

Douglass Township
Planning Commission
Minutes
April 28, 2021

1. Call to order (Regular Meeting – Wind Turbine Meeting)
2. Roll call
 - a. Jack Jeppesen - Present
 - b. Rick Baldwin - Present
 - c. Cindy Shick - Present
 - d. Patrick Althoff - Present
 - e. Todd Wells - Present
 - f. Kevin Rush - Present
 - g. Tim Snyder - Present
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Agenda
 - a. Motion to approve - Pat Althoff
 - b. Second - Rick Baldwin
 - c. Voice Vote - unanimous yes
 - d. Motion carried
5. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Motion to approve with correction - Pat Althoff
 - b. Second - Rick Baldwin
 - c. Voice Vote - unanimous yes
 - d. Motion carried
6. Tim Johnson, PCP - Information on process for ordinance approval
 - a. Write ordinance, not prohibit, but balance property interest, legal land use, and lawsuit. Ordinance is not to be so restrictive to zone out as a business. The ordinance must also protect the health, safety, welfare of residents by limiting noise to 45 dBa, with height, setback, noise, and materials to apply for a special use permit.
 - b. PC will continue to work on the draft, then public meeting for public comment. Then PC may act on the ordinance or make changes. The best-case scenario is ordinance supported by residents, board, and wind energy systems.
 - c. The ordinance will require special use applications submitted to the PC. PC will hire someone to evaluate. The process takes time. Then public hearing for special use and public may speak and ask questions. The PC makes a decision
 - d. See special land use standards already in our ordinance.
 - e. PC is decision is final; not the township board. The PC can approve or deny.
 - f. Tonight the PC is putting the rules and regulations in place for applications.
7. Public Comment (3-minute limit, one time each)
 - a. Sheila Crooks (Douglass Township) – The 45dBa isn't close to the citizen request of max at the property line. Vacant property needs to be usable. At the special use public hearing, if ordinance requirements are met the PC cannot turn down. The ordinance has to be ironclad. Keep in mind that a 3-5 dBa increase results in a doubling of sound, If people say 45dBa is silent, then it is no big deal to have 45 dBa max at the property line and 30 dBa max at night. Tim (Johnson) mentioned WES approval. She does not care if Apex approves or not. 600-foot tall turbines will not move over once in place.

- b. Kelley Jeppsen (Douglass Township) – Comments at prior meeting concerning their retirement, she meant farmers’ retirements. Anyone selling wants best money to survive at a decent profit. Willing to have one by her. The PC is on both sides and need to work, last week PC accomplished a lot without interruptions; need quiet while PC works. It’s not Apex against the world.
- c. Albert J (Apex Sales) – Referenced packet given to the board (3 maps and 3 letters) and mentioned a document in township office. Stated the Vestas discussed out of context from safety manuals. Maps show footprints on property in Douglass Township eligible to sign with the proposed setbacks based on option three and the assumption that every 20+ acre parcel signed. The document in the TB office is a safe operation and installation manual from Isabella County for public record.
- d. Ben Reynolds (_____) WES effect on groundwater/aquifer not discussed. For example, flooding rainbow lake, fixing it, risks different flooding. Montcalm County is different from Gratiot County with water. “Good fences make good neighbors.” Keep your business on your side. Keep setbacks and noise infiltration in mind. Look out for neighbors.
- e. Harvey Shick (Douglass Township)– House-based setbacks are trespass zoning. This vendor is meeting with individual PC members. Is PC writing ordinance for people or vendor?
- f. Eric Tester (Douglass Township)– Where is the two-year environmental impact study? How do we get a copy? Is it done? What does it say about this community compared to others?
- g. Sarah Kelley (Douglass Township) – Albert’s job is to sell WES for cost-effectiveness for Apex, PC’s job is a safe ordinance with zoning to property lines, not housing. Need a Q&A session for PC to answer our questions. Many promises made to township, does DTE honor promises like tax tribunals, decommissioning funds,...later? PC’s job is health, safety, and welfare; not to fund own retirement.
- h. Scott Carr (Douglass Township) Offered 10x the \$5000 for legal fees to make it fair and safe, This comes up in August to vote it and others out.
- i. Pamela Hemmis (Montcalm Township) Displayed posters (trespass zoning and turbine size comparisons). Homes within tech safety zone cannot leave that zone or shadow flicker, infrasound, and sleep disturbance. If WES comes, make it is safe. PC and TB take care of us; do the right thing. Do not need to meet a wind company’s business plan, Other township residents here are concerned for everyone.
- j. Linda Reynolds (Douglass Township) – referenced Ben – Delicate water table, 120+ county lakes. Will decommissioning plans return everything to its original state including concrete, rebar, and inground electrical wiring? Concern about water, if only 4 ft down removed. Gratiot started with 175; now over 400+, need to limit what size and how many.
- k. Joe Hansen (Sidney Township) Referenced video he sent to Jack and Kevin. Asked if they had watched it. Farm owners don’t want them, neighbors don’t want to look at them, Don’t tear up community friendliness for profit. If no retirement, sell some property. WES is a government boondoggle, Warren Buffet pursues turbines for wealth, while turbines are rotting. Don’t put in community when not wanted. PC is not for self-service.
- l. Evi Petersen (Douglass Township) If the moratorium is over in August, and <Tim Johnson> stated that this will take a long time, will we extend the moratorium or fall back on the 2017 ordinance?
- m. Wendy Winters (Sidney Township) – 40 years here, 20 years plan for retirement. Not counting on wind turbines. I will put neighbors before myself.
- n. Marcia Crocetta (Douglass Township) Zoom missed ordinance process, request condensed process posted, Asked PC and TB to watch Kevon Martis presentation, Zoning administrator and ordinance need to be strong to protect from long term issues. Is Albert’s binder in office available for viewing?

- o. Renee Smith – (Evergreen Township) Lives right next door. Albert and Apex do not live here and will be gone when turbines are up. PC works for residents, not Apex. If want meetings quiet then show listening to residents and state that what matters is what the majority of residents want. Why is PC against property-line setback, shadow flicker? Why these are not negotiable? Not saying no turbines, but residents first for a safe ordinance in township and county. Conflict of interest if already signed or planning to sign and not for a safe ordinance, then going against your oath and should step down not negotiable.
- p. Sherril Houser (Maple Valley Township) experience too detrimental to the environment and safety of the community. Boards work for people, not Apex or other companies. They are also sickening to look at.
- q. Norm Stevens (Almer Township) Referenced the planner's comments. Ordinance in place with 500-ft limit, no shadow flicker on, 4x setback from and 45db lmax at any nonparticipating property line, \$800,000+ for decommissioning, and waivers for setbacks/limits to minimize lawsuit. NextEra claimed exclusionary, sued in federal court, and lost. Federal court judge upheld that they could install fewer and shorter, so not exclusionary.
- r. Richelle Lentz (Montcalm Township) Raised in Douglass Township; family still here. Documentation shows can be some turbines, residents have already spoken with the referendum, why not listen to residents and pass an ordinance that is more restrictive, safe setbacks. If others don't like they have the same rights/ability to retain attorney, petition? Pass restrictions already stated based on referendum and let those who want less go through the same process.
- s. Kay Scott (Douglass Township) Setback distances important. Live on Nevins, ½ mile from where Douglass land is leased. Flashing lights at night will affect greatly. Albert said limit not eliminate. Shadow flicker steps all over like kids flipping light switches, how long allow? Or strobe light outside windows before call police for harassment. Should residents have to plan around shadow flicker? Add flashing lights in evenings, any amount is intrusive. Need no shadow flicker like Sidney Township.
- t. Jennifer Ehle (Douglass Township) entire life within ½ mile radius; for many of board, the same. The residents' frustration levels indicate passion level. Lucky to have passionate people in our township, passion for being neighborly, PC/TB see attenders' frustration as not knowing if being heard so need Q&A for public.
- u. Ron Finegood (Douglass Township) Put initiative on ballot: assess to fund litigation with refund if not used. Put advisory question on ballot for wind/restrict wind/no wind. All townships should be working together to come up with a strict ordinance. There is no harm to one single citizen with a strict ordinance.
- v. Robert Scott (Sidney Township) – No one in Douglass has shadow flicker now, so if no flicker easy to prove a violation. If any permitted, difficult to enforce complaint process with quick response. Shadow flicker should never cross a property line,
- w. Janet Cross (Douglass Township) Okay to want to make money on land, but it should not infringe on others, Don't want flicker, noise. Do not want lives disrupted. Live in the country for a reason. Should not disrupt a nonparticipating resident.
- x. Terry Andersen (Douglass Township) supervisor – Jack will end at 9:00. Heard this over and over for the last five months, with Rick and Cindy can come to a good ordinance. If recall threat, more power to you. We cannot ordinance away to get rid of them, Has to be doable, can regulate them, but can't vote them out. Until we have an ordinance we can't have Q&A. Look at integrity up there, not going to shove anything down anybody's throat, give them a break.
- y. Jamie Snyder (Cato township) Casnovia township kept them out, if we don't want them here, can chose not to have them, There are ordinances that keep them out.

- z. Vicki (Douglass Township) Ditto all but one person, All for a safe ordinance for the residents. No one comes out to say they want less restrictive. Hoping this board is listening; not using emotions.
- aa. Public comment closed
- 8. Old Business
 - a. Consideration of Wind Energy System Amendment
 - i. Motion made to recommend the extension of the current moratorium by an additional year changing the end date to August 2022 or until an acceptable ordinance is in place.
 - 1. Motion by Cindy
 - 2. Second by Rick
 - 3. Roll Call Vote
 - a. Jack Jeppesen - Yes
 - b. Rick Baldwin - Yes
 - c. Cindy Shick - Yes
 - d. Patrick Althoff - Yes
 - e. Todd Wells - Yes
 - f. Tim Snyder - Yes
 - g. Kevin Rush - Yes
 - 4. Motion Carried
 - ii. Changes from prior meeting given to Tim Johnson to update the working ordinance.
- 9. New Business
 - a. Jack asked Tim Johnson for a hard copy of the ordinance process for Ronda to post.
- 10. Next meeting
 - a. Special planning commission workshop, 7:00 p.m., Monday, May 17th, at the township hall.
- 11. Adjourn
 - a. Motion to adjourn
 - i. By Cindy
 - ii. Second by Tim
 - iii. Voice Vote - Unanimous
 - iv. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Shick