

Calhoun County Metropolitan Planning Commission
Minutes
July 30, 2012

Present: Comrs. Daniel Kesselring, Larry Rizor, Blaine VanSickle and Kelli Scott. Staff: Planning Consultant Jennifer Bomba and Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk Chris McComb.

Excused: Terence Lunger, Rebecca Rocho, Robert Bolton

1. The July 30, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. Roll was called by the Deputy Clerk.
3. Approval of Agenda

“Moved Member VanSickle, supported by Member Rizor to approve the July 30, 2012 Planning Commission agenda with the addition Agenda Item 7d. Discussion on wind farms and wind turbines.”

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

4. Public Comment

There was none.

5. Approval of June 25, 2012 Meeting Minutes

“Moved Member VanSickle, supported by Member Rizor to approve the June 25, 2012 Metropolitan Planning Commission minutes as presented.”

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

6. Communication

- A. City of Battle Creek Planning Commission canceled their meeting scheduled for July 25, 2012.

7. Township Planning & Zoning

- a. 7-12-01, Convis Township: Zoning Text Amendment re: Wind Energy Conversion Systems, Maximum Height.

Planning Consultant Bomba explained the request was to change the maximum height for a large turbine or utility grid system from 300 feet to 500 feet. There is a possibility of a wind farm within the three townships. All three townships have approved the change within their planning commissions. .

Staff recommended for approval.

“Moved Scott, supported by VanSickle to support the Convis Township Zoning Text Amendment re: Wind Energy Conversion Systems, Maximum Height.”

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

- b. 7-12-02, Pennfield Township: Zoning Text Amendment re: Wind Energy Conversion Systems, Maximum Height

Staff recommended for approval.

“Moved Scott, supported by Rizor to support the Pennfield Township Zoning Text Amendment re: Wind Energy Conversion Systems, Maximum Height.”

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED

- c. 7-12-03, Marshall Township: Zoning Text Amendment re: Wind Energy Conversion Systems, Maximum Height

Staff recommended for approval.

“Moved VanSickle, supported by Scott to support the Marshall Township Zoning Text Amendment re: Wind Energy Conversion Systems, Maximum Height.”

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED

- d. Discussion on Wind Farms and Wind Turbines

Resident Lynn Smith stated he met with the company who installs the wind farms and offered them 1000 acres for a wind farm but they require at least 3000 acres. He stated he got with his neighbors and came up with 7000 agreeable acres. The turbines would be set in fence rows or in non-producing farm land. The new wind turbine technology requires 500 feet of height clearance. The company, Arion, has spent \$80,000 studying the sustainability of wind turbines in the area and they believe the wind is good enough. A lot of footwork needs to be done before they move on. There will be a minimum of 50 turbines, probably more like 80-100. Arion is committed to using all labor and parts from Michigan.

8. Department Report

A. Calhoun County Master Plan

Planning Consultant Bomba presented additional amendments to the Master Plan and discussed changes proposed by Member Rocho regarding the transferability of food science/safety professionals to other industries, reference of the 2004 focus meetings, school performance link to mixed housing, and a final paragraph recap of what to do with the plan. No additional changes were agreed upon.

9. Member Comments

Member Rizor stated he would like to see preservation of farmland in conjunction with the windmill proposals. His position is that individual ownership is a right that will be transferred and you are a temporary caretaker of your land. People say that farmland is only in the interest of the farmers but it goes beyond the current owner. He is in favor of windmills and pleased that there is only a small amount of land being used to construct them.

10. Public comments

There were none.

11. Announcements

The next Calhoun County Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for August 27, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.

12. Adjournment

The Calhoun County Planning Commission meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris McComb
Deputy Clerk