

More extensive use of wind power seen

Proposal would allow turbines on half-acre residential lots for the generation of electricity

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OGDEN - Homeowners in Weber County could soon get permission to place small wind turbines on their homes to generate electricity.

Planning commissioners are considering amending zoning rules to allow the practice. The county has two planning commissions - Ogden Valley and Western Weber. The county commission makes the final decision on an ordinance.

"We're trying to be as friendly as we can for people who want to generate power that way," Western Weber Commissioner Wayne Andreotti said. "I think it's a good idea because we're all trying to get green."

Current zoning allows for 40-foot tall windmills only in agricultural areas. The proposal could clear the way for them on half-acre residential lots.

Under new rules personal windmills would be allowed under a conditional-use permit. Planning commissions would review each application to make sure the plans are appropriate for the landscape.

Small turbines can cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000 to install, but come with state and federal tax breaks. Rocky Mountain Power lets residents deduct private energy production from electric bills.

Also required: A steady wind and the ability to plug the turbine into the municipal power grid.

Some residents object to the idea on aesthetic grounds.

"I just think with private homes, it doesn't work," said Marsha Rasmussen, an Eden resident and organic farmer. "I think it will detract from the landscape up here."

Julie Martin, who lives near Ogden Canyon, said wind power makes sense. Martin said she has to anchor her cast iron lawn furniture with bungee cords to keep the heavy winds from blowing it across her yard.

"It's something I've talked about with my neighbors . . . Why aren't we harnessing these amazing canyon winds?" she said.