

Editor, The El Dorado Times  
Dear Sir:

August 16, 2004

The possibility of wind turbines in the Flint Hills has raised the issue the issue of property rights- the right of landowners to do with their land as they wish.

In Butler County concern over this issue began in the early 1960's when state agencies were urging regional land use planning with some areas as large as 18 counties. At the same time national voices were urging the government to purchase large areas of the Flint Hills for a tall grass prairie park. Both of these developments were seen as threats to property rights and the County Commission, with broad popular support, named ten outstanding individuals to develop the first ever land use planning in Butler County.

They were: Les Arvin, Rose hill; W. W. McMullen and Paul Mann, Augusta; The County Engineer; Wesley Baker and Maurice Carter, El Dorado; Herb Claassen, Potwin; Jack Ferrell, Beaumont; James Knowles, Douglass; and Chad Patten, Cassoday.

Early on this board recommended that planning in Butler County be solely its function but with close communication and cooperation when possible with our neighboring counties. It was obvious even then that population growth would be precipitated by an expanding Wichita and by growth out from our own cities and towns. There was nothing on the horizon that suggested an industrial assault or population movement into the Flint Hills. Consequently both have proceeded without comprehensive land use planning in eastern Butler County.

Because planning guides zoning and subdivision of land , property rights became a critical issue. Ultimately, however this Board unanimously agreed that as growth occurs regulation of land use must happen if Butler County was to retain its character as a good place to live near a growing metropolitan area. Les Arvin ,a staunch conservative said, "Yes, land rights are to be respected but remember that your rights stop the instant your fist hits my nose." The Board members agreed and authorized the land use map which would later guide regulation in the county.

To put that statement in perspective, it seems to me that the multi-national corporations have squarely hit the nose of Kansas by replacing the unmatched beauty of the Flint Hills with 45 story structural steel and concrete towers; have hit the nose of neighbor citizens adjoining the tower line; and have hit the nose of every taxpayer who is forced to guarantee those same corporations a profit.

I hope your readers know the unmatched beauty of the Flint Hills and value them as the last of the once great sea of tall grass that is now entrusted to Kansas and to Kansan's.

Sincerely,  
Ted Farmer  
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