

Libertyville Wind Turbine Protest Continues

By Mick Zawislak | Daily Herald Staff | July 28, 2009
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Residents living near a recently installed wind turbine in Libertyville will continue to fight what they say is a harmful presence in their neighborhood.

Members of Citizens for the Protection of Libertyville, a grass roots group centered east of where the turbine is located, are scheduled to address the village board today regarding the 120-foot structure at Aldridge Electric Inc., 844 Rockland Road.

"Our goal is to get them to rescind those special ordinances designed for Aldridge and start over again," said Dave Gates, who lives about 600 feet from the turbine.

The turbine, dedicated May 1, shut down in early June after residents secured a temporary restraining order signed by Lake County Judge Mitchell Hoffmann. Residents argued the turbine was noisy and disruptive.

Hoffmann ruled Friday that residents were affected by the turbine and issued a "compromise" order that allows it to operate from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays, Gates said.

Keeping the turbine from operating at all would have required residents to post a bond against potential Aldridge losses, which they could not afford to do, Gates added.

Company spokeswoman Lizzie Aldridge confirmed the hours of operation, but had no further comment.

Aldridge, a leading electrical contractor, described the turbine as an investment in a renewable energy source that would reduce its carbon footprint.

The company said the 50-kilowatt turbine generator would produce enough energy to power the 125 computers and 42 printers at its headquarters for a year.

Before the Aldridge request, Libertyville did not have any regulations regarding wind energy. The ordinance researched by village staff and approved by the village board is insufficient, Gates alleged.

"Our opinion is (the village) did a really bad job writing the ordinances," he said.

At the time, planners said they researched several community, state and county ordinances before making a recommendation.

Gates said the group will pursue legal action to have the turbine removed and plans to hire a sound expert.

"Part of our appearance there (at the village board) is to say, 'Hi, we're not going away,'" he added.