

CWW informational meeting presentation by Bonnie Palmiter

As a mother, wife, educator, and Cohocton Taxpayer, I am appalled at the record of conduct of the Town of Cohocton Boards and UPC. The pattern and behavior of secrecy is indefensible and disgraceful. This should not be tolerated by our government officials nor should they go to such lengths to conceal crucial information from the public they are serving.

Cohocton Wind Watch has filed freedom of information forms for the resulting conclusions of the Bagdon Environmental firm on the proposed UPC project. Bagdon is supposed to be working to protect the best interest of Cohocton and was hired by the Town Board. Their fees are being paid by UPC money, so their independence is in question. One has to ask, what is wrong with our society when there is so much dishonesty; why is it that as elected officials it is so easy for you to be dishonest with the people you were elected to represent. The response to our FOIL is that the Bagdon information is “**Confidential.**” Why would there be a need to conceal this public information from Cohocton voters and taxpayers? This is a violation of the Freedom of Information Act, yet what do they care, as usual the law apparently does not apply to them.

Also FOILED were the money payments that SCIDA will pay your Town, School District, and County governments from the PILOT scheme that UPC proposes. The response from the Town Board is that “ the details and dollar amount payment from the PILOT program is **Confidential**”; again voters and taxpayers of Cohocton are on a need to know basis so that we do not question or speak out against our government officials. As residents and property owners don't you think you have the right to know **all** the details of **any** program that allows for reduced taxation? SCIDA is not even an official government agency – there are no elected representatives in the agency – yet they are the ones that are financially setting up the PILOT program, and you as residents of Cohocton are not privy to this information. Don't you believe that as taxpayers of Cohocton you deserve to **know** the exact dollar amount that UPC would derive from a PILOT subsidy vs. the industrial tax assessment they should pay? Don't you agree that James Sherron should have had an open session with the Town Board and the public about this crucial information on the PILOT program and not in a Special Closed Executive session? Doesn't this make you wonder why such crucial information is being restricted from you the public?

I, along with Cohocton Wind Watch, oppose any developer receiving special tax treatment; any industrial wind developer should have to pay full industrial property tax rates on the value of their project. Why is it that the Town Board doesn't seem to be making this happen? Why is it that as taxpayers you aren't demanding this for yourselves? Many of you think that you haven't got a choice. Choice is what you make it; if you choose to sit back and think that you have no say, and that your say isn't important you're in fact mistaken. Our first amendment states that we have certain freedoms – use them; stand up and let the Town Board know; stand up and demand the Town Board and UPC to be open with all the information pertaining to this project. If the Town Board and UPC do not listen, join in a united front and revolt against your government; you can't sit back and think a few can change it all. We are trying, but you as taxpayers also have to help inform yourself. The rights and wrongs of your local government, the morals and ethics of your Boards are questionable; do you want what is best for the **whole** town or just a few. If you think it is fair for just a few to get this information, remember you're the ones that have to wake up and look in the mirror every day; you are the ones that will have to tell your children and grandchildren that you failed them when this UPC wind industry comes in and takes away all the valuable reasons

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why we live here in Cohocton. If you think that by letting UPC in here that your children and grandchildren's lives will be much better for it, don't do anything and wait until Cohocton becomes a ghost town where Wind industry is the only thing your community and children have, not the beautiful place your ancestors left for you.

Do you realize the UPC project keeps growing in size? If you're not aware of it, people, the original lease agreements started off with 1.5 MW, to a DEIS for 2.0 MW, and now it is up to 2.5 MW at a height of 423 feet. Phase II would be increased from 34 MW to 40 MW plus or minus, depending on what UPC comes up with next. It has been told that eight turbines will be eliminated from Phase I. Who are the leaseholders that are losing their "Windfall"? This has already been told before all the challenges to each and every site location, before special use permits can be issued; what's next?

What might have looked to be a "good deal" from UPC is now being exposed to be nothing but Fraud. It sure looks like the UPC land leaseholders are being taken for a ride. Your yearly lease payments are some of the lowest in New York State. Peeling back the layers on this secret onion of collusion will ultimately expose you to the loss of your own land, liability risks, and continuous legal actions. Reread your agreements and examine in detail the clauses that expose your land to eminent domain and condemnation. "Right of First Refusal" means your children will not simply inherit your property; UPC may have other plans; what your grandfathers, and fathers passed down to you could likely be taken from you and you'll have no one to blame but yourselves. As long as you retain title to the land that erects a "Monster Machine" for industrial use, you will be at Risk. Are you really willing to take that risk, for pennies? Those leases are not private, but are subject to New York State Law. It appears that the manner they were negotiated may very well have violated NY State real estate laws. Do you really believe that such leases will not be challenged? You may very well become a party to New York State investigations that focus upon UPC's suspect business practices along with your own Town Board Members' government actions.

While I still vigorously oppose any industrial turbines for our town, I have to say that Empire told this community much more as to what they could do for this whole town not just a handful. They stepped up to the plate and told all that Local Law 2 had too many holes in it to protect the community and taxpayers. Empire Wind Energy is concerned that the Town of Cohocton is in a rush to destroy themselves, and feels we should slow down.

I will listen and keep an open mind, an open mind to how the whole town can benefit; this in no way says that I am for Empire Wind, just that I will listen to what they have to offer the community as a whole. Information is a valuable tool. I am asking that you take this tool and use it; keep an open mind.

Leaseholders, I am asking you to open your minds as well and examine your options. Windmill Local Law 2 will be contested as the law is now written. You should educate yourselves to this Law; Wayne Hunt stated at the Empire public presentation on October 11th, that Wind Mill Law 2 is already decided, even before the public hearing to be held October 24th. This is an ethical violation and a public insult to every citizen of Cohocton.

If the Empire community-based model is adopted, property tax rates can be reduced by more than 50% for **all** property owners. That means everyone in Cohocton could benefit from their

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financial payouts. Why does UPC need a ridiculous PILOT program to build their project and one that is kept confidential from the public?

YES! Wind Advocates, you now have a new option. Floating around is a sound bite, “a bird in the hand...” Check out what is left in your hand when the bird decides to fly away. Bird droppings won't pay your property taxes. But full industrial tax assessments will cut your tax bill in half; doesn't this sound better than what has been proposed from your employer UPC? Are you really for clean alternative energy or are you just married to the UPC project because a family or friend has a UPC lease?

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN COHOCTON DESERVES BETTER; THE UPC DEAL FALLS SHORT. SLOW THE PACE DOWN; GO MORATORIUM; LET'S DO IT RIGHT. THIS IS YOUR TOWN.

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