

MINUTES
MONTCALM TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
October 12, 2021, 7:00pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- Chairman Richard Karnatz led the Pledge of Allegiance

CALL TO ORDER

- Chairman Richard Karnatz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

- Members present: Richard Karnatz (Chair), Erin Nerychel (Secretary), Jessica Shearer (Board Liaison), Robert Hemmes (Commission Member), Jeff Dolphin (Vice Chair, Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison)
- Members absent: none

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Jeff Dolphin motioned to approve the agenda. Robert Hemmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Robert Hemmes made a motion to approve the minutes from August 4, 2021 meeting. Jessica Shear seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

- None

COMMENTS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS

- Robert Hemmes recommended a joint meeting with the Montcalm Township Board in regards with commercial wind energy conversion systems zoning.
- Richard Karnatz commented on planning commission member's performance and contributions.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Sec. 2.10 – Violations, Penalties and Fines of Montcalm Township Zoning Ordinance. Possible change from misdemeanor to Civil Infraction for Violations.

- Mike Nelson commented that is difficult to enforce the ordinance infractions as it is written now. Asking planning commission to look into classifying ordinance violations civil infractions.
 - Richard Karnatz commented on changing section 2.1 to civil infraction to civil citations. Second offenses or failure to correct could result in a higher fine. Township attorney provided a document Misdemeanor v Municipal civil infraction.
 - Discussed fine amount, implementation and process for if fines are not paid.
 - Next meeting finalize fine amounts and research on what happens when fines are not paid.
 - Jessica Shear motioned to table the discussion on civil infractions. Robert Hemmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- Discussed special meeting combined planning commission, township board in November 10th, 6:30pm.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Discussion of Sec. 7.24 (WECFs) commercial and private facilities. Amendment dated Aug. 05, 2020.
 - Dick Karnatz recused himself
 - Robert Hemmes commented to on the Sydney Township or Draft Montcalm Township Ordinance No 2021 wind ordinance as a good example to use as a draft. It has more clarity and would align with neighboring townships.
 - Discussed recommendation from the township attorney and incorporating them into the draft.
 - Discussed priorities for the ordinance: height, setbacks, sound, flicker, and lighting.
 - Robert Hemmes motioned to use Montcalm Township Ordinance No. 2021- An Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance to Permit and Regulate Wind Energy Conversion Systems DRAFT. Jessica Shear seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
 - Discussed getting outside help to facilitate revising the draft. Discussed posting draft to website.
 - Discussed how to review document and using key elements to drive discussion.

- o Discussed set-backs (Section 5 of draft): participating, road right away, non-participating, minimum distance between turbines
- Private Wind Conversion zoning Separation from Sec. 7.24
 - o Robert Hemmes motioned to leave the private wind conversion zoning in the working draft. Jessica Shear seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Rick Hillman – commented on getting a planner or lawyer to help.
- Sheila Crooks (Douglas township) - Provided list summarizing Michigan township wind ordinances that have been passed.
- Robert Scott (Sidney township) – provided document with picture of turbines
- Township resident – commented against wind turbines
- Township resident – commented against wind turbines and visual aspects wind turbines
- Kay Scott (Sidney township) – commented against wind turbines and health effects, visual aspects and time spent researching wind turbine issues.
- Pamela Hemmes (township resident) – commented against wind turbines. Provided article from Michigan Outdoors News and shared pictures of wind turbines. Commented upcoming Pine township meeting.
- Rachel Lentz – commented on referendum process and commented against wind turbines.
- Diane Fountain – commented on planning commission member’s contributions.
- Wendie Switala – commented on increasing number of planning commission members.
- Karen Baird – recommended having assessor review taxing method for turbines.
- Township resident – asked about posting draft wind ordinance to township website.

ADJOURNMENT

- Jessica Shear motioned to adjourn the meeting. Robert Hemmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,
Erin Nerychel, Planning Commission Secretary