Notes on Conversation with Les Blomberg

11/14/18

Les is a sound expert who runs the Noise Pollution Clearinghouse in Montpelier.

Les worked with Frank Seawright on town noise standards; visited Windham at one point; he drafted the language for Policy 4.10, Action Step 2 in the Enhanced Energy Plan (p.22). He explained, using a graph, that this method measures low frequency sound that is most easily conducted through walls and windows and into buildings.

PUC does not use the best methods for measuring sound. Their methods do not do well distinguishing the noise made by wind in foliage from turbine noise. Their data only is reliable at night time or in the winter.

Fast Lmax is a stricter standard than the PUC standard which is an hourly average.

45 fast Lmax is close to the PUC standard of 42 decibels

Measuring sound is complicated and really expensive.

Setbacks are a better way to deal with the issue. He emphasized the importance of keeping setbacks in our plans.

A setback 10X height of the turbine would probably lead to a sound level close to the PUC standard about a mile from a turbine.

He feels the 2500 foot setback from property line would have taken out a lot of the most problematic Iberdrola turbines. 2500 feet probably would be politically prudent and seen as more reasonable that setback of 10X the height.

A 45 dBA fast Lmax standard would be noisy enough to bother people at night and near a property line.

He thinks having a consistent standard in all 3 docs makes sense. He did not seem to feel that the standards below are too strict for individual turbines.

After a long conversation (45 min to an hour) we agreed the following standards makes the best sense and should be in all the zoning regs, town plan and enhanced energy plan.

* Wind turbines will not exceed 41 dBA Fast Lmax daytime at the closest property line and 39 dBA Fast Lmax nighttime.
* Limit source noise dBC Fast Lmax minus dBA Fast Lmax to less than 15 dB beyond the property line and inside homes, schools and town offices and buildings.
* Industrial wind turbines shall be set back 2,500 feet from property lines