

DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP
January 6th, 2021
Board Meeting Minutes

Present: Terry Anderson, Ronda L Snyder, Amy Laper, Tom Jeppesen, & Doug Poulsen

Guests: Dave Kelsey, Mark Nettleton, Shelia Crooks, Ken Weller, Gin Doty, Andrew & Evi Petersen, Mary Bogue, Julie Weippert, Jack Jeppesen, Albert Jongewaard (Apex Clean Energy), Linda Reynolds, Ben Reynolds, Laura Dargitz, Cindy Shick, Rick Baldwin, Mark & Linda Swan, Keith Millieur, Ron Finegood, Erik Benko, Dan Paris, Jeremy & Christy Williams, Dan Welkie, Dave Duffy, Krista Baldwin, Harvey Shick, Kelli Richards, Norm Stephens, Ken Bunting, Brandy Bunting, Steven Crooks, Sue Sumerix, Holli Almas, Melissa MacLaren, Nancy Spanski, Elizabeth Waldon, Beth Visser, Pam Wetherington, Melissa Bannen, Kellie Jeppesen, Janet Cross, Matt Moorman, A Lavery, Mike Doty, and more.

Due to issues getting started with Zoom we opened the meeting late.

7:08 p.m. Terry opened the meeting and we recited the Pledge of Allegiance

1. Ronda asked to amend the Agenda to add a line item #5 Report from the Clerk on Canvas of Petitions for Referendum on Amendment to Ordinance #150
Amy made a motion to accept the Agenda with the amendment. Tom seconded the motion. Motion Passed
 - A. Mark Nettleton who was moderating the meeting let everyone know that we will need to do a resolution for board approval. Mark will have ready the resolution wording for the ballot at the Feb 3rd, 2021 board meeting. We need to pass the resolution so that it can be placed on the election ballot for the May 4th, 2021 election. The Resolution wording has to be sent to the county by Feb 24th, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.
2. Tom made a motion to approve the Nov 4th, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Doug seconded the motion. Motion passed
3. Tom made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Doug seconded the motion. Motion passed
4. Amy made a motion to approve Paying the Bills. Tom seconded the motion. Motion passed

5. Report from Clerk on Canvas of Petitions for Referendum on Amendment to Ordinance #150

“With respect to the petitions filed with respect to Ordinance No. 150, an Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance of Douglass Township, adopted by the Township Board on November 4, 2020, I received 35 pages of petitions containing 260 signatures. Of the 260 signatures submitted on the petition, 231 were determined to be valid signatures of registered electors of the Township of Douglass. The total number of votes cast in the Township for all candidates for governor at the 2018 General Election was 955 total votes. Per MCL 125.3402, 15% of the total number of votes cast in the Township for all candidates for governor at the 2018 General Election equals 144. Based on the foregoing, the petitions filed with respect to Ordinance No. 150 are (X) sufficient / () insufficient.”

Public Comments:

1. **Dave Kelsey:** 1 permit was granted through a Variance Hearing. That permit is for a garage to be built at 5729 Ellsworth. Dave also had 1 complaint violation but he checked it out and found it to be invalid.
2. **Doug:** made a motion to move the next Planning Commission meeting to January 20th instead of the 27th as there was a scheduling conflict. Tom supported the motion. Motion Passed. The Jan 20th, 2021 meeting will be about Camper & RV Storage and Boat Storage.

Doug said he attended a meeting via Zoom on Dec 7th, 2020 and the Montcalm Conservation District and because the Flat River is part of it, they asked him about our Natural Rivers Act. Doug let them know that we had already worked on that some time back.

Terry: We are going to open up the meeting to public comments; however Doug and he would like to make comments first.

- A. Doug stated as far as windmills go at the public hearing, the participation was dismal at best. The people on the board are experienced and did nothing illegal, they worked hard and did their jobs. Also, as for the packets we received, most of it was well received and appreciated, and some of it we didn't appreciate. We don't need anyone telling us how to do our jobs or conduct meetings.
- B. Terry: We've been working on this Wind Ordinance since 2016 and we didn't even know Apex at the time. Nobody shows up to our public hearings, we think we did our jobs and then nobody likes it. The board thinks it's a good

ordinance. We don't necessarily like or dislike wind turbines. We just try to do the best we can do.

The Public Comments will be moderated by Mark Nettleton, he is our Township Attorney and everyone will get 3 minutes.

Mark: We will be doing this in the order that people raised their hands.

3. **Sheila Crooks**: 3948 N Holland Rd. – She stated that she was told by Albert (Apex Clean Energy) that if someone is considering allowing a tower on their property that Apex would come and talk to their neighbors beforehand, however her neighbors have signed a contract and no one came to talk to them. Sheila spoke against the windmills.
4. **Ken Weller**: 4273 W Stanton Rd. He wanted to thank the Planning Commission members and the Township Board Members for the job we do and how hard we work. He has questions for Apex about the height of the towers with the blades? He also wanted to us to know that he is also against the turbines coming in to Douglass Township.
5. **Gin Doty**: 4571 Hunters Trail. Wanted to let the board know that she received another violation for her camper. (Ronda did send her a statement on our Facebook page and told her not to worry about it until after the Planning Commission meeting. per a conversation with Doug).
6. **Andrew & Evi**: Petersen: in the township on McBride. They would like to see us spend more time researching the topic.
7. **Mary Bogue**: Thanked the board. She wants us to rescind the Ordinance & have everyone to work together to redo it and send it back to the Planning Commission.
8. **Julie Weippert**: 2302 N Musson. Thanked the Township board and the Planning Commission members. She is against the WEO. Would like us to rescind the Ordinance and take another look at it.
9. **Jack Jeppesen**: 5648 N Derby. He is the Chairman of the Planning Commission. They started working on a Wind Ordinance in Oct 2019. One of the Planning Commission members 2nd the motion to adopt the Ordinance and the same member in Oct of 2020 2nd the motion to send the Ordinance to the Township board. This member's wife is now part of the spearheading to rescind this Ordinance.

At this point Tom would like to hear from Apex.

10. **Albert (Apex)**: In answering the earlier question about the wind turbines. The ones in Isabella are 600' to the tip of the tallest blade. We don't know where the

windmills will be in the county or the type they will be yet but they will be designed with the community in mind. He will put his email address in the comments so he can answer people's questions. albert.jongewaard@apexcleanenergy.com

11. **Linda Reynolds**: 5729 Ellsworth. She is against the turbines. She worries that 911 calls won't get through and how that would open us up to liability.
12. **Ben Reynolds**: (taking the rest of his wife's time) He thanks us. He is also against the turbines.
13. **dargll- Laura Dargitz**: 325 Woodlawn. She wanted to know if we were going to read the letters sent in. Ronda told her all board members have copies and that they have read them and there wouldn't be time tonight so No. She will send her letter to Apex then.
14. **Cindy Schick**: 1351 W Briggs. Member of the Planning Commission and was originally for the windmills however since doing more research she has changed her mind. She worries about infrasound (soundwaves with frequencies below the lower limit of human audibility). Would like us to rescind the Ordinance and place a 12 month moratorium so that we can do more research.
15. **Rick Baldwin**: 2215 N Sheridan. Sits on the Zoning Board and he admits to not doing his homework. He worries about the 55 decibels. He also addressed Jack Jeppesen and stated he would like it if township residents wanted to bring him information and said his wife is not spearheading this. He is against the Ordinance.
16. **Mark Swan**: 4452 Fritz. He was raised on his farm and it has been in his family over 100 years. He is against wind turbines. His neighbor was also at his house and spoke next.
17. **Keith Milliur**: Against wind turbines and wants a moratorium.
18. **Ron Finegood**: 540 Clifford Lake. Question for Mark. Do we have the legal right to keep the wind turbines out of the township? And to Albert, do you work for Apex or are you an independent contractor?
19. **Erik Benko**: 4487 N Osage. Last year they bought their dream home on Indianhead Lake. He is against the wind turbines and would like a 1 year moratorium.
20. **Ben Reynolds**: 5729 Ellsworth. Thank you. He thinks the Township boards should take empty meetings as a compliment. He is also against the wind turbines.
21. **Dan Paris**: He is a lifelong resident of Montcalm County and a wind energy developer for 15 years. **Lost Internet connection so I had to refer to the video for the rest of Dan's comments.**

I've spent the last 10 years working in Gratiot County. If you know me and know my family know that I would never be a part of bringing something bad or harmful to my community. I wouldn't participate in this if I believed any of these anti wind narratives that you folks are seeing on the Interstate Informed Citizen's Coalition

where a lot of you are doing your research. I've heard these anti talking points over and over again over the last 10 years. I know them to be false. I know where they are coming from. I know who created the messaging. I know who finances it nationally. I know who spreads it on social media. It is the ageing industries lobbyists, namely the nuclear & coal industry that are perpetuating this. What is true about wind energy & I've witnessed it next door here in Michigan is the enormous economic benefits that they bring to communities willing to host them. Gratiot County was struggling after losing their petroleum & auto industries back in the 80s. Many of you who grew up here remember when it happened in the appliance industry. It was hard to raise a family and make a living. In Gratiot County those economic struggles are gone. 3 minutes over.

22. **Christy Williams:** 1990 W Klees. Shares that she works in Gratiot County. Husband has lived on property for over 20 years. According to map there is one zoning planned right behind her house. She has an inner ear issue and she has Vertigo, the windmills and the 55 decibels affects them so she is unable to have this in her back yard. She doesn't feel they should have to move just so her neighbor can have a windmill built on their property. This will lower property values, who will buy house?
23. **Dan Welke:** Lives in Gratiot County. He states he has 2 windmills by his house and they are horrible. The shadow flicker is bad and when they get a SW wind it sounds like 2 747s over their house. He states his wife's ability to sleep is bad and she has to sleep in the closet. His letter is included for more information.
24. **Dave Duffy:** 1183 Enness. Not against wind energy but doesn't want to see them and doesn't want it to decrease property value.
25. **Christa Baldwin:** 2215 N Sheridan. Property has been in family for many years. She was at a couple of meetings & at first was for the wind turbines but after doing more research has decided she doesn't want them here.
26. **Harvey Shick:** 1351 W Briggs. Wants a moratorium. Is against the wind turbines.

At this point Terry asked Mark to go to people who haven't spoken yet and then the rest can come back on with 1 minute.

27. **Kelli Richards:** 1197 N Nevins. Against windmills. She has an eye issue and the windmills make it worse.
28. **Norm Stephens:** Not a resident of Douglass Township. Lives in Elmer Township which is east of Saginaw about 25 miles. Against the Ordinance. He says the 55 decibels is just an average and it could be a lot higher. He would like to see L Max in the Ordinance.
29. **Ken Bunting:** 2038 N Musson. Read the Townships Ordinance,

SECTION 5.01 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This district is primarily intended for large tracts used for farming or which are idle. It is not intended for any use except agriculture, low-density single family residential use, other rural uses requiring large tracts of land and various related uses. One of the purposes is to preserve the rural character of the area. These areas are not served with public utilities and are likely to remain without such services for an extended period of time into the future. If more intense development and subdividing are to occur it should be preceded by sound planning and rezoning.

Property within the AG/RE District may be located in the vicinity of a farm or farm operation. Generally accepted agricultural and management practices may be utilized by the farm or farm operation and may generate usual and ordinary noise, dust, odors, and other associated conditions, and these practices are protected by the Michigan Right to Farm Act. Sellers are not required to disclose whether a farm or farm operation is actually located in the vicinity of the property or whether generally accepted agricultural and management practices are being utilized and therefore potential purchasers of property may wish to undertake their own investigations prior to the purchase of property.

Ken then went in to things we can and can't do in the township. Wants to know how we can enforce the first ordinances if we bring in Windmills?

30. **Brandy Bunting:** 2038 N Musson. Against the Ordinance and wants a moratorium.
31. **Mary Bogue:** wants to know if the letters will be read. No, this question was answered already.
32. **Sheila Crooks:** "There is no Big Money here, just citizens who want more restrictions". She feels Apex is lying and she is against the ordinance.
33. **Ron Finegood:** To Mark again, wants to know if he has a conflict of interest.
Mark: No! Ron in response to "Can the Township keep them out?" per Apex's Website, No, local townships have the authority to approve or deny permits for a wind project in this area. Wind farms do not have eminent domain and cannot touch private property without an agreement with the property owner.
34. **Ken Bunting:** Just wants to ask, have you ever gone and sat under a wind turbine? If not, he encourages us to do so.
35. **Cindy Shick:** "You can see a 325' tower from 7 miles away". Cindy expressed remorse for her role in approving the wind ordinance. "Since then I have researched and realized the ordinance I was a party to does not protect the residents of Douglass Township". "Infrasound is more dangerous than anything you can hear," she declared. She is now against the ordinance.

Terry to Mark: "I have 5 minutes to 9:00 p.m. How about at 9:00 p.m. we stop the comments and move on"? Ronda stated that "If the only ones in line waiting to talk have already done so and they have nothing new to say then we need to move on". Terry: "We do have other business so let them go until 9:00 p.m. and then we need to move on".

36. **Steven Crooks:** 3948 N Holland. He is going to email us a list of 60 windmills that are being challenged by DTE the owners of the windmills. Wheeler Township is the defendant. If DTE wins it will result in a significant loss of revenue. This is DTEs standard operating procedure and the windmill companies are not being truthful.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

1. IM SAFE Kids asking for a donation. Mark broke in and told us we shouldn't decide tonight. Amy made a motion to table this until next month. Tom supported the motion. Motion to table for a month passed.
2. Lakeview Community Schools Agreement for Collection of Summer School Property Taxes. Amy made a motion to accept the contract. Tom supported the motion. Motion Passed.

Terry: Do we have anything else? Everyone said no. Terry said if we have nothing else can I get a motion to adjourn?

9:08 p.m. Tom made a motion to adjourn. Amy supported the motion. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.