

No place for wind turbines

Pros cite flicker, lost sleep, sliding home value

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BY ED COLLINS Special to the News-Sun

LIBERTYVILLE — A property appraisal expert and an acoustical engineer both agree that industrial wind turbines have no business being located next to urban residential neighborhoods, citing noise, sun shadow flicker, and a negative impact on home values.

They spoke at a two-hour wind turbine seminar at the Libertyville Civic Center. The program was sponsored by Citizens for the Protection of Libertyville, a neighborhood group in the Rockland Road area that opposes operation of an industrial wind turbine on the Aldridge Electric Co. property

The wind turbine located at Aldridge Electric in Libertyville is pictured in this file photo. A tight shot of the top of the turbine can be seen in photo to the right. (News-Sun file)



Both experts agreed that the turbines may be appropriate for rural properties, but are just out of place next to suburban residential neighborhoods.

Michael McCann, a Chicago real estate appraisal consultant, said suburban homes are often difficult to sell with a wind turbine nearby.

McCann said that since a home is usually a person's biggest personal asset, the ability to sell it at a competitive price is very important to the owner.

"My studies show definite declines in home values the closer one lives to a wind turbine," he said.

Acoustical engineer Richard James, of E-Coustic Solutions, Okemos, Mich., agreed with him. James said he was not generally opposed to wind turbines, just to locating them in urban areas.

James said he plans to conduct a sound study of the Libertyville wind turbine later this year. But at Saturday's meeting he also cited his own recent studies that show that low-frequency, fluctuating noise levels generated by rotating turbine blades is particularly objectionable at night and can cause sleep deprivation.

"Zoning boards need rules that prohibit such sounds from exceeding 30 dba," he said. James maintains that anything over 45 decibels draws a 40 percent response of "highly annoying" from neighbors. He said many communities allow as much as 60 dba from various noise pollution sources.

Libertyville has imposed a six-month moratorium while officials study the effects of various wind turbines on their community.

Lake County planners are working with municipalities to develop a model ordinance addressing wind turbines.