



## WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

|                                      |                                                    |                                           |                                              |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Information <input type="checkbox"/> | Recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Decision Request <input type="checkbox"/> | Councillor Activity <input type="checkbox"/> |
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**To:** Committee of the Whole

**Submitted by:** Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor District 7

**Date:** April 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole Meeting

**Subject:** Bear Lake Wind Project Community Liaison Committee (CLC) Appointment

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### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act – Section 24 – 27 (Standing, Special and Advisory Committees, Vacancy on board, commission or committee, Citizen advisory committees, Standing and Community committees).

### RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

That Committee of the Whole recommends ...

***Council appoints a member of WHRM Council to be a representative and participate in the Bear Lake Wind Project Community Liaison Committee (CLC) for their proposed renewable energy development.***

Further

That Committee of the Whole recommends ...

***Council directs the CAO to engage staff to make the necessary changes to the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy RCOGE-003.00 to include an appendix identifying the Bear Lake Wind Project Community Liaison Committee and include a Terms of Reference as set out by the committee.***

### BACKGROUND

|            |                     |               |          |            |                          |
|------------|---------------------|---------------|----------|------------|--------------------------|
| Property ☒ | Public<br>Opinion ☒ | Environment ☒ | Social ☒ | Economic ☒ | Councillor<br>Activity ☒ |
|------------|---------------------|---------------|----------|------------|--------------------------|

During the March 25, 2025 Council meeting correspondence from Mark Stewart on behalf of the Bear Lake Wind Project, a partnership between Membertou First Nation and EverWind, extending an invitation to West Hants Regional Municipality to participate in their Community Liaison Committee (CLC) for their proposed renewable energy development was discussed.

To properly address the request, an amendment would be required within the WHRM Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy RCOGE-003.00 to include an appendix reflecting the addition of a Bear Lake Wind Farm Community Liaison Committee and Council would need to appoint a representative to fulfill this commitment and be present and part of the ongoing discussions.

## DISCUSSION

Community Liaison Committees (CLCs) operate as collaborative forums where community, industry, and representatives meet to liaise between different groups, share information, identify concerns, and address issues. These forums are established to facilitate open communication and information sharing between wind energy developers and the public regarding project matters, often with a focus on environmental, social, and economic impacts.

An effective CLC maintains good public relations, fosters environmental stewardship, and acts as a vehicle for transparent and ongoing communications between community, stakeholders, and the proponent on matters pertaining to current and planned development in the community.

The Bear Lake Wind Project is currently in the development phase in West Hants (Upper Vaughan area). As identified in the March 20, 2025 letter, the proponents are establishing a dedicated Community Liaison Committee (CLC) to facilitate ongoing, structured dialogue between the project team and community members; noting the committee would serve as a forum for addressing questions, sharing updates, and collaboratively solving challenges as they arise.

As noted at past meetings of the current and former Council, wind farm development/alternative green energy has been an ongoing topic of discussion. West Hants has seen a rise in wind energy projects, from the Benjamins Mill Wind Project (a joint venture between Wskijinu'k Mtmo'taqnuow Agency Ltd. (WMA) and Natural Forces), Ellershuse, Martock and now Bear Lake Wind Farm as wind energy projects speak to host communities' offerings, including job creation, tax and land-lease revenue, and clean, affordable, homegrown electricity. However, neighbors of existing or proposed wind projects also have concerns and questions about the turbines or development. Topics of potential concern include sound; shadow flicker; health and safety concerns regarding themselves, their homes, ecological impacts to the environment, plant and animal species and impacts/limitations to their properties.

West Hants appears to be an ideal location when considering wind farm development, we have available land that is cleared and accessible by road (commonly forestry land), proximity to transmission lines, proximity to load centre (i.e., HRM), and availability of consistent, non-turbulent wind. These considerations position WHRM as an attractive location for further development of wind turbines but also raise serious concerns from residents who also make these same areas their homes.

Council has had extensive discussions regarding future wind turbines in the WHRM and need for and importance of establishing setbacks that reflected the values and visions many of our residents/community wanted in relation to their quality of life in relation to the proximity a wind turbine may have in relation to the homes, use of property and the natural environment. These discussions resulted in WHRM proposing amendments that benefitted the community and supported what the community had voiced.

Correspondence received from Provincial Planning Department regarding WHRM Councils requested MPS and LUB amendments advised the Province approved the amendments; however, the Minister exercised their authority and made additional amendments to the planning documents submitted by the Municipality as the provincial statements of interest and the province's vision did not align with what West Hants proposed as an amendment. Minister Lohr authorized and imposed further amendments, specifically the change in setback requirements and the removal of the consideration of visual intrusive impacts on the landscape from the MPS when the municipality is evaluating wind farm applications. The imposed changes for West Hants will soon be the standard for all municipalities in the province.

With these recent and concerning changes, it is imperative the Municipality has representation and is part of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC).

## **NEXT STEPS**

Once approved by Council, Mr. Mark Stewart (on behalf of the Bear Lake Wind Project) will be contacted and notified of the Councillor appointment to the Community liaison Committee (CLC).

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial impacts associated with this appointment.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

- Council can choose not to accept the recommendation and choose not to participate as a member in the Community Liaison Committee.

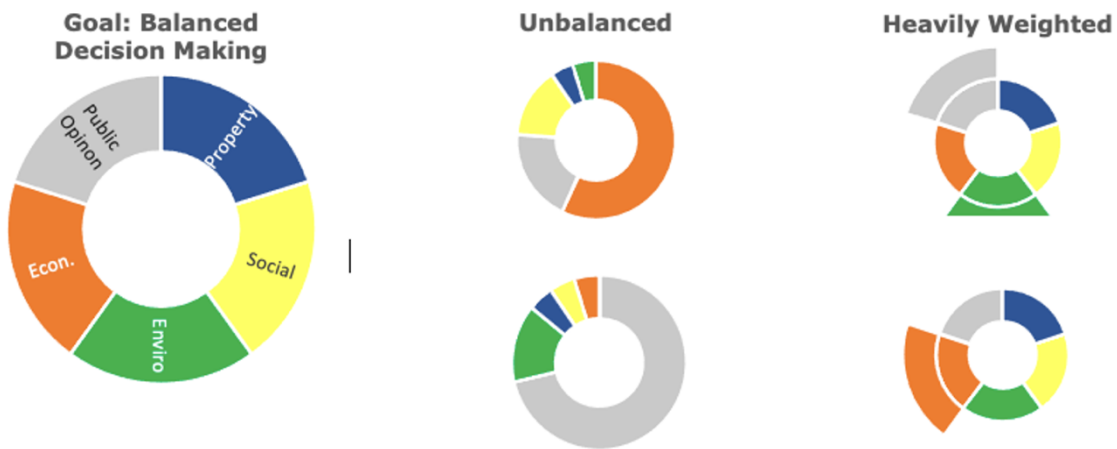
- Council can direct staff to explore other options by giving a different direction to staff.

## ATTACHMENTS

None

## CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

*Council has been provided with a reference taken from the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy , Appendix C “Decision Making by Council and Committee of the Whole” as a reminder of the principles highlighted for good decision making.*



Report Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor District 7

Report Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk

Report Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer