer

/cm -c mc - attachments