

Chair
Stephen Gobbo
Vice-Chair
Bruce Keilen
Secretary
Dale Dailey
Commissioners
Max Calder, Trustee
Kimberly Smelker
Marsha Zimmerman
Jason Flower
Theresa Shively
Tim Fair



Community Development Director
Richard M. Trent
Township Planner
Jim N. Foulds
Recording Secretary
Linda K. Parkinson

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**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MAY 3, 2010
7:00 p.m.**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the DeWitt Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Gobbo.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was said by those present.

ROLL CALL by Secretary Dailey.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Gobbo, Bruce Keilen, Terri Shively, Kim Smelker, Marsha Zimmerman, Jason Flower, Dale Dailey, Tim Fair, Trustee Max Calder.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Flower moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Supported. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Keilen moved to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2010 Regular Meeting as printed. Supported. MOTION CARRIED.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Due to no public being present, there were no public comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

I. Wind Energy Conversion Systems Discussion and Draft Ordinance.

Township Planner Jim Foulds briefly reviewed staff's memorandum dated April 27, 2010. He went on to review the April 28, 2010 draft ordinance which incorporated comments and suggestions from the Planning Commission and others in the community. The objective for this evening's discussion is to get the draft copy to a point where the Township Attorney can review the document and the Planning Commission can move forward with the Public Hearing process.

Lengthy discussion followed regarding wind energy systems being used for a source of energy on light poles; maximum allowed height of the Small Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS); the required setback distance for the WECS (equal to one or one and one-half times the height of the tower); the definition of

“certified professional” as referenced in Section 6.6.2(O)5); and the manner in which the Township would regulate and enforce the number of decibels a WECS unit would generate.

During lengthy discussion regarding maximum height allowed for a WECS unit, it was determined that the Commission would like additional information to demonstrate how high 45 feet would appear. Fair asked staff to provide a graphic that would clearly depict a 45 ft. high structure so that the Commission can have a reference point of the height.

Keilen questioned if the State of Michigan has any regulations for the WECS.

Foulds advised that the State has decided to allow the local communities to address issues regarding setback and noise regulations for the systems.

Gobbo suggested that numbers 5) and 6) under Section 6.6.1 (O) to help with clarification of “certified professional”.

Further discussion followed regarding the implementation of a standard review process prior to a WECS unit being constructed, as well as a notification process for surrounding property owners. Staff will consult with the Township Attorney regarding these issues.

After lengthy discussion regarding setback requirements it was the consensus of the Commission to hold off on making a decision regarding the setback distance requirement at this time. The possibilities are anywhere from one to one (1) and one-half (1 ½) times the height of the tower, as measured from the top of its place in the vertical position from all adjoining property lines.

Gobbo asked staff to discuss with reviewing agencies (specifically the Fire Department) how they would respond to an emergency issue if a WECS unit was allowed to be 45 feet in height as opposed to 35 feet in height.

Further discussion followed regarding implementing safety regulations related to the WECS having steps for access to maintain the structure. Staff will ensure that language is inserted to safeguard against non authorized people gaining access to the steps.

With respect to regulations related to the larger WECS (over 45 feet) Foulds pointed out that they are only allowed in the A (Agricultural) zoning district and only by Special Use Permit. This would require a Public Hearing and notification of property owners within 300 feet of the subject site. Staff asked for direction as to whether the Commission feels larger WECS should be allowed in Commercial and/or Industrial zoning districts.

It was the consensus of the Commission to allow larger WECS in the Commercial and Industrial zoning districts.

Foulds reviewed the newly inserted Section 6.6.4 related to Accessory Tower/Structure Mounted WECS.

In closing, Foulds advised that he would make the changes discussed at this meeting and move toward setting the Public Hearing in the near future.

II. Comprehensive Development Plan Update – Discussion and Outline Approval.

Foulds briefly reviewed his memorandum dated April 27, 2010.

Shively questioned if DeWitt Township had representation at meetings held by the Capital City International Airport.

Gobbo stated Trustee Musselman has served as the liaison to the airport in the past.

Dailey presented his ideas on proposed senior citizen initiatives (see attached).

NEW BUSINESS: None.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None.

REPORTS:

I. Trustee:

Trustee Calder briefly reported on business conducted and action taken at the regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meetings held on April 12, 2010 and April 26, 2010.

II. Zoning Board of Appeals:

Chairman Gobbo briefly reported on business conducted and action taken at the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting held on April 21, 2010.

III. Committees: None.

IV. Staff:

Foulds distributed the document related to the impact of setback requirements and noise limitations in wind zones in Michigan.

DISCUSSION : None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Keilen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Supported. MOTION CARRIED.

Linda K. Parkinson, Recording Secretary

Dale Dailey, Secretary