

Council passes first approval for wind ordinances

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As Casper's infamous wind blows into town, residents can take comfort they are one step closer to being able to harness the cold gales for energy.

Only, of course, if the homeowner meets the city's guidelines.

The Casper City Council voted recently, on the first of three needed approvals, to pass a set of specific regulations on wind energy within city limits.

Some of the regulations include restrictions on distance from property lines, minimum lot size, color and sound.

Most of the council members supported the ordinances, including council member Guy Padgett, who said any opportunity to become more energy independent is important.

Former mayor Paul Bertoglio, on the other hand, voted against the ordinances, saying, "These have absolutely no business in the city limits."

The wind generators will be an eyesore, he said, and the economics of wind are "very poor."

Deb Theriault, co-owner of SunPower Energy, said the regulations are similar to other communities and seem reasonable.

SunPower Energy works in renewable energy including wind. It recently installed three wind turbines for the Bryan Stock Trail VFW as part of Rocky Mountain Power's Blue Sky program.

The city currently does not have ordinances on wind energy and if someone wants to build a wind turbine the applicant needs to apply for a conditional use permit through the Planning and Zoning Commission. If approved, the new ordinances mean building a wind turbine would only require meeting the regulations and requesting a building permit.

The council will need to vote two more times on the ordinances before they come law.

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