

High-profile campaign for planting turbines off Jones Beach wasn't just ... Blowing in the wind

BY MARK HARRINGTON
Newsday Staff Writer

The high-profile campaign for a 40-turbine wind farm off Jones Beach may appear at times to be a spontaneous groundswell, but documents released to Newsday show a well-organized playbook behind the scenes.

In a section of contractor FPL Energy's proposal for the project titled "community relations," the division of Florida Power & Light describes a well-orchestrated plan to build awareness and support for the project.

The documents, which Newsday obtained through Freedom of Information Law filings, discuss ways project proponents can achieve goals by going beyond the conventional means.

"In addition to standard outreach," the proposal states, "we will incorporate subliminal marketing to make this project part of the Long Island identity and jargon. This tactic could include the use of local faces/celebrities in support of the project," among other things.

Last year, actor Alec Baldwin performed radio commercials in support of the wind farm. "As a native Long Islander, I am thrilled to see us leading the nation in the development of offshore

wind energy and a more rational energy policy," Baldwin, a Massapequa native, said Sept. 1, 2005, in a joint release from the Long Island Power Authority and Renewable Energy Long Island, an environmental group.

As part of its media relations strategy, FPL proposed hiring Manhattan-based Rubenstein Associates and, specifically, Gary Lewi, Rubenstein's executive vice president. Lewi was once press secretary for former U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, who is a consultant to FPL.

Lewi said last night, "We have been in an advisory role" on the project for at least the past few months. "It's a complex [media] environment and we offer whatever insight we can."

LIPA and FPL haven't yet finalized their contract, so much of the public outreach on the project thus far has been led by LIPA. FPL, whose contract is valued in excess of \$356 million, for now is doing any work on the project on a "risk" basis, LIPA said.

A spokeswoman for FPL could not be reached for comment.

The proposal also lays out FPL's

strategy for corralling environmentalists, trade unions, breast-cancer activists and others to the wind-farm cause. "We will strive to utilize experts in the region that have been addressing the concerns on Long Island for many years," the proposal states.

The Long Island Association, a business organization specifically identified in the proposal, and an official for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union are among the groups that have voiced support for the project at federal and local hearings.

The plan also suggests soliciting third-party endorsements. These are "extremely valuable to convey messages, information and data in a neutral context," the document states. "Third-party endorsements may be integrated into technical document references, expressed in independent white papers or op-ed viewpoints for the print media."

Among educational programs, the proposal says FPL may sponsor an "advanced student research project, provide mentors, materials or data" locally for the Intel science competition. The plan also envisions developing training or soliciting local participants to volunteer in the local Audubon Bird

Survey, while separately providing technical teams for science fairs or sponsoring wind events. "Wind, water and waves are fun for students, involving motion and energy," according to the plan.

Among "potential" events aimed at increasing awareness of FPL as an "environmental entity": creation of "The Windmill Trail," an initiative that would connect FPL and the wind farm "with a variety of museum facilities and resources on Long Island to vistas of the future off-shore wind farm." FPL also envisioned beach cleanup efforts and even "row-for-a-cure" events in the fight against breast cancer - one that would include a "floating billboard."

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