



An artist's rendition of the Forbes Lofts, an "eco-friendly" development.

WINDMILL ON THE CREEK?

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Developers get green light for wind turbine that would provide power to Forbes Lofts

Opponents of the peak power facility have blasted Jim Gordon, whose company is proposing the power plant, for wanting to install a diesel-powered facility in Chelsea while Gordon has proposed a cleaner wind farm on Cape Cod.

"The millionaires of Cape Cod get a wind farm while Chelsea gets a diesel facility," is how City Council President Roseann Bongiovanni once described the proposals.

Energy Management Inc. has maintained that a wind farm in Chelsea just simply wouldn't make sense. However, one local developer recently received permission to construct a windmill that will generate enough power for more than 300 residential units and its abutting commercial enterprises.

The Conservation Commission recently gave Urban Design/Development, the company that is transforming the former Forbes Lithographics Manufacturing Company site into a mixed-use residential/commercial development, to construct a 250-foot windmill that will provide energy for the development. The windmill will stand where Mill Creek meets the Chelsea River.

"It's simply not true that we need new energy resources," said Blair Galinsky of Urban Design/

Development. "By simply utilizing alternative energy resources and some conservation measures, we can provide enough power for this entire site."

The Forbes Park Development is a massive undertaking that looks to revitalize an area that has been left abandoned for virtually a generation. Forbes Lithographic had 18 buildings on the site and was an industry leader in commercial printing for over 100 years. Nine of those 18 buildings will be torn down and turned into maybe as many as 350 residential units and about 20,000 square feet of commercial space. Urban Design/Development officials are now in the process of applying for \$500,000 grant from the Massachusetts Technological Collaborative, a state agency that administers grants to "green" programs across the state. That would foot about half of the projected cost of the windmill, which would be but one part of an environmentally friendly eco-community.

James Bill of Urban Design/Development said the project "will restore the area to the natural wetlands habitat it was 150 years ago." The wind turbine will provide power for the residential and commercial units. Excess power would be then be used (for among other things) to power a fleet of shared electrical vehicles. The residential units will have floor-to-ceiling windows and no air-conditioning.

Unique design elements will allow for the rooms to cool themselves in the hot summer months, a move that will not only save energy but one that also flies in the face of Energy Management's assertion that the peak power facility is needed at such times.

City Manager Jay Ash said he was impressed with the company's resourcefulness. "I'm happy to see renewable energy utilized in this project," Ash said. "It's an important aspect for this project and it's an important aspect of meeting our future energy needs."

The complex has a fascinating history. In World War I, Forbes Lithographics produced maps for US troops. It produced invasion money - or fake European currency - for GIs in World War II. The area is also the site of the first naval battle - the Battle of Chelsea Creek - of the Revolutionary War.

If all goes according to plan, Galinsky said, the area could be the site of one of the most complex and visually appealing eco-communities in the country. "We think this can be the poster child project for smart growth initiatives everywhere," Galinsky said. "This can be an example of cleaner, greener living."