



Falmouth officials woo Cape Wind and potential jobs

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FALMOUTH — Selectmen voted this week to encourage the developer of the proposed Nantucket Sound wind farm to set up shop in town.

"It was not about should there or shouldn't there be a wind farm," said the chairwoman of the board, Mary Pat Flynn.

If Cape Wind Associates LLC is able to secure the necessary permits to move forward with the project, having the company's operations and maintenance facility and associated jobs in Falmouth would be good for the town, Flynn said.

The vote — four in favor of asking the company to locate in town and one abstention — came on the heels of a presentation by Cape Wind spokesman Mark Rodgers.

"We feel at this point that Falmouth looks like it's going to make sense for these operations," Rodgers said yesterday, adding that the company has looked at other harbor options but found the Upper Cape marine science hub to have the best attributes.

The company expects the facility to employ 30 to 35 full-time people during the wind farm's operation, Rodgers said. More jobs could be available during construction, he said.

Rodgers specified the former Lighthouse Ford property on Dillingham Avenue near Falmouth Harbor as a potential location for the facility if it is still available when the company officially enters the real estate market. "We wouldn't be able to move on a building until after project finance sometime next year," he said.

Cape Wind is waiting on final federal approval from the U.S. Minerals Management Service, the lead agency to review the wind farm. Final approval is currently stalled as federal officials consider the potential impact of the project on historic and tribal sites.

Carey Murphy, the lone selectman to abstain from Monday's vote, said yesterday that he did not want to turn down the potential jobs but felt Nantucket Sound was not the appropriate location for the wind farm. The selectmen's move was unexpected, he said, adding that he had been told before the meeting that there was no vote scheduled on the issue.