

FEATURE

Ontario couple loses wind turbine case

The Ontario couple who launched a case arguing that nearby wind turbines devalued their waterfront home and should be a factor in property assessments lost their potentially precedent-setting court challenge. A two-person panel from the province's Assessment Review Board ruled that proximity to wind turbines would not be a factor in deciding how much property tax Edward and Gail Kenney should pay. The couple has lived on Wolfe Island for 48 years and appealed their assessments on the grounds that the 86 wind turbines erected around their home brought unwanted noise and posed a health concern, estimating a 40% to 50% loss in the value of their property. The board ruled there was no evidence that turbines negatively affected property values. The Kenneys' assessment was set at \$357,000 in 2010. Organizations concerned about potential adverse health effects linked to wind turbines say that the constant, low-frequency noise emitted can disturb sleep or cause headaches and nosebleeds.

FEATURE

A site and buildings perfect for... condos? daycare? prison tourism?

With Ontario's Kingston Penitentiary set to close, whoever buys the prime waterfront property site will have some challenges. According to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, this year's assessment for the eight-building, 8.4-hectare [21-acre] property is \$20.76 million. "In terms of market value ... it's probably worth more in the \$5 [million] to \$7 million range," said Martin Skolnick, a vice-president at DTZ Barnicke Eastern Ontario Ltd. because of the cost of renovation and rebuilds. "The problem with these old historic institutional properties is they're ... single-purpose built, so there are all of these little cell rooms that are built of heavy stone walls and small windows," he said. With its limestone buildings being almost 177 years old, the prison has been designated a National Historic Site, preventing their demolition. The last time the land sold was in 1873 for \$4,000. In 1836, it was sold for \$55. The 3.24-hectare [8.1-acre] Prison for Women site, which consists of a single building, sold for just under \$2.9 million in January 2008 when Queen's University took ownership for its archives.

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