

Dear Mayor Goldring & Members of Council,

On behalf of BurlingtonGreen, I would like to share input on your recent decision to cancel the installation of the wind turbine on the pier. In doing so I hope you will change your decision.

BurlingtonGreen did not comment on this item at Committee as it was only upon stumbling across the meeting on webcast that we learned of this issue. It appears that it would be voted on tonight with many citizens of Burlington learning about it after the fact. We would suggest that this item should be deferred allowing for a staff report and reasonable opportunity for community awareness and engagement.

That said, I am here now and would like to offer input on this issue along three areas:

- financial paybacks
- missed opportunity
- and go forward solutions

Financial payback: it is disappointing to continue to hear members of Council focus their comments on financial “payback” when it comes to the advancement of renewable energy initiatives, in this case, the pier wind turbine. The science is in. Advancement of renewable energy and recognition of its critical role in tackling the implications of climate change is a given.

Why is there a focus on cost recovery when it comes to advancing renewable energy projects? Why do the discussions not include a comparison of the triple bottom line costs associated with continued dependency on conventional, non renewable dirty energy production? With renewable energy advancements, you are recouping costs AND not negatively impacting the environment. We are grateful paybacks were not the focus of discussion when it came to decisions about saving the Jefferson Salamander or when deciding to add bike lanes to our streets. It is because these are deemed as investments that provide valuable benefits. The same should be true for the advancement of renewable energy initiatives.

A powerful symbol – a missed opportunity: our understanding is that the original intent of the wind turbine previously approved by Council was to power the pier's LED lights and for symbolic or aesthetic benefits. We expect that Council agreed to support the initiative based on rationale supporting both these objectives. However, at the Committee meeting there appeared to be no Council discussion about the implications of cancelling the feature in regards to a loss of image related opportunity costs when changing plans mid-cycle.

Surely when the turbine "beacon" was recommended for the project there was rationale to support the benefits of the turbine in serving as a high profile feature and key marketing tool. The City has identified itself as a progressive, innovative city that prides itself in advancing opportunities to support a more sustainable future. The wind turbine on the pier is the perfect opportunity to showcase this image & vision. Preserving it in the pier project will send a message to citizens, tourists and potential tech savvy industries that Burlington is the place to be, the place that is forward thinking with a vision to serve the environment more responsibly.

Removing it from the project due to a longer payback period and the added costs to include battery packs also sends a message. We believe it is a confusing and inconsistent message. (Our team could not help but recall the irony of former Council's decision to support the added \$2 million cost of burying unsightly hydro poles in front of the Performing Art's centre - The point being, Council has recognized that aesthetics matter and is willing to pay for it).

We absolutely respect that it is the responsibility of this Council to assess initiatives and make decisions that are financially sound and are respectful of the taxpayers of Burlington. We recognize too that the variables for the wind turbine project have changed but again suggest the project was not purely economic or power generating based. What we are suggesting here is that the decision at Committee to scrap the turbine project appears to be based on higher cost without consideration of the bigger picture and cost analysis rationale.

Go Forward Solutions: Without the benefit of a staff report on this issue we would like to offer the following suggestions in an effort to support the wind turbine:

1. The turbine has been ordered. Don't waste it, install it, be transparent about its purpose in both the short and long term to the citizens of Burlington.

2. Take full advantage of what would be the city's most profile and unique landmark to market the city and to serve as a teaching tool promoting awareness of renewable energy to the citizens of Burlington. Include an information sign near the turbine as the focal point highlighting the many commendable advancements Burlington has invested in when it comes not only to renewable energy initiatives but the wide range of environmental initiatives & achievements the city has made that we expect the majority of citizens are currently unaware of. (Solar panels are not as visible as a wind turbine).
3. Install the turbine as an opportunity to help people learn about renewable energy and to reduce misconceptions about wind turbines. Use it to help serve the vision that Burlington must look ahead to how it can advance alternative energy solutions knowing the supply of dirty oil is finite.
4. Install the turbine to serve as a prominent incentive to push forward the demand for transformer upgrades to support clean, green surplus energy sooner than later.
5. Be creative and encourage staff to explore potential partnership "fits" that could support the added costs of the project.

In summary, everyone here knows how a city represents itself and its image is an integral part of its attraction, livability; its economic stability and growth. That is why the city invests in so many services, beautification projects and new initiatives.

On my weekend trip to the City of Kingston, **the impact of image** could not have been more clear. Strolling along their waterfront I could not help notice the similarities and "feel" of walking along Burlington's shoreline. It was upon looking out at the lake's horizon that the image drastically changed. I was not in Burlington looking out at the smoke stacks of the steel industry – very much a symbol of former industrial history. Instead I looked out at the

churning wind turbines with an image of a city that very much celebrates its history but it also embraces the future by acting now respectful of the generations yet to come.

Thank you for your time. BurlingtonGreen hopes you will proceed with the installation of the wind turbine on the pier.

Respectfully,

Amy Schnurr
Executive Director
BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association
info@burlingtongreen.org