

Questions, questions, questions.

By Matt Markey

There are so many unanswered questions, so many queries unaddressed, and so many inquiries yet to be undertaken. As One Energy seeks the authority to place three large wind turbines on the grounds of the Martin Marietta Materials facility located just north of the village of Woodville, questions abound.

These are questions that deserve answers before the first permit is issued, before the first footer is poured, before the first blade turns, and before any electricity is generated. Issues that need a thorough review before the Woodville Township Trustees with all questions acknowledged and satisfactory, straightforward responses delivered in an open forum so that all interested parties have the opportunity to be heard. No accusations or allegations, just a deeper, open air dive into this issue with the curtain pulled back and everything laid out in the light of day for a full evaluation and analysis.

When was this project first proposed or discussed? Has it quietly been in the works for a year or more? Were any of the neighboring property owners made aware when construction of the large towers was first proposed?

Were contracts signed between One Energy and Martin-Marietta before the project had been given the green light from the township trustees? If so, was that legal, or ethical?

Were the people of the surrounding community notified at that point and kept abreast of any developments? Have the people who live in the area been treated with respect and dignity and their input sought as this proposal progressed?

Were all aspects involved with erecting three wind turbines that will stretch 405 feet to the tip of the highest blade considered? Was there a thorough environmental impact study done?

Since there is an active bald eagle nest within a mile of the plant and five nests within five miles, was the potential impact on these once-endangered birds discussed and reviewed? With the preeminent expert on Ohio bald eagles — avian biologist Mark Shieldcastle — based nearby, was he brought in to lend his

expertise to any wildlife impact study? Is One Energy aware that a wind turbine in Bowling Green knocked a bald eagle out of the sky to its death?

Since the region sits in a major flyway for migrating birds, the same question arises. With one of the world's leading experts on birds and their migration patterns — conservationist, naturalist, author and lecturer Kenn Kaufman — living close by in Oak Harbor, was his input sought to determine how these three towers could harm migrating flocks.

With several species of bats confirmed in the area of the plant, and another endangered bat species likely present, was any study undertaken to determine how many might be killed by the whirling blades?

Has any kind of environmental impact study been undertaken by a neutral third party? If so, has the information in this study been shared with the public?

Was a solar array capable of generating a comparable amount of electricity given a fair review? Was accurate data from a local solar study used in order to make a determination on the feasibility of such an array?

Why is One Energy seeking a variance for considerably more power generating capacity than the three wind turbines in its request will produce? Are there plans for an expansion of the wind turbine array, once the initial phase is in place? Should those plans be shared at this time, in the interests of transparency?

Have the 1.5-megawatt machines been proposed in order to keep the issue below the threshold that would put the project under the purview of the Ohio Power Siting Board? Do any of the individuals involved in the decision-making process have a potential conflict of interest due to property sales or leases with Martin Marietta involving them or family members or relatives?

Does the fact that the One Energy staff counsel has previously served as an Ohio assistant attorney general representing the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and the Ohio Power Siting Board, the entity that has jurisdiction over the placement of large turbines, raise an eyebrow?

Were the reported assertions by One Energy's CEO at a recent trustees meeting that he would do "whatever it takes" to get the project done a thinly-veiled threat to litigate into submission a township with shallow pockets?

Have the families and relatives of those interred in Woodville Cemetery been made aware of the project, since at least one of the proposed wind turbine towers would be located very near the grave sites?

Is this proposed wind turbine project at Martin Marietta the proverbial camel's nose under the tent, as some area conservationists fear? Is this the beginning of the end as far as protecting the critical marsh regions close to Lake Erie from the risks presented by wind turbine arrays?

Are small governmental entities such as township trustee boards, which are used to dealing with ditch cleanings and right-of-way mowing issues, being bullied by the manner in which these wind projects are presented?

Will the Woodville Township Fire Station be packed for the 7 p.m. trustees meeting on Wednesday? Will the residents of the area have a chance to air their concerns? Is the will of the people going to be respected?

There are so many questions. The answers are due on Wednesday evening.

Matt Markey