

Date: November 1, 2010

To: Rice County Planning Commissioners  
c/o Trent McCorkell and Julie Runkel  
Rice County Planning and Zoning  
320 N.W. 3<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Faribault, MN 55021

Re: Wind Projects on November 4, 2010 Planning Commission Agenda  
Spring Creek LLC Project

## Neighborhood Petition

We the undersigned are in opposition to the placement of two wind turbines on the Dave and Jacquelyn Hubers' property as the proposal does not satisfy the requirements for a Conditional Use Permit.

**1. Health concerns (503.05.M other)**

Medical research is showing that people living within 1 mile of industrial size wind turbines, and especially those living within ½ mile are at increased risk to develop health conditions including sleep disturbance, headache, dizziness, ringing in the ears, ear pressure, vertigo (spinning), nausea, visual blurring, tachycardia (fast heart rate), irritability, problems with concentration and memory, and panic episodes associated with sensations of internal pulsation or quivering, which arise while awake or asleep. The young, those over 50, and anyone with a chronic medical condition are at especially vulnerable. Presently, at least 30 people would live within ½ mile of one of the turbines as presently proposed. (See attached letter from Dr. Gary Carlson).

**2. Property valuation (503.05.C compatible with surrounding uses)**

Our research into the discussion of the impact wind towers have on land and property values for those living in proximity to any existing or proposed project is fueled by consultants and surveys drawn from both sides of the argument. One major wind energy study funded in 2009 by the Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory<sup>1</sup> is used to support the industry and developer's claim that there is no statistical economic impact on the property or land values of those who live within the immediate vicinity of a wind tower. However, case after case appears in more recent literature research where local, experienced and well-recognized appraisers have documented property value decreases in the 25-40% range. (See Valuation Documents below).

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<sup>1</sup> (<http://ecopolitology.org/2009/12/03/dept-of-energy-wind-farms-have-no-impact-on-property-values/>)

Common sense and experience, we trust, will convince Rice County Planning commissioners that greater setbacks (over 1 mile) will have less of a valuation impact than those within or under 1 mile. Of particular note to Rice County planning commissioners is the current valuation assessments of some home contiguous to the Spring Creek project. A few of these homes have substantive value (well above the county averages) and would, in our opinion, be materially impacted both by a drop in assessed value as well as potential resale value.

Finally, practical experience also suggests that any motivated or willing buyer will use the presence of these towers along with the increased growing body of potentially harmful health effects to discount the purchase of an adjoining property by a significant percentage.

Property Valuation References

<http://alleghenytreasures.wordpress.com/category/industrial-wind-vs-property-value/>

<http://www.aweo.org/problemwithwind.html>

<http://www.adamscountywind.com/Revised%20Site/Windmills/Economic%20Issues/Real%20Estate%20Values.htm>

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/32984818/McCann-Appraisal-LLC-Written-Testimony-Re-Setbacks-Property-Values-June-8-2010>

**3. Incompatible with Zoning and Comprehensive Plan** (503.05F Zoning district purposes and 503.05G Comprehensive Plan)

This proposal is to place two industrial size turbines in Urban Reserve and therefore does not meet the criteria 510.01.E

510.01 Purposes

The purpose of the Urban Reserve District is to implement the following Rice County Comprehensive Land Use Plan goals and additional objectives:

- E. Restrict land uses that have the potential to interfere with orderly urban expansion and subdivision at urban densities.

We adamantly would argue that the installation of any wind tower with a combined height of 411 feet is neither compatible with the Urban District, nor surrounding landholder usage.

**4. Visual/Aesthetic Impact** (503.05.D Appearance)

As a high corollary to the compatibility use, the undersigned will be negatively and severely impacted by the short setback of the towers from adjoining properties. Unlike the landowner of the Spring Creek Wind LLC project, many of the affected neighbors are not agricultural farmers. The land is used for recreational enjoyment including walking, hiking, cross-country skiing and running. In specific adjoining

instances, paths were established on adjoining properties well over 10 years ago and at a cost to landholders have been maintained ever since. An effort to restore the prairie, with nominal tree coverage, has been ongoing for the last ten years. Neighbors have worked to burn the prairie and keep non-native trees out of the soil.

Thus, the point here is that the sightlines of these towers will be prominent to some neighbors who wish to keep the prairie free of trees. The sheer presence of these towers which require respect due to their size, electric components and moving parts will have a large and negative affect on the quality of the experience for those living in proximity to them.

Lastly, we as neighbors have been overwhelmed by the speed, size and seemingly powerful trajectory of this requested Spring Creek conditional use permit. It was not until the middle of September, 2010, that we first heard of the applicant's desire to place this project before the Rice Country Planning commission. Given that:

- The "Term" of use is requested for 30 years and the impact of this decision is one that neighbors will have to live with for three decades (Section 503.05(C));
- There has been no material conversation or even awareness (until recently) by Northfield public officials (including lack of awareness at the elected Northfield city level, Northfield city staff or Northfield planning commission level) of the request to place the Spring Creek LLC towers in its Urban Reserve District;
- The communication with neighbors has been one-sided. There has been one perfunctory meeting in which the landowner and developer effectively stated that they were going to apply for a conditional use permit to Rice County to put the Spring Creek towers up; at the specified height; and at the locations indicated. It appears (as we are now catching up with the speed of this process), that discussions with utility concerns, the developer and the investors have been ongoing for many months prior to September, 2010. Additionally, it appears that adjoining neighbors were the last to be "notified" and the process suggests that the voice of adjoining Rice Country residents is of little concern. Neither the developer, landowner nor any investor has asked adjoining residents if this project is appropriate for the surrounding use.
- This project appears to be a "re-packaging" by developers to cut and paste a number of smaller projects into Rice County; and thus there appears to be a wholesale presentation to Rice County of several projects all at the same time; all at the same planning meeting; all with very similar applications.
- There appears to be a rush to blindly build based on current legislation that outlines renewable and efficiency incentives

<http://www.state.mn.us/portal/mn/jsp/content.do?id=536893811&contentid=536885915&contenttype=EDITORIAL&programid=536917401&agency=Energy>).

Our belief is that the only parties that will most completely absorb the numerous and specific negative effects of the Spring Creek wind turbine project are the adjoining property owners and Northfield citizens and not the landowner, the applicant, the developer or the investors. Stated differently, the local residents and affected Northfield residents are being asked to accept and endure all the potential negative effects (health, property devaluation, aesthetics, and compatibility use) and none of the benefits.

The undersigned respectfully requests that the Rice County Planning Commissioner deny the conditional use permit for the application of Anna Schmalzbauer of Spring Creek Wind LLC. At an absolute minimum, the neighbors signing below request that the applicant, the landowner, affected neighbors, Northfield city officials, in collaboration with Rice County officials need more time to evaluate all the issues including potential impact to local residents and Northfield citizens more broadly in the areas health impact, compatibility of project within the Urban District, compatibility with local use, and degradation of property valuation of adjoining properties.

(Signatures will be collectively separately and attached as one.)

Name (print)	Address	Signature
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Attachment: Dr. Gary Carlson correspondence

October 30, 2010

To: Gordon Kelly, Chairman of the Rice County Zoning Commission

From: Gary Carlson, MD, DAAFP, DAAMA

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I have been informed of a proposal to place two Carleton size wind turbines adjacent to our property. I have always been an environmental and wind advocate, but my recent investigation of the medical literature has raised serious health concerns about this proposal and I would like to present those to you and to your fellow members. My qualifications include being a family physician for over 22 years with the last 6 years specializing in treating people with chronic medical conditions.

My bottom line conclusion is that the medical literature supports the position that all industrial size wind turbines should be placed at least ½ mile (2640 feet) and preferably 1 mile (5280 feet) from any residence.

**What are the health concerns related to wind turbines?**

The health concerns are sleep disturbance, headache, dizziness, ringing in the ears, ear pressure, vertigo (spinning), nausea, visual blurring, tachycardia (fast heart rate), irritability, problems with concentration and memory, and panic episodes associated with sensations of internal pulsation or quivering, which arise while awake or asleep.

**Why does this happen?**

Sound waves, both audible (20-20,000 Hz) and inaudible (0-20 Hz) produced by the turbines and the blades can affect our internal ear gyroscopes which control our sense of motion, balance, and position (think getting carsick as a child). People are especially affected at night when they are trying to sleep.

**Who is most likely to be affected?**

Young children, those over 50, and anyone with a chronic medical disease are at higher risk.

**Do wind turbine setbacks make any difference?**

Yes, this is the key point. Our present setbacks are outdated. Most are at 500-1000 feet from property lines or living residences. Placing them at least ½ mile (2640 feet) and preferably one mile (5280 feet) from people minimizes potential health issues. Many of the European countries, who are about 15 years ahead of us in experience with wind turbines, started with our present guidelines but have learned through experience that people get sick and complain when they live that close. Their sound and setback guidelines now are consistent with the ½ to 1 mile setbacks argued for above.

**Does it make a difference how many wind turbines there are?**

One industrial size wind turbine can create significant problems but the more you have grouped together the higher likelihood you will have problems.

**Aren't the new turbines much quieter?**

There have been some improvements to dampen mechanical noise of the motors, gears, and generators, but you can't capture the wind with 150-ft-long blades chopping through a 2-acre vertical air space without disturbing the air, i.e., generating audible and inaudible noise.

**Is there medical literature to support the above conclusions?**

Yes, some of the articles are attached and more are being generated each day as we gain experience with more people living close to these turbines. In fact, the First International Symposium on the Adverse Health Effects of

Industrial Wind Turbines will be held this weekend, October 29-31, 2010 in Picton, Prince Edward County, Ontario, Canada

**Are there any precedents for having ½ mile setbacks?**

Yes, many wind companies are starting to incorporate this into their plans and as mentioned above most European countries have these setbacks. Goodhue County, MN, in response to a recent wind farm proposal now has a “10 rotor” setback which is 2475 feet (the company had offered 1500 feet). Trempealeau County, near Lacrosse, WI, has set backs that are at least a mile from the nearest home and a half-mile from neighboring property lines.

**What about our local turbines at St. Olaf and Carleton College?**

These turbines were planned and erected in 2004-5 when the medical literature was much less robust on the health concerns mentioned above. Carleton has only three residences within the ½ mile radius. Unfortunately, St. Olaf has many more, but at least the turbine is over ½ mile from the hospital.

Once a wind turbine is erected it will be there for the next 25 years. Proper placement is the key to ensure that those living nearby do not suffer serious health effects.

Thank you for your attention regarding this matter. [Attachments supporting this communiqué were sent separately to Planning Commission members and are available upon request.](#) If you Google wind turbine health issues you will find hundreds more.

Sincerely,

Gary R. Carlson, MD

Attachments:

- 1) Sound file—blade swish inside the vestibule of a home 1500 feet from turbine (electronic only)
- 2) Dr. Pierpont’s testimony to the NY State Legislature 2006 and op ed piece 2010.
- 3) Minnesota Dept of Health discussing health effects with setbacks < ½ mile.
- 4) Dr. Hamming article on turbines and sleep disturbance.
- 5) Website to multiple health research articles (scientific recognition of adverse health effects from wind turbines. (electronic only)
- 6) Scientist challenges the conventional wisdom that what you can’t hear won’t hurt you.
- 7) First international symposium on wind turbine health effects.
- 8) Personal stories
  - a. Wind Turbine Torture
  - b. MPR news