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Proposed Lenox Mountain Wind Turbine Project is Whirling up Controversy in Western Mass.

Posted by [erik devaney](#)

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Lenox Mountain in autumn, courtesy of

[norockingchairforme.blogspot.com](#)

To build a turbine or not to build a turbine? that is the question in Lenox and its surrounding communities.

At a recent Lenox Board of Selectmen meeting, residents of both Lenox and Richmond passionately expressed their disapproval of a recent wind turbine study. The study identifies two possible sites on the 2,126-foot, Lenox Mountain, where wind turbines could be erected.

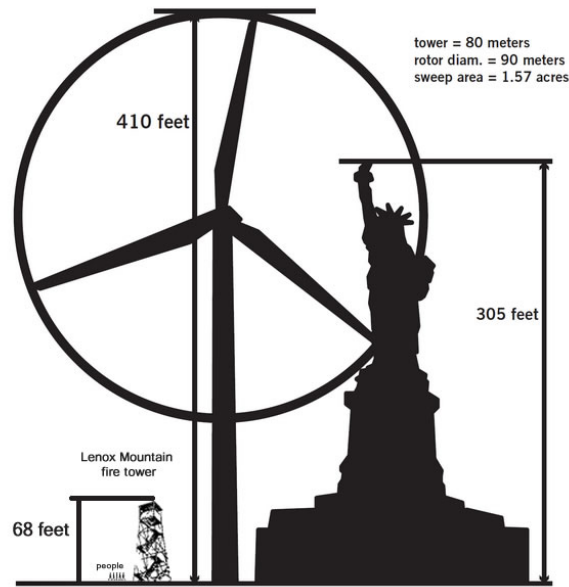
“The project has the potential to save municipal operations significant dollars in reduced energy costs,” Town Manager of Lenox, Greg Federspiel, told New England Post. The project could also help the town reach its “goal of being a ‘green community’ with reduced reliance on fossil fuels.”

However, Federspiel also concedes that wind turbines on Lenox Mountain would have some considerable drawbacks.

“Turbines are large and do not have a particularly ‘light’ footprint,” he commented, citing “upgraded roads to get the turbines to the ridgeline” and “possible noise impacts.”

Neal Pilson, a resident of Richmond, highlighted even more potential problems with the project when he spoke at the Lenox Board of Selectmen meeting. “Wind turbines would loom over the village, Tanglewood, Lilac Park, [and] Cliffwood Street,” he said. “They will be visible from many parts of the town and will be within a mile and a half of several hundred residents of both Richmond and Lenox.”

Pilson is by no means the only resident in the Lenox/Richmond area with serious concerns about the proposed wind turbine project. Opponents of the project have created a website, [Preserve Lenox Mountain](#), which they use to provide residents with information about the potential ecological and health risks associated with wind turbines. To illustrate how large a wind turbine on Lenox Mountain would loom over the surrounding area, the creators of the website posted this image:



The widespread concerns associated with the construction of one — or possibly two — Lenox Mountain wind turbines have not fallen on deaf ears. Before making any concrete decisions, the Lenox Board of Selectmen will establish a six-person committee to explore the issue further.

Town Manager Federspiel told New England Post that the committee will hopefully be formed within the next two weeks. “The goal is to examine the issues that are associated with wind, see if these issues will be a factor in a possible project in Lenox, and ‘tee up’ the issues for discussion at future public forums by identifying good sources of information and the latest knowledge on the various concerns,” he said.

But just as many residents have already made up their minds and have voiced their disapproval of Lenox Mountain wind turbines, one municipal official has made up his mind and is pushing for the proposed wind turbine project to move forward.

“I personally feel that all towns should be looking for ways to add alternative energy to their network. I am certainly in favor of wind turbines as well as solar,” John McNinch, Chairman of the Lenox Board of Selectmen, told New England Post. “Saving money for the town is my main goal. Alternative energy is good for the town and good for the environment... I would like to see us use all of the resources at our disposal to help the town and to help the environment.”

The six-person committee that will further explore the issue of Lenox Mountain wind turbines is expected to submit a report on January 1, 2012.



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