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Ngahere Park votes to oppose wind farm

By Helen Harvey

Residents in the Ngahere Park area will consider legal action if the proposed Turitea wind farm goes ahead, a submissions hearing was told last night.

Paul Stichbury said he was speaking for other residents who were so angry they couldn't attend the meeting.

“If this goes ahead, residents want to take legal action .... if they stumped up $5000 each that would be about $500,000.” He did not know if the action would be successful, but it would be embarrassing for the city council, he said.

Last night was the second of three meetings of the infrastructural well-being committee to hear submissions on the council’s proposal to change the purpose of the Turitea Reserve Management Plan to allow renewable energy on the reserve. The third meeting will be on September 27. The committee meets on October 18 to consider the submissions in conjunction with a report by chief executive Paul Wylie and make its recommendation.

This will be considered by the council on October 30. Tararua District Councillor Warren Davidson said he was satisfied the council wouldn’t jeopardise the water supply and that there would not be any damage to the reserve by building wind turbines. There would also be a financial benefit.

It is strange how quickly feeling changed about wind farms and the ‘nimby” effect came in, he said.

“You have the potential for a wonderful facility there and I would say go for it.” Turitea Valley resident Tom Quelch said he was saying no to the proposal
because there was insufficient information to make an informed decision and because of the lack of independence and conflict of interest in the council.

Jill White said she was not against wind farms, but the Turitea Reserve wasn’t the place for them.

“The water supply for the city is absolutely sacrosanct. This is the real issue.” She found it “absolutely impossible’ to believe that the integrity of the water supply could be retained while there was major construction going on.

“The eco park is a poor lever in this argument it’s the sweetener in the pill.” MidCentral Health senior health protection officer Peter Wood said he was putting in a neutral submission.

The wind farm and the eco park have different implications for the water supply, he said.

“The proposed management plan has a clear focus on protecting the water supply and protects it from humans going into the (Turitea) reserve.” However, the consultation document had him concerned because it allowed for more people into the water catchment area, he said.

Pineland Drive resident Doug Pringle said he was not opposed to the proposal as long as the natural horizon of his property is not compromised, the enjoyment of his property without intrusion is not affected and the health and safety of his family is not affected.

Mr Pringle said there is a low-frequency noise problem with wind turbines that can cause sleep deprivation.

He said negligence under the Health and Safety Act is a criminal act.