

REPORT OF THE OBSERVER CORPS, JULY - AUGUST 2024

HIGHLIGHTS

- Opposition to US Wind Substation
- Northstar Development on Rte. 9 in Lewes
- Buffers

US Wind Substation.

US Wind is the developer of up to 121 wind turbines 10 to 12 miles off the Maryland coast. A critical part of the project is the connection to a land-based substation. The proposed substation would be located near the existing Indian River power plant on property owned by the Renewable Redevelopment LLC, a subsidiary of US Wind. The property is zoned HI-1 (Heavy Industrial District). The Substation connects four cables from the offshore turbines. The cables will be laid 60 feet under the Atlantic Ocean and then come ashore nine feet deep at 3R's Beach at Route 1 and be buried six feet deep under the Indian River Bay to the substation.

The Planning & Zoning Commission approved the project on July 10th. At the County Council hearing on July 30th, objections were raised by the Center for Energy & Environmental Policy at the Caesar Rodney Institute based on the turbines' impact on Delaware. Fenwick Island's Mayor also objected and is seeking changes to the overall project.

The County Council deferred a vote to a future meeting.

On a related note, the General Assembly passed the offshore wind procurement act (SB 265), which controls the number of bidders and benchmark prices for the generated energy.

Northstar Zoning Consideration Continues.

The Northstar development is located on Route 9 outside of Lewes across from the Vineyards. The development is made up of four parcels currently zoned A-1 (residential) and C-1 (commercial). The proposed development would include 852 residential units for 2,130 residents and 96,000 square feet of commercial space. The Sussex Preservation Coalition (of which LWVSCDE is a member) is the main citizen group presenting recommendations for changes in the Project. One of the main SPC requests is that any decision be delayed until the completion of the Coastal Corridors Study. SPC is also seeking to have the developer resubmit its application by changing the zoning from C-3 (heavy commercial) to RPC (residential planned community).

Northstar is one of two major developments proposed for the Route 9 corridor. The other is Cool Springs with over 1620 units (Alternative 1) or 1922 units (Alternative 2).

Buffers.

On August 27th, The Council adopted the Buffer ordinance, which provides a woodland buffer of 30 feet plus a 20-foot preservation for a 50 foot-buffer, and a 30-foot buffer for non-woodland.