

OTTAWA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: September 29, 2008

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, Main Conference Room

PRESENT: Matt Hehl, Jim Holtvluwer, Bill Miller, Roman Wilson, Jeff Wincel

ABSENT: Jim Miedema

STAFF: Mark Knudsen, Nate Lisenbee, Meghann Rauscher, Tabitha Rowley

GUESTS: Adam Kantrovich, MSU Extension; Jeff Costello, Audio Technician

Call to Order:

Vice-Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present to do business. Invocation was given by Jeff Wincel.

Approval of the Agenda:

08-52 Motion: To approve the September 29, 2008 Agenda, with the following amendments:

- Reverse Items 8(A) and 8(B)
- Postpone Item 13 until the next meeting

Moved by: Holtvluwer

Supported by: Hehl

UNANIMOUS

Approval of the Minutes:

08-53 Motion: To approve the minutes of the August 25, 2008 meeting

Moved by: Wincel

Supported by: Holtvluwer

The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Hehl, Holtvluwer, Miller, Wilson (4)
Abstentions: Wincel (1)

Introductions:

All of the guests present introduced themselves.

Presentations:

A. Audio Demonstration – Jeff Costello, Audio Technician

Mark Knudsen stated that the most common complaint regarding wind turbines was noise. He had asked Jeff to come to the meeting and play recordings of the sounds that large, medium, and small wind turbines produce at various decibel levels.

Jeff discussed decibel meter scales, ambient room noise, and the characteristics of high and low frequencies. He also distributed a chart comparing the decibel levels of different noises, such as a

quiet room, a lawnmower, a jet engine, etc. Jeff then played recordings of different sized wind turbines at varying decibel levels.

Matt Hehl asked if a buffer of trees would work to decrease the noise level of wind turbines, as measured at a property line. Jeff stated that a tree buffer would provide a sound buffer and would also increase the ambient noise level, making the noise of the wind turbine less noticeable.

Action Items:

A. Wind Energy Model Ordinance

Mark thanked his staff and Dr. Adam Kantrovich, Director of the Ottawa County MSU Extension Office, for their assistance in developing the model ordinance. He then provided a brief Power Point presentation regarding wind and wind turbines. Included in the presentation were photos of various-sized turbines, and information regarding wind speed, wind quantity and quality, and turbulence.

Mark reviewed each section of the model ordinance. The types of turbines regulated in the model ordinance are small turbines that are mounted to structures, small turbines that are mounted to towers, medium-sized turbines, and large-sized turbines. The size of turbine (e.g. small, medium, and large) is determined by its height and the amount of power it is capable of producing.

In the model ordinance, both small structure-mounted turbines and small tower-mounted turbines would be permitted in any zoning district. Medium turbines would be a special use in agricultural, commercial, industrial and public use districts, as well as in Condominium Developments that are approved after the effective date of the Ordinance. Large turbines would be a special use in designated Wind Energy Overlay Districts.

The model ordinance also regulates siting and design requirements, which include, but are not limited to noise levels and vibration; setbacks; signal interference; decommissioning regulations; and a process for public inquiries and complaints.

After the review of the model ordinance, the Planning Commission discussed the following as potential changes to consider in the document:

- Specify using 'A' scale for decibel meter readings
- Increase height permitted for small tower-mounted turbines, to be based on lot size
- Require that small turbines be rated by the manufacturer to be at or below a specific decibel level
- Require turbine owner to carry liability insurance
- Define front/side/back yards
- Require turbine owner to comply with all applicable environmental regulations
- Remove requirement of a fence around small tower-mounted turbines
- If property ownership changes of either medium or large wind turbines, require both property owner and turbine owner (if not the same) to meet with municipality board/council to review conditions of special use permits
- Under definitions, require that a structure be a minimum of 12' in height
- Require large wind turbines to have a setback of ½ mile from any occupied dwelling
- Remove language stating that special use permit could be revoked if a lapse in bonding occurs

Mark stated that the Planning Department would make additional revisions to the model ordinance, after which a legal review would take place. The revised model ordinance will be presented at the next Planning Commission meeting.

B. PA 116 Application for Termination of Farmland Development Rights Agreement for Parcel #70-18-34-200-006 (Cheryl Wolf) in Jamestown Township

Nate Lisenbee stated that a request had been received to terminate two (2) acres from a farmland development rights agreement by Cheryl Wolf of Jamestown Township. Under PA 116, a request for release of part of the land held in an agreement must meet certain requirements. Since this request met the requirements, Nate recommended that the Planning Commission support the request.

Jeff Wincel asked why the landowner was not present at the meeting. Bill Miller stated that the Planning Commission has not required the landowner to be present for PA 116 reviews in the past. Jeff questioned that decision and made a motion to table the request.

08-54 Motion: To table the PA 116 Application for Termination of Farmland Development Rights Agreement for Parcel #70-18-34-200-006 (Cheryl Wolf) in Jamestown Township, pending the ability of the applicant to be present to explain their request

Moved by: Wincel

Supported by: Hehl

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C. West Michigan Transit Linkages Study Recommendation

In July, a Request for Proposals (RFP) had been issued for the West Michigan Transit Linkages Study. Meghann Rauscher stated that two proposals were received in response to the RFP. She stated that the Transit Study Technical Committee had interviewed both consultants, contacted their references, and performed a ranking of each of the consultants. Based on their rankings, the Technical Committee recommended that Nelson/Nygaard be hired to perform the Study.

08-55 Motion: To support the West Michigan Transit Linkages Study Technical Committee recommendation to hire Nelson/Nygaard Associates, Inc. to conduct the West Michigan Transit Linkages Study

Moved by: Wincel

Supported by: Holtvluwer

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Announcements:

A. Reports of Meetings Attended

None

Petitions and Communications:

A. FYI Folder

B. Resolution of Support for the West Michigan Transit Linkages Study, dated 8/18/2008, from Spring Lake Village Council

- C. Letter of correspondence, dated 8/26/2008, from Macatawa Area Express Transportation Authority regarding a Resolution of Support for the West Michigan Transit Linkages Study**
- D. Memorandum of correspondence, dated 8/19/2008, from Ken Rizzio regarding the Ottawa County Economic Development Office Activity/Performance Report for the first half of 2008**
- E. Letter of correspondence, dated 9/5/2008, from Michigan Department of Agriculture regarding Farmland and Open Space Preservation Contracts**

08-56 Motion: To receive for information Items A-E

Moved by: Hehl

Supported by: Wilson

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Public Comments:

None

Discussion Items

A. Comprehensive Water Resource Assessment

Mark stated that he had received a draft of a new Scope of Work from one of the environmental consultants; however, the project was being put on hold until a new Environmental Planner is hired.

B. Planning Commission Educational Representative Opening

Mark reported that the Planning Enabling Act has taken effect, replacing the County Planning Act. Language in the new Act has changed. In the previous County Planning Act, the County was required to have an educational representative from a school board or school administration. The new Planning Enabling Act does not require the County to have an educational representative, but states that the County must make “every reasonable effort” to include one. To that point, Mark stated that the position was already posted, and there were no applicants with an educational background. The position has been posted a second time. If no educational representatives apply to the second posting, then the position will be filled by one of the other applicants.

C. Urban Smart Growth Award

Mark reported that the Planning Department had received an “Honorable Mention” award from the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) for the Urban Smart Growth Demonstration Project. Paul Sachs will attend the MAP Awards Ceremony to receive the award.

Input and Strategy Session

A. Performance-Based Budgeting

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.