



Plat map used by permission of Rockford Map Company

DCTA Supports Amendments to OA #37, 2010-11 (Regarding Small Scale Electric Generating Stations in the A-1EX District)

March 31, 2011

Renée Lauber, DCTA Policy Advisor

Several towns have expressed concerns about proposed wind turbine development or speculation related to such development in their town. They have asked the DCTA to help ensure that local governments are included as part of the tower siting process.

The DCTA has been working through the Chapter 10 Task Force to change language in the A1-Ex Ag zoning district to address this issue. A1-Ex zoning currently allows small-scale wind turbines as a permitted use under “Small Scale Electric Generating Stations.” This could mean a wind farm development producing up to 100 MW - or, ~60 1.5 MW turbines (1.5 MW turbines can be over 300' tall). As such, only a county issued zoning permit is required to put up a turbine. OA 37 moves “Small Scale Electric Generating Stations” from a permitted use to a conditional use. This will give towns oversight of the siting process as applicants will have to go through the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process.

The DCTA will be asking for additional changes to improve this OA. Specifically, we would like the definition of “Small Scale Electric Generating Station” further refined. As proposed the definition excludes “equipment and structures for the purposes of creating electricity to be used primarily on the property” from the CUP requirement. This exclusion was intended to allow homeowners to build small structures on their property without a CUP but we believe it also creates a loop hole that could thwart the intent of the OA. We will be working with the Zoning and Land Regulation (ZLR) Committee and County Board to close this loop hole and regulate all towers.

An amended version of OA 37, with changes to the definition section, should come back to towns for approval in late April or early May.

Attached for reference is a March 11, 2011 memo from Majid Allan, Dane County Planning and Development, regarding OA 37. If you have any questions or comments I can be reached at reneelauber@consultant.com or 608-577-9997.