

LAKE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Unapproved Minutes September 23, 2009

The meeting of the Lake Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM by Secretary Dale Hartsell. Members Gerry Geppert, Lisa Konke, and Rich Ehrlich were present along with 20 guests. Mary Johnson was present as recording secretary, absent was Dave Szumlinski.

Motion by Hartsell to allow Rich Ehrlich to fill in as Chairman for the meeting, seconded by Geppert, all ayes, motion carried.

Minutes of the August 26, 2009 meeting were approved upon motion by Ehrlich, seconded by Hartsell, all ayes, motion carried.

Motion by Hartsell to approve agenda, seconded by Geppert, all ayes, motion carried.

Correspondence: None

Ehrlich opened the meeting for public comments:

It was mentioned if Hartsell was going to pass on to the township board the planning commission's disappointment in DTE for not attending the previous planning commission meeting.

Jeanne Henry asked that the next agenda for the planning commission include the introduction of the two new members to explain their backgrounds and qualifications.

McCallum suggested that the Planning Commission adopt its own by-laws as it states in the Michigan Planning and Enabling Act of 2008 and this should be included on the next agenda.

McCallum asked Hartsell if he received a letter back from Grady Nance in response to the letter sent following the August 26th planning commission meeting. Hartsell replied no.

Lalley asked when the next scheduled meeting with DTE would be held. Harsell replied that DTE would not schedule a meeting until the board has made selections for the Chairman and Secretary positions.

Colletta asked Konke what her interest is in getting on the Planning Board. Konke replied that she has been interested for a few months as the board has been discussing adding two additional members. When the two openings came up she accepted.

McCallum asked Konke what educational material she was provided with in preparing for the position on the board. Konke replied that she received the Michigan Planning Guide Book for Citizens and Local Officials and The Michigan Zoning and Guide Book for Citizens and Local Officials.

New Business:

Motion by Hartsell to elect Dave Szumlinski as Planning Commission Chairman, seconded by Konke, Geppert-nay, Konke-aye, Hartsell-aye, Ehrlich-nay. Motion failed.

Motion by Hartsell to elect Rich Ehrlich as Vice Chairman, seconded by Geppert, all ayes, motion carried.

Motion by Geppert to elect Mary Johnson as recording secretary, seconded by Hartsell, all ayes, motion carried.

Motion by Hartsell to elect Lisa Konke as Secretary, seconded by Geppert, all ayes, motion carried.

Old Business: None

Public Comments:

Jeanne Williams mentioned that Hartsell isn't the only person disappointed in DTE and asked if there was any way to request new people to attend meetings to represent DTE. Williams also asked if DTE has been advised of the changes of the status of the board. Hartsell replied that DTE has been advised of the changes and knew of no way to request new DTE representatives to attend the Planning commission meetings.

Neil Rohner expressed that anyone in business would have a hard time knowing if they were making any headway with the board or not. It was made impossible by the board to come to any agreement with the ordinances presented. He stated he could not blame DTE for not attending the meetings.

Geppert disagreed with Rohner stating that there was a meeting planned and DTE did not even bother to show up.

Henry stated that back when the Zoning Board of Appeals had a hearing for the MET tower, DTE said that if they met with any resistance they would just go away and perhaps that is what they are doing now, going away.

McCallum stated that the word 'negotiate' with DTE and the planning commission is off base. The planning commission's job is to plan with the community not DTE.

Gerry Simmons asked if there is a charge to put a turbine on your property in Lake Township. She stated she had heard that but had not read the ordinance. Ehrlich responded that no there is no charge to put a turbine on a landowner's property.

Lalley stated he feels that a lot of times the ordinance falls on deaf ears or they just have their minds made up against it but the ordinance allows people to have turbines closer than a mile if they want but protects people who don't want them that close.

Lou Bushey commented that the wind ordinance stated that the turbines must be ½ (one-half) mile from any road, making it impossible to have a turbine in Lake Township. Lalley stated that maybe that portion of the ordinance needs further review and discussion but stated that the ordinance also allows homeowners to agree to have a turbine as close as 1000' to their home if they want and does not prohibit turbines in Lake Township.

Colletta stated that people who seem to think it is impossible according to the ordinance for DTE to put in wind turbines should read the ordinance. The ordinance allows for closer setbacks for participants.

Jeanne Williams asked whether she is right in that the planning commission is supposed to be protecting the people of Lake Township. Ehrlich agreed. Williams commented that she hoped they would keep that in mind when working with DTE.

Jeanne Henry stated the setback from the road was something that supervisor Smith discussed at another meeting and should be discussed and could be adjusted.

Simmons said she noticed a lot of signs that state "Say No To Wind.com" and wanted to know who was putting them up. Colletta and Lalley replied that they were responsible for the signs and Lalley

said they do not say “n-o to wind” but k-n-o-w wind and people should visit www.knowwind.org and educate themselves.

McCallum gave the board recent reports from the Acoustics Ecology Institute on noise and a Citizens Committee report from the Town of Orleans relating to wind turbines.

Simmons stated that she knows someone in Elkton that would let anyone drive right up to the turbine on her property and you can not hear them. McCallum asked Simmons if she has read their contract. It states that the turbine owner cannot say anything negative about the turbines.

Charlie Henry asked how the board members plan to bring the new members up to speed on this issue. Hartsell replied that they have been to meetings and have documentation. Konke added that she has a lot of information, and stated that her mind is not made up one way or the other. She has also been living here for 32 years and knows the issues at hand.

Charlie Henry stated that two members of the board had no hesitation to nominate a new member for chairman. It is an awesome responsibility, and it struck him as odd that the least seasoned person would be elected as chairman.

Next regular meeting scheduled for October 28, 2009.

Motion by Hartsell to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Konke, all ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by:
Mary Johnson
Recording Secretary