

# Council considers wind

---

By CHRISTINE ROBINSON  
Star-Tribune staff writer

Tuesday, January 20, 2009 2:06 AM MST

Tonight is your turn to voice an opinion about wind turbines in the Casper city limits.

Casper city staff members wrote ordinances on wind generation that would allow a homeowner to construct a wind turbine that fits the criteria with a simple building permit. The Casper City Council will discuss the ordinances in a public hearing tonight, welcoming comment from Casperites.

Right now, building a wind turbine in town requires a permit from the Planning and Zoning Commission. In addition to debating the project, the commission also sends notice to neighbors asking for opinions.

This can be a cumbersome process for homeowners, and wind energy continues to increase in popularity. City staff members also worry if each request is discussed individually, without formal guidelines, the city could be vulnerable to law suits on fairness, according to a memo from Community Development Director April Getchius.

As a result, the staff members in the planning office established lists of requirements to allow homeowners to have building-mounted wind systems and also free-standing wind towers.

The restrictions include noise and power limits, color specifications and minimum lot sizes.

The building-mounted turbines, for example, cannot be more than 15 feet above the highest point on a roof. Free-standing turbines can be no taller than the distance from the base of the tower to the nearest property line.

The turbines would also be limited in their power. A building-mounted generator could generate up to 3 kilowatts of energy for a residence, and 10 kilowatts for a commercial business.

Noise is the most common objection to wind turbines, Getchius wrote in the memo, and so the proposed standard is a maximum level of 60 decibels measured from the property line. This is equivalent to an air conditioner from about 20 feet away.

Potential wind turbines would also be limited in colors to white or neutral tones.

The council will need to approve the ordinances three times before they are official.

Contact city reporter Christine Robinson at (307) 266-0639 or [christine.robinson@trib.com](mailto:christine.robinson@trib.com).