



# County of Ottawa

*Administrator's Office*

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## County Administrator's Weekly Digest March 19, 2010

### **US 231 LETTER/RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT** (Mark Knudsen)

In the true spirit of hurry up and wait, we have been asked to provide a resolution of support for the US 231 Bypass Project by Monday. We asked Dennis Kent, MDOT transportation planning supervisor to send us a draft of the resolution of support that they wanted for the US 231 Bypass Project a couple of months ago and just heard back a couple of days ago. MDOT now needs the resolution by Monday. I am going to send a letter with a draft resolution on Monday and then request that the Board allow us to walk the resolution onto the Board agenda for Tuesday's meeting. We will then send the signed resolution to MDOT Tuesday afternoon. The letter and resolution are attached to the Digest email message.

Recently, the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) approved the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the M-231 Bypass Project. The EIS was posted at various locations including Ottawa County for a public review and comment period.

Additionally, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has requested that the County provide a resolution of support for the project. The resolution will be used to validate the County's support for the M-231 Bypass to the FHA. The County Road Commission, the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC) and the City of Grand Haven have also expressed support for this project.

Recently, the County was informed by MDOT that all comments must be submitted by Monday, March 22, 2010. Ottawa County was not informed of this deadline until Thursday, March 18, 2010. The plan was to take the resolution to the Planning and Policy Committee at their next meeting. However, since MDOT would like a resolution of support as soon as possible. I will place this item on the agenda for the next meeting of the County Board of Commissioners. In the meantime, I will be submitting a letter of support and a draft of the resolution per MDOT's request. We have been informed that the resolution will still be accepted as long as a draft is submitted before the deadline.

### **OUT AND ABOUT**

I spoke at the Coopersville Rotary Club meeting earlier this week. The group was highly appreciative of the Board decision to award the RZFB bond capacity for the Continental Dairy project. Last Thursday, June Hagan, Keith Van Beek, Connie Vander Scaaf and I presented the budget to an audience of 27 at Sunset Manor. We had a number of good questions and Commissioner Holtvluwer also attended the meeting. June Hagan and Marie Waalkes also attended a brown bag lunch in Hudsonville last week.

## **LOCAL UNIT QUADRANT MEETINGS**

The spring local unit quadrant meetings have been scheduled as follows:

**Southeast** Local Quadrant Meeting - Georgetown Charter Township Hall March 25, 2010 from 2-4 p.m.

**Northwest** Local Quadrant Meeting - Grand Haven Charter Township Hall April 1, 2010 from 2-4 p.m.

**Southwest** Local Quadrant Meeting - Holland Charter Township Hall April 20, 2010 from 2-4 p.m.

**Northeast** Local Quadrant Meeting - Coopersville City Hall April 21, 2010 from 9-11 a.m.

## **SCANDIA WIND FARM PROPOSAL** (Keith Van Beek)

I asked Keith to put some notes together regarding the Scandia proposal that hit the media a couple of days ago. We were surprised to learn of this proposal. Muskegon County Commissioner(s) and Administrative officials were invited to a "private" meeting with Scandia officials. When they arrived, television cameras were set up. Ottawa County was not invited to the meeting, at least none of the Commissioners or staff that I have been in contact with this week were invited. As we understand it, county governments do not have authority to lease Lake Michigan bottomlands and the developers are attempting to get buy-in to their proposal in order to gain State approval.

I attended the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Regional Issues Committee meeting yesterday and heard a presentation on wind energy by John Sarver, who is chair of the Michigan Wind Working Group. Mr. Sarver stated that there are no off-shore wind energy farms in North America at this time and that the technology is still being developed. There are a number of off-shore wind energy farms in Europe. He also stated that current Michigan law does not allow the development of off-shore wind farms.

Some people are excited about the possibilities and others, including the Grand Haven, Holland and Muskegon Chamber Directors are quite concerned about possible negative impacts on tourism.

I heard that Scandia might approach the County to make a presentation to the Board and if so we should certainly learn all we can. At this point though, if I am asked for comment by the media I am going to say "no comment" because at this point anything else would be premature. I've attached information that Grand Haven Chamber Director, Joy Gaasch, provided on the Scandia proposal.

Some basic points as I understand them relating to the Scandia wind energy proposal for Muskegon and Ottawa County:

#1 - This is related to the same project proposed up north near Pentwater, straddling Oceana and Mason counties. That project met resistance and they are possibly looking to scale down that project and move portions of the project to Muskegon/Ottawa. In this latest proposal, they are looking to locate wind turbines in the following locations;

- One 500-megawatt wind farm 4 miles off shore between Pentwater and Ludington.
- One 500-megawatt wind farm 6 miles off shore just north of Grand Haven.
- One 125-megawatt wind farm at the Muskegon County Wastewater Facility.

#2 - The original Pentwater proposal involved one wind farm of 100 square miles. This latest proposal involves the two wind farms or 50 square miles each. Each area would have 50-100 wind turbines that would be 300-450 feet high.

#3 - The development of the wind farms is "needed" in order to attract the first offshore wind turbine manufacturing plant in the US. The amount of megawatt production needed is said to be 1,000 megawatts, which would supply approximately one year's worth of work for the proposed

manufacturing plant. It is said that 3,000 permanent jobs would be created by landing this manufacturing plant, including the suppliers that would be needed to support the parts necessary.

#4 - The initial construction and ongoing maintenance of the wind farms would require the use of several ports in the area.

#5 - The counties are supposedly being asked to consider the proposal in the coming months and provide, by September 1, a statement of whether or not the proposal meets the approval of the community. It appears that formal county action is not required, but the company is requesting this step before completing more involved and costly economic and environmental studies prior to submitting application for needed state and federal permits.

#6 - The details of the "compensation" for counties is a bit less detailed. The news report indicates the company would provide "a \$1 million annual payment to the counties where each of the 500-megawatt wind farms are located". Unclear to me if this would be \$1 million split among the counties, or just to Ottawa as a large portion of one farm touches Ottawa. Additionally, "the company wants to explore providing the counties a 5 or 10 percent ownership stake in the offshore wind development as compensation for their support, Scandia CEO Steve Warner said. The counties would not have to pay upfront for its portion of the development costs but would recoup its portion of ownership when Scandia sells the project to investors at the time that all permits are in place and construction would begin."

There is more detail relating to why they are investigating this area, which I can provide if you want more detail.

**FEBRUARY DISPATCH STATS** (Tim Smith)

**Total Incidents** – 7,581 down 3.4% over February 2009 and down 9.8% YTD over 2009

**Fire Incidents** – 924 up 1.6% over February 2009 and down 7.7% YTD over 2009

**Law Incidents** – 6,657 down 4.1% over February 2009 and down 10.2% YTD over 2009

**911 Calls** – 6,012 down 15.1% over February 2009 and down 15.4% YTD over 2009

**911 Hang Up calls** - 965 up 33.9% over February 2009 and up 27.5% YTD over 2009

**Wireless 911 calls** – 74.9% of 911 calls for February 74.5% of 911 calls YTD  
(Before long the only landlines may be in the Smithsonian, and at my house)