

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE LEXINGTON CITY COUNCIL****January 8, 2018****7:00 P. M.**

The regular meeting of the Lexington City Council was called to order at 7:00 P. M. by Mayor Pro Tem Steve Fosen in the City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mayor Pro Tem Fosen led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call was taken to find the following physically present: Mayor Pro Tem Fosen, Alderman Schreiber, Alderman Stover, Alderman Colclasure, Alderwoman Wilson, and Alderman Richard with Mayor Johansen absent. Members of the staff and public present were: David Belvery, Andrew Downey (Invenergy), Jim Alexander, Jeff Alexander, Earl Vandegraft, Jere Payne, Pete Bachman, Dwight Stricklan, David Leake, Al D. Keith, Patrick Killian, Yale Young, Abby Young, Kevin Edwards, Ashtin Edwards, John Mohr, John Cheever, Mike Matejka, Ashley Hacker, William Davidson and Tom Kinsella. Also present were: Ronald Wilken, Susan McGuire, Larry McGuire, Katie Adams, Walker Adams, Tom Leake, Gary Leake, Kevin Parzyck, (Invenergy) Ariana Martino, (Invenergy), Mandy Wiltz, Mark Freed, Sue Noland, Paul Miller, John Slagel, Dean R Steidinger Bart Flack, and Karin Atkins.

It was moved by Alderman Colclasure and seconded by Alderwoman Wilson to approve the minutes of the December 26, 2017 regular City Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Alderman Stover and seconded by Alderman Colclasure to approve the Treasurer's Report and pay bills in the amount of \$13,140.99. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Input:** Mayor Pro Tem Fosen reminded everyone to be cordial and give as many people as possible an opportunity to speak. When we go into regular session, discussion will be closed to the public. I would like to ask if Mr. Stricklin was intending on speaking, one of the major issues is how the funding formula works with the proposal and whether or not there is anything in the State funding of the schools that would diminish that.

Dwight Stricklin: Especially if anyone has attended any of the Mclean County meetings as to how the windfarms will impact the schools districts. Previously, taxes raised the EAV and the following year the State would drop their state aid for you. Now there is a new state aid model that guarantees the school will get the same state aid as last year. For the school district this is such a game changer, let's assume the windmill farm went thru next year, we are still going to get the exact same amount of money from the state we get this year plus the money from the windmills. There was also some confusion as to how much money will be generated from the windmills. Officially the way it works, we have money that we are going to get that Invenergy would pay with overall tax dollars to the school district that we actually have access to. To officially break it down, it will come down to the total number of dollars that we have access to, that includes our education fund, our transportation fund, our special ed, our bridge cash, and

our lease. That comes to \$15,598 per turbine within the district. The other number that has been thrown around is \$12,200. That is the number we get per turbine just for the education fund, which is the biggest fund we have in the school district. Take out these turbines, you can multiply by these two numbers. Total number of money that we have access to \$15,598. Now we talk about if we had a 15 turbine wind farm in our school district. The total number of dollars Invenergy paid in taxes is going to be a little over a million dollars. That is taxes that the district does not have access to. So, I do want to make clear that a windmill farm will be a game changer for the school and the town. The more things we are able to do for the school will help draw families to Lexington.

Katie Adams: You said in the district, and not the setback. The school will still get a large amount of money even if you do not get the 18 in the setback? I want to clarify if it is all or none.

Dwight Stricklin: My point of view, the windmills need so many to make the project work well for them. If you take away the 18 in 1.5 setback, it makes it harder for them finish the project.

Mayor pro tem Fosen: If 50 windmills generates a million dollars of company money being paid in taxes for that same 50 windmills how much of the million dollars would the school see? Even if it is a rough estimate.

Dwight Stricklin: Around \$780,000.

Mayor pro tem Fosen: So presumably the difference of \$220,000 would be the windmills taking off part of the tax burden from the district?

Dwight Stricklin: At that point, total tax dollars and total turbines at \$359,000 per turbine, per EAV tax rate of \$.50, the referendum will be off, that is \$1,900,568.

Gary Leake: This sounds like quite a boon for our school district and I always try to support our school district with several referendums. To me it sounds like a good idea.

John Mohr: I am here again to ask the council to protect it's 1.5 mile zoning jurisdiction.

New information from the 12/13/17 TIF committee meeting shows the increment has reached \$650,000 per year. That means by Ordinance 2016-5 the City is required to share 60% of the new increment back to the school. Starting this year the school will receive more money from the TIF district.

Where is the City funding crisis that is requiring you to sell your zoning jurisdiction for any amount of money? Those same minutes also declared \$100,000 surplus funds in the TIF funds creating a huge opportunity for local investors and skilled jobs right here in our corporate limits. Why is there a school funding crisis now? We were told that the referendum would provide a ten year life span for the school and bringing the school closer to complete

dissolution of TIF district and the school will realize the distribution of \$450,000 in revenue or more every year forever—not 20-25 years.

All increments were achieved by making investments (25M) inside corporate limits that served to attract people to the community and created a lot of skilled labor jobs.

I'm curious now, what are you going to spend the money on? If it is tax relief, you should know that there are more than enough numbers now given by Dwight Stricklin and the Council for the school board to pass a resolution, make a pledge, more than a pledge, make a commitment to the community, how much tax abatement, how much tax rate reduction, how are you going to lower your levy, to pass through the taxes to us? How is this money going to be spent? These questions really have not been answered. Please, protect the 1.5 mile zoning setback.

Paul Miller: I think we should not give up our 1.5 setback restriction. The main reason is, if we ring the City with the turbines, where is there going to be any growth? We may have the best the school district but who will move here? If you look at the area where a lot of the turbines are potentially going to be on the Northeast side. I was on the council for a number of years, and one of the great areas for growth is the areas to the North and East of town. If you change the zoning to allow the turbines this close in these areas you now restrict that growth. So now you have a great school district but you don't have any place for people to live. Before you just give it up, you might want to think very clearly about that. Is losing that many turbines on that side of town going to have that big of an impact on the project as a whole? I don't think so. Once the turbines are here, they are here to stay.

John Cheever: I'd like to clarify a point, I've heard all kinds of number thrown around. The actual number of windmills including the 18 that would be in the Lexington School District is 64. Is that correct?

Kevin Parzyck: I would qualify, that currently with the County we have asked for approval of 117 locations for turbines as to which ones those are, there could be some variability.

John Cheever: My question is, you have applied for 117 windmills for the County? You have Chenoa, Gridley, Lexington, Lawndale, and Money Creek Townships? Money Creek, Lexington and parts of Lawndale Townships are part of the Lexington School District. How many of those 100 and some odd windmills will directly affect the Lexington School District?

Kevin Parzyck: 64

John Cheever; The point that Dwight Stricklin was good enough to share with us, consider the math that those 64 will generate, consider the dollars the 18 that those will generate. When we did the math for what those 46 windmills will generate, the difference was \$280,000. It went from \$979,000 to \$717,000. Now I don't care if you are talking about the \$900,000 or the \$700,000 that's serious money. I would say everybody needs to seriously consider how well that impact of the \$717,000 would help the school district in light of the fact

that John Mohr is talking about down the road the TIF money is going to roll off. TIF is going to go away and those dollars will go back to the district where they have been pulled from the district now into the TIF. At what price tag do you want to put on this 1.5 mile? When you are talking about a million dollars I don't think \$200,000 is not that much money. I don't think you should sacrifice that 1.5 mile. And you just made a point the number may vary.

Kevin Parzyck: We have applied for 117, it depends on what our feedback from the County is as to how many are approved.

John Cheever: If you don't get these 18 can you scatter them someplace else within the County?

Kevin Parzyck: That is my point, I want to make sure everyone understands, this isn't about we are going to make all this money off these other turbines. No, if these 18 are not included it may not be viable and it may not work. There is a lot of discussion going on out in the County. You can't say, we will take this money but not that money.

John Cheever: I understand, but the people here in this room are concerned with Lexington. There might be people that live in Gridley or Chenoa Townships that are concerned with the Gridley Township and the Chenoa Township.

Walker Adams: In a previous City Council meeting Invenergy told the city council that the 18 windmills didn't matter. It didn't matter if they were approved or not.

Kevin Parzyck: I did not say they were not critical to the project.

Yale Young: I have attended all the ZBA meetings in Bloomington and one thing that was said by Invenergy at the last meeting was they could have 100 windmills to make this project work. That is just a little turned around from what we are hearing tonight. It was said and is public record that 100 windmills would make it work and we are hearing it different now.

Kevin Parzyck: We said at the hearing approximately 100 that would equate to 250 megawatts of power. So if you take 117 windmills and take 18 away, how many does that leave you? 99, plus there is other discussion. My point here is that, things are not final until the County decides on a variety of issues and approves of the permit.

Mayor Pro Tem Fosen asked the question of how many other windmills are with other town's jurisdictions and have to make the same decisions that we have to make.

Kevin Parzyck: There are a total of 5 that are within the jurisdiction of Gridley and Chenoa.

Mayor Pro Tem Fosen: In addition to our 18?

Kevin Parzyck: That is correct.

Abby Young: I have written a letter to the Lexington City Council:

## Selling Out?

What a wonderful community we have the opportunity to live in! Many years ago Lexington had several prominent families who owned and/or operated many of the businesses which helped establish Lexington. This was a time when handshakes were as good as a contract, and a man's word was something you could trust. Who knew that they were building a town which would stand together to support their school, families, and friends and community while continuing to support the local agricultural community? That goal remained the driving purpose of the founders until opportunity arose for greed and corporate bullying to enter into this small rural town and threaten what brought many individuals to this town in the first place.

Have you walked the streets at the festivals? Shopped at the local stores? Attended the activities in the gyms of a school that bleeds purple? It is fascinating really! I sometimes pinch myself as I feel like I can picture Lexington is straight out of a Hallmark channel. But then, when a company comes and dangles money in front of the people those scenes change...they change,,,

Of course I am addressing the invasion of wind turbines into our idyllic community. Ladies and gentlemen, the farmers are not always the landowners, many of the landowners don't even live near these turbines. So all they have is the money....That is it!

But, is this invasion really necessary?

Do we really need a company to "save our school"? I may be mistaken, but I thought we were doing a swell job at supporting our school amongst ourselves. I am sure the incentives look enticing, but not at the sacrifice of pleasures like exiting the eastside of town and seeing for miles or enjoying a jog down a country road without the sound of blades thrusting through the open air. I question the "they are neat to look at" comments I have heard. However, my family chose to move here because of the rural setting and strong community even when the taxes were higher than other places that we looked at.

We love to watch the sun rise and with silhouettes of tree lines, barns, and homes so still, as if they were straight out of a storybook. As a family we love to stop and take in the beauty. My 3 year old daughter said just recently, "Look mom, isn't God a beautiful artist!" Our 7 year old specifically asked for an art set for Christmas so she could paint the sunsets from the barnyard. Don't tell me that these kids don't get it either.

The countless hours we spend outside will all be changed when we are surrounded by giant, and I mean "GIANT" 499 feet tall wind turbines, over a hundred feet taller than the turbines at two other surrounding locations. Have you listened? Have you watched a video of the flicker? Not real? Folks this is not Texas where there are miles, and miles between homes. These are right in our back yard!

Have you talked with individuals who live near these monstrosities? Have you heard their stories? Have you talked with other potential stakeholders from other towns? Invenergy is not

a company with integrity, they will swindle and entice, but LISTEN carefully. Just as every contract nowadays has “fine print”; there are ways of saying things, “without” saying them. It is in the verbiage. Then consider the studies and how they connect to the company. It’s a classic; I scratch your back you are going to scratch mine.

Protect our town at minimum, there are setbacks for reasons! Forget town growth if you don’t.

Ron Wilken: I’ve lived in Lexington 47 years. I would ask you to make your decision based on the facts presented.

Jim Alexander: I live a ½ mile from the City limits and have lived there for 60 years and I am going to ask this council please, we do not want the turbines on top of us. I live across the road from them and am going to have 4 of them right on top of me. I’ve been in here ever since last summer, talking to all of you people not to let the windmills in. Looking at this map anyone can see it is going to destroy just anything in the way of future growth. Now from what I understand, the school is going to get a lump of money out of these 46 without the 18. I don’t think the tax payers of this town realize that. All they see is what’s on face book. All of the windmills equals so many millions of dollars. Well, I’m for the school district, I went to school here, my wife went to school here, my kids went to school here. I’ve voted for every tax referendum that has come up, but if you want to stick a windmill up on top of me that is too much.

Katie Adams: I look at things a little different. I know my child does not go to school here. I still voted for the school referendum, because like you, I would rather pay higher taxes. And I did move here because of the school district but right now my child has some needs that can’t be met and we still want our money from the taxes on our house to go to the school district. I would rather pay higher taxes all day long, and I pay taxes as a person and a business owner, and I would pay higher taxes every time rather than have the windmills that will lower my property values. These numbers are based on our property values. That is what our property taxes that go back to our school. So if we put these up and our property values goes down then what happens to those numbers. Think about it. If our property value goes down will those tax numbers go down as well? We moved to Lexington, we have a home and we have a business here because there were no windmills. That was the main thing we looked at when we moved here. I would ask our City government to protect us the way the County and State has put the setback there to protect us and I would ask that you leave the setback there. And I’m sorry if it hurts the big project but I will not sacrifice not having children here go to school.

Jim Alexander: I’ve heard several surveys around this town, small surveys, 100 or so people, and they are 2 and 3 to 1 against, leave the 18 alone.

The question was asked who did the survey?

There was discussion on the survey done by McLean County Wind Project surveyed 382 people. Are they all Lexington residents? Lexington is not big enough for a poll. This poll was done for Don Cavallini and Catherine Mesker. As you can see 90% of the people that we polled agreed with having the turbines. This survey was not paid for by Invenergy.

How many were from Lexington?

About 100. It wasn't put together just for Lexington. It was put together for the project as a whole.

Katie Adams: Anyone who commented negatively against the turbines got blocked from the survey.

**Old Business:** **Invenergy Discussion/alternative proposals:** Mayor Pro Tem Fosen started the discussion: We got approached by school administration on this issue whether or not there be consideration within our 1.5 mile and we have been going thru that process. To be clear, state law is that we have the right and the responsibility for siting within the 1.5 mile. It is not a restriction, it is not an embargo on the windmills within that 1.5 mile. If application is made, we have to deal with those applications. That is our responsibility. The law allows an incorporated community to reach out 1.5 mile to control and protect its ability to grow. That's why we have this meeting coming up on January 22, 2018.

I'd like to introduce this map here. This is still the map of the 18 as proposed by Invenergy some time ago. Mayor Johansen has been asking all of us aldermen to look at the project and to assess where we thought there were high impact and low impact areas. Essentially, both sides whereby we thought that enjoy ability of citizens, future growth of the village, all those things might be more impacted than others. He asked us to provide input to him. Some of us have provided that input. All that red and green means, nothing has been approved, nothing has been declined, all it means is that after the process, several of us looking at the map, that was sort of the cut of high priority areas for future growth, it has been discussed from the East-Northeast in this meeting from the public and that pattern mirrors that, also to the West. There is rational, there is logic behind this map, I asked Alderman Richard to talk about that, what he thinks of the red versus green.

Alderman Richard: The main thing a lot of people think that we can just pick and choose the particular sites. But looking at the map we can have an alternate to the yes and no with respect to everyone. Taking out a specific distance would be better. This allows them to come in not quite ½ mile and still leaves them within a mile of the setback. This frees up the zone in the East and the West. This not something we are ready to vote on this just an alternative. There has been no discussion on it, that just explains the map.

John Colclasure: I ran on a platform of honesty, integrity and common sense. For me to change in the middle of the stream from what I campaigned, that's my word. I will not support

any windmills with in the 1.5 mile setback. You can read website after website on windmills, page after page, pros and cons. In the past the City Council has given the school money, then a referendum came and was passed, now we see in the Lexingtonian they want to pass another referendum and increase our taxes again. This footprint that is going to be ringing the City, that sways me a lot. I will not support anything that I saw in 2010, those proposals for three turbines, Bright StockWind Energy. I will not support anything inside that 1.5 mile.

Mayor Pro Tem Fosen wanted to clarify something he said at the last council meeting. I related a story about being in a high school that failed. The point of that story was not to compare Odell to Lexington. The point of the story also was not to predict Lexington is going to fail if any of this project doesn't happen. That is not the point of my story. The point of that story was, that when I was in high school, that high school went from struggling to a worse situation that we experienced here in Lexington a few years ago. The failure of a referendum led to that school closing. There was an environment and atmosphere there that was tough on the students emotionally and socially. Even more so, instruction was almost at zero for almost a year and a half, I felt that myself. That's what happened. I went to Pontiac my senior year, and I spent a year trying to catch up in math. I had not had study hall for math for 1 ½ years. I went to college, my chosen major a technical major, I got in in second semester in advance math and I was lost and a lot of that was because of my high school math. Again, I'm not saying Lexington is going to fail if this project doesn't happen. But that situation is very similar where a school goes into struggle, then profound struggle, then the situation I experienced. That effects how I look at things. How I make decisions. Our school is functioning.

To reply to specific comments made tonight, the referendum rolls off in two years, TIF rolls off in twelve years. There is a ten year gap. You are right, we the taxpayers have had foot the bill for the school thru the referendum and is set to expire in two years. The TIF is set to expire in 12 years. You might want to consider that.

Alderman Richard stated that purpose of this compromise was not to take a vote but only to show other options at the January 22, 2018 meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Fosen stated that Mayor Johansen was looking for guidance and was there something that they should focus on to take back to him?

Alderman Richard says he is still considering information every day and still does not know how he is going to vote. To say yes or not to any windmill, I think that is unfair to everybody.

Alderwoman Wilson reminded the council that McLean County Zoning Board has not approved the windmill project yet and until they do we really cannot make a decision. Their decision may take several meetings and get really close to the January 22, 2018 date before we know if they are approved by the County Board.

Alderman Colclasure wanted to know if the County assessor assessed a valuation for each turbine?

Mayor Pro Tem Fosen stated that the state formula by law assesses them at \$359,000 for the first year and will go down by 4% per year with an inflation adjustment. That law expires in 2020.

Kevin Parzyck: That law goes back to the state every couple of years and they have year the years continued it. If it does sunset the responsibility goes back to local assessor.

Mayor Pro Tem Fosen asked the question by expressing opinion do the aldermen think it is worthwhile to give the map back to Mayor Johansen and tell him how to run the meeting on January 22, 2018

Alderman Richard agreed that at least it is some other option.

Alderwoman Wilson would like to see other options but would not say if she is for or against.

Alderman Schreiber stated he was with Alderman Colclasure.

Mayor Pro Tem Fosen stated that nothing has been approved tonight nothing has been declined tonight, as of right now we still have the application for 18 windmills within the 1.5 setback.

Alderman Colclasure asked if there was such a thing as “guaranteed property value” for homeowners?

Kevin Parzyck: That has been raised in prior projects across the country. It is not a common practice and not something we are proposing for this project.

Mayor Pro Tem Fosen stated that we also have contract work that we are working on before January 22, 2018. We are doing some research on the Bright Stock project in 2010, the attorney is looking at that, along with some discussion on the current contract. I would like to see some changes to the sunset clause.

Like Mayor Johansen has said, we have been doing our homework, we are watching the County proceedings, and we are learning more as we go. I think something like (the map) shows that we are trying to determine what makes sense and will be fair to ourselves and fair to all our neighbors. Some people who don't like this project are our neighbors and some who would like to benefit from this project are also our neighbors. Probably on January 22, 2018 I will relay some experiences I have had of being from and working in what is currently a windmill project in Livingston County. I've been privy to being a neighbor and farming inside that project for about eight years now so I have some background with that. I'll share my thoughts about that on January 22, 2018.

**New Business:** None

**Committee Reports:**

**Mayor's Report:** None

**Police:** None

**Building/Insurance:** None

**Finance/TIF:** The City will begin accepting TIF application January 15, 2018, although we will not be able to process until after the budget process. There is a positive cash flow in the TIF fund.

**Water/Sewer/Sanitation:** The water treatment plant will have it's final inspection by the EPA on January 24, 2018.

**Street/Alley:** None

There being no further business motion was made by Alderwoman Wilson to adjourn at 7:58 P.M. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Pati Pease

City Clerk

Approved: January 22, 2018

