

CENTERVILLE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – October 26, 2010
CENTERVILLE TOWNSHIP HALL

Call to Order:

Vice-Chairperson Mike Scharpf called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

Members Present:

Gerry Laskey, Jim Schwantes, Mike Scharpf, Molly Hyde, and Recording Secretary Annette Kleinschmit; ~~Excused~~Not Present: Tim Johnson and Zoning Administrator Tim Cypher

Public Present: Bob Eitzen, Edward J. Krajewski, Pat Krajewski, Virginia Eitzen, Randy Smith, Penny Spencer, Shandy Spencer, Bill Wheadon, Susan Wheadon, Lisa Conroy, Joe Flees, Kay Kobetz, Richard Kobetz

Public Comment: Scharpf acknowledged the large audience and said he assumed it was to address residential wind systems; like the one recently constructed at the Spencer residence. **Richard Kobetz** spoke first and said he wanted to request that the Planning Commission (PC) recommend a moratorium on private wind systems until an ordinance could be written. Scharpf said the PC would add the request to the agenda and take public comment.

Revise/Approve Agenda:

Scharpf reviewed the agenda and "Request for Moratorium on Private Wind Systems" was added to the Zoning/Planning Issues of the agenda. **MOTION BY HYDE, SECONDED BY SCHWANTES, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. MOTION PASSED.**

Approve Minutes:

The PC reviewed the minutes of the regular meeting held September 28, 2010. Hyde requested that revisions be made to the "Bylaws Update" section to clarify her comments. **MOTION BY SCHWANTES, SECONDED BY HYDE, TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2010 MINUTES AS REVISED. MOTION PASSED.**

Zoning & Planning Issues:

Request for Moratorium on Private Wind Systems – Scharpf indicated that the PC would now address Mr. Kobetz's request that the PC recommend to the Township Board a moratorium on private wind systems until an ordinance could be written. He mentioned that Zoning Administrator Tim Cypher and Chair Tim Johnson were absent. He said objections to any zoning permit were normally taken up with the Zoning Board of Appeals, who would then send their findings back to the Planning Commission; that while there might not be any action taken tonight, the PC would hear public comment on the issue.

Kay Koebetz (S. Good Harbor Trail) said she and her husband hired Williams Consulting Service of Traverse City to review Centerville Township's Zoning Ordinance (ZO) in regards to the regulations of private wind energy systems. She read excerpts of the letter and gave copies to the PC (attached). Williams Consulting felt there were inconsistencies in the ZO and recommended a moratorium on permitting private wind systems until an ordinance similar to the newly adopted Commercial Wind Ordinance could be written.

Bill Wheadon (S. Good Harbor Trail) wanted to point out that we are in an agricultural area and land-in-ag and farms and windmills have gone and operated together for years. He feels the existing ordinance is adequate and working and he doesn't think any further regulations are needed. He urged the PC to make no recommendation of change to the Board.

Richard Kobetz (S. Good Harbor Trail) said that he is a proponent of wind power and served on the subcommittee to create the Commercial Wind Ordinance for the township. He feels the project at the Spencer's, in his opinion, is inappropriate siting. He hoped that the township could do better in the future.

Bob Eitzen (S. Good Harbor Trail) said that he is a fourth generation farmer and there was a windmill on his property that was a source of power for the well water for many years. He said he doesn't see any harm in allowing anyone to have a windmill on their property.

Patricia Krajewski (S. Good Harbor Trail) stated that she thinks it's good for folks to 'live green' and conserve energy, and thinks it's uncalled for that someone would object. She said she agrees with Mr. Eitzen, that windmills have been used for many years and do no harm.

Kay Kobetz said that Mr. Williams pointed out that there is no differentiation between various kilowatt systems, nor system wing spans. She said that the one that was constructed is not the same as a farm windmill. She presented pictures to the PC that were taken from the point of view from her home, of which she thinks is poor siting. She feels these types of towers are the same as a communications tower.

The PC reviewed the photos Mrs. Kobetz presented, and they were returned to her.

Richard Kobetz said he knows there isn't anything he can do about this windmill situation and that his proposed moratorium on windmills was for others.

The majority of the audience reacted verbally to Mr. Kobetz's statement. Scharpf reminded the audience to keep their responses civil and address their comments and questions directly to the PC.

Randy Smith (Williamsburg) indicated that he owns the renewable services company that installed the wind system at the Spencer's. He said that he has a degree in Natural Resources Planning from MSU, built his own off-grid home, has 30 years of construction building experience and installs and designs wind systems that encourage non-polluting types of energy. He thinks Centerville's ZO has been in place for approximately 20 years, and he disagrees with Mr. Williams' comments on the ZO. He doesn't feel there should be any delay in future installations of wind systems in the township. He said the wind system that was installed is under 30 kilowatts, only supplies energy to the home and doesn't expel excessive pollution into the atmosphere, unlike a 5,000-6,000 square foot home would. He said that the only people that can see it are the Kobetz's and that their home doesn't face the direction of the wind system. He added that the local college has added renewable energy classes, because this is what people want and it is the future in jobs. He said he is encouraged by the support of the neighbors and that the decisions the PC makes impact future generations.

Shandy Spencer (Kilway Rd) said he is the owner who installed the wind system generator. He stated that he agrees with some comments made. He said that while he initially is paying more, he feels as though he is doing something good and most would have a hard time finding a lot of people that want to do this because they could buy on-the-grid cheaper. He said he has a hard time grasping why what's within his rights, is even a topic of discussion. He thinks people think, "not in my back yard", but everyone is somebody's back yard.

Virginia Eitzen (S. Good Harbor Trail) said that the windmill is the first thing she sees in the morning and has the best view of it. She said she doesn't mind it at all.

Bob Eitzen stated that the power went out today and if he had a windmill, he wouldn't have had to worry.

Susan Wheadon said that she admires Shandy and Penny Spencer; a young couple who have moved into the area and want to make a difference and care about their community. She said she wants more people like them in our community. She supports the way they are living and feels they are an example for all of us.

Scharpf thanked everyone for their comments and asked the PC to give input on the request at hand to the Board.

Schwantes said that he has looked at the windmill, and that he doesn't feel there is an overwhelming request to write a residential wind system ordinance. He commented that the PC is in the midst of updating the township's master plan; including a questionnaire to gather input from the community on residential wind systems, as well as other issues. He also stated that the Commercial Wind Energy System Ordinance (CWES) regulations were initiated a few years back because of pressure from Noble Energy's desire to construct CWES in the township. He doesn't feel that there is that kind of pressure at hand, and that the PC does plan on addressing residential wind energy systems in the future, so he is not supportive of a moratorium at this point.

Hyde stated that the PC has an obligation to look at all allowable uses and not restrict resident's land use rights; all while balancing neighbor's rights. She is not sure a moratorium is necessary at this point.

Laskey concurred with Schwantes, saying that the PC is in the midst of a master plan update. He also felt addressing residential wind systems is a definite issue of residents. He also doesn't see how based on last minute information, that the PC could make any type of recommendation to the Board. He said he would not support it.

Scharpf concurred with fellow PC members, and added that it is not a dead issue. He said it is one of the PC's goals to address residential wind systems during updating of the master plan and that it is part of the citizen survey to get input this winter. He said the consensus of the PC is that they wouldn't support a moratorium to the Board at this time. He thanked everyone for their comments.

Review Monthly ZA Report – The September report was circulated via email by Cypher prior to the meeting, but not discussed in his absence.

Master Plan Update Schedule – PC reviewed the draft citizen survey that was provided by Cypher. There was brief discussion on questions that pertain to open space and wording. Kleinschmit reviewed additional questions that were added since the last review of the citizen survey. Also discussed ensuring there were proper questions on residential wind turbines. Hyde commented that the PC should research the difference in various kilowatt systems when addressing the residential wind ordinance. Scharpf concurred, and Schwantes also suggested addressing size and height limits.

Scharpf indicated that he thought there was mention of adding a question pertaining to adding bike paths to roads and the funding of them. Kleinschmit will work on adding the proper questions to the Services Section. Schwantes also pointed out necessary grammatical corrections. Kleinschmit will make the necessary corrections and additions and send a new draft by email prior to the next meeting on November 16th. Schwantes said the Board reviewed the survey at their last meeting and approved mailing the survey with the winter tax bills.

There was a suggestion of changing the next PC meeting to Thursday, November 18th because of known absences. Kleinschmit will check with Cypher and Johnson to see if they are available, and if they are not, the next meeting will remain on November 16th.

PC Enabling Ordinance Update – Schwantes said that the Enabling Ordinance was passed by the Board at their last meeting.

PC By-laws Update - **MOTION BY SCHWANTES, SECONDED BY HYDE, TO TABLE DISCUSSION UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING. MOTION PASSED.**

Budget – Hyde distributed new copies of the ZO to the PC, and asked members to review thoroughly for any problems before more copies were printed. Scharpf took the invoice for the printing and will give to David Wurm for payment.

Public Comment – None

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm. The next PC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 16, 2010 (rescheduled from November 30th) at 7:00 pm at the Solon/Centerville Fire Hall.

Recorded by: Annette Kleinschmit