

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL**

**Petition of BNE Energy Inc. for a
Declaratory Ruling for the Location,
Construction and Operation of a 4.8 MW
Wind Renewable Generating Project on
Winsted-Norfolk Road in Colebrook,
Connecticut (“Wind Colebrook North”)**

Petition No. 984

April 19, 2011

**PETITIONER’S OBJECTION TO FAIRWINDCT, INC.’S MOTION
FOR MISTRIAL OR FOR CONTINUANCE, RECONSIDERATION AND TO
ALTER SCHEDULE**

The petitioner, BNE Energy Inc. (“BNE”), submits this objection to FairwindCT, Inc.’s (“Fairwind”) motion for a mistrial, or in the alternative for continuance, reconsideration and to alter schedule, dated March 29, 2011.

I. FAIRWIND’S MOTION

As a preliminary matter, BNE notes that despite Fairwind’s attempt to consolidate all three pending BNE petitions, Petitions Nos. 980, 983 and 984, the petitions have not actually been consolidated. Therefore, BNE will be responding to Fairwind’s motion in three separate filings, one in each petition, as is appropriate.

A. This petition was filed on with the Council on December 13, 2010, more than four months ago. Since then, a field review and numerous public hearings and evidentiary hearings have taken place, and parties and intervenors have submitted countless filings and issued and responded to hundreds of interrogatories. Fairwind now moves for a mistrial based on, at its worst, a 2-3 minute conversation regarding procedural matters that occurred on March 18, 2011 between the former Council Chairman and an attorney not representing any client in this proceeding.

A motion for a mistrial is entirely inappropriate given that this is an administrative proceeding – not a trial. Conveniently, Fairwind does not bother to address this issue, or to cite case law allowing a mistrial in an administrative proceeding, likely because none exists.

If a mistrial was even an option in this proceeding, which it clearly is not, any potential conflict created by the March 18, 2011 conversation between then-Chairman Daniel E. Caruso and Jeffrey Tinley, Esq. is entirely erased by virtue of Chairman Caruso recusing himself from this proceeding and his subsequent resignation from his position as Chair. Fairwind’s allegation that the Chairman’s resignation “points to the conclusion that there are larger problems than just an ex parte communication in this proceeding” is baseless at best, and conspiracy theorist at worst.

Furthermore, the point of the prohibition against ex parte communications is to protect parties and intervenors from off-the-record discussions between another party or intervenor and a member of the Council. In this instance, the conversation took place between Chairman Caruso and Mr. Tinley, who represents Save Prospect Corp. in an entirely different proceeding – the proceeding before the Council in Petition 980 for the construction of a 3.2 MW wind renewable generating project on New Haven Road in Prospect, Connecticut. As Save Prospect Corp. is not a party to this proceeding, the conversation between the Chairman and Mr. Tinley simply cannot be characterized as “ex parte.”

In the Petition 980 proceeding, Fairwind has participated as a “grouped party” with Save Prospect Corp., which makes it all the more ridiculous that Fairwind is now complaining of an ex parte communication between the Chairman and Save Prospect Corp.’s representative. The only possible party or intervenor aggrieved as a result of the

conversation is BNE, the petitioner. BNE takes no issue with a 2-3 minute conversation (at its worst) regarding procedural matters. In accordance with appropriate procedure, the conversation has been stated on the record, and the Chairman has recused himself from this proceeding and even resigned his position entirely. BNE sees no need for further disruption of this proceeding due to Fairwind's hysteria at this late juncture. As any possible conflict resulting from Chairman Caruso's 2-3 minute conversation with an attorney representing a party in an entirely different proceeding regarding procedural matters relating to that separate proceeding has now been cured by the Chairman's recusal and resignation, Fairwind's motion for a mistrial should be denied.

B. Perhaps recognizing that a mistrial is entirely inappropriate in this administrative hearing proceeding, Fairwind alternatively argues that the Council should continue the proceeding and reconsider all rulings in which Chairman Caruso participated. Fairwind spins yet another conspiracy theory – that the Chairman's "bias" "influenced other members of the panel" and the Council "may have deferred to him" and "voted with him." These allegations are supported by zero evidence and represent yet another attempt by Fairwind to muddy the waters to create some sort of basis for its inevitable appeal. Fairwind even goes so far as to allege that the Chairman "explicitly misled" members of the Council, giving the example of the Chairman's statement in Petition 980 that the Council has 180 days from the time in which the petition is filed to render a decision, and that the Council "can't change that." Fairwind then triumphantly declares that the Administrative Procedure Act provides: "If an agency does not issue a declaratory ruling within one hundred eighty days after the filing of a petition therefor, **or within such longer period as may be agreed by the parties**, the agency shall be deemed to have decided not to issue such ruling. Conn.

Gen. Stat. § 4-176(i)(emphasis added by Fairwind). Fairwind fails to elucidate exactly how the Chairman's statements were incorrect or misleading. The Council does, in fact, have 180 days in which to render a decision. The Council cannot change that – only the parties can. For Fairwind to allege that the Chairman “explicitly misled” the Council by correctly stating the law is shameful.

Furthermore, Fairwind seeks a reconsideration of each and every ruling made by the Council during the time that Chairman Caruso was acting as Chairman. Fairwind does not bother to provide any reasoning as to how a communication between a single member of the Council and an attorney in an entirely separate proceeding would have any bearing on rulings made by the nine-member Council in this proceeding.

Furthermore, even assuming Fairwind's absurd argument that decisions in this proceeding were somehow “tainted” by a purported ex parte communication in an entirely separate proceeding, BNE notes that every single ruling that has occurred in this proceeding has been a unanimous decision. Therefore, Fairwind simply cannot make any plausible argument that it would suffer prejudice if rulings in this proceeding are not reconsidered, as removing any vote lodged by the former Chairman would result in absolutely no change to any decision that has already been rendered.

C. Proceeding with its “kitchen sink” approach to set up issues for its inevitable appeal, Fairwind then argues that BNE should not be permitted to submit revised plans. As the Council is well aware, revising plans pursuant to Council, party, intervenor and abutter suggestions and recommendations is standard practice in proceedings before the Council. Fairwind apparently seeks to put BNE in petitioner purgatory – it seeks to tear apart BNE's plans, but when BNE attempts to respond to concerns in a productive manner by modifying

its plans (at its expense – including not only the revisions but the considerable cost of the revised measures, including siting turbines at less preferable locations in terms of wind speed), Fairwind shrieks prejudice. Not only is BNE revising plans to accommodate abutters' concerns in accordance with standard Council practice, it is also consistent with procedure in judicial proceedings, in which parties may conform pleadings to the evidence presented.

Fairwind continues to resurrect its arguments regarding the protective order despite the fact that no protective has been approved to date in this proceeding. Therefore, this basis for Fairwind's motion for mistrial is baseless.

Fairwind also claims it has failed to receive electronic service from BNE. This is because Fairwind has not elected to receive electronic service. Neither Fairwind's request for party status dated January 14, 2011, nor its notice of CEPA intervention dated February 24, 2011 indicate what type of service Fairwind elected to receive. The most recent service list issued by the Council indicates that Fairwind elected to receive service via U.S. Mail.

As explained in the Siting Council's "Information Guide to Party and Intervenor Status," which was provided to Fairwind by the Council, "Parties and intervenors may elect to receive documents by e-mail or by U.S. mail." (Emphasis in original). As counsel for BNE has previously informed counsel for Fairwind, if Fairwind would like to change its method of service to electronic service (in this or any petition), it must indicate as much to the Council and all parties of record. Fairwind has simply not done this. BNE has effectuated proper service to Fairwind in accordance with Fairwind's elected method of service – U.S. Mail. Therefore, Fairwind's meritless argument that somehow this entire

proceeding should be subject to a “mistrial” or continued based on its own failure to change its service preference with the Council is just that—meritless.

D. Fairwind also seeks to regurgitate its now-familiar arguments regarding Epsilon. Again, Epsilon not a participant in this proceeding – it is simply a third party consultant retained by the Council in accordance with its statutory discretion. It is not a developer or proponent of BNE’s proposed wind renewable generating project.

Fairwind’s argument that Epsilon must be subjected to cross-examination regarding its work for the Council so that this evidence could then be produced as part of the record in this petition “is necessary for the Council’s full and fair consideration of BNE’s proposal” holds no water. Given that Epsilon is the Council’s own consultant, the Council is already aware of “the work performed by Epsilon for the Council” and “any conclusions reached and recommendations made by Epsilon.” Fairwind is essentially attempting to force the Council to reveal its internal deliberations and decision-making.

II. CONCLUSION

What is clear from the above is that Fairwind, along with other parties and intervenors, are grasping at straws and creating as many issues as possible in a desperate attempt to stall or prevent this proceeding from reaching conclusion. What is equally clear is that any purported impropriety that may have arisen from (at worst) a purported 2-3 minute ex parte conversation concerning procedural issues that took place between a former member of the Council and an attorney representing a participant in a separate proceeding has been completely alleviated by the fact that the former Chair recused himself and subsequently resigned from the Council. Fairwind’s tactics should not be permitted.

WHEREFORE, BNE requests that the Council deny Fairwind's motion for mistrial or for continuance, reconsideration and to alter schedule.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Certification

This is to certify that a copy of the foregoing has been mailed this date to all parties and intervenors of record.

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