

DRAFT

Regular Meeting of Casco Township Planning Commission
February 6, 2013 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Barker, Dian Liepe, Daniel Fleming, David Campbell, and Judy Graff **ABSENT:** John Stroud and Paul Macyauski

STAFF PRESENT: Janet Chambers, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Diana Ostermann

- 1. Call to order and review of agenda:** Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. There were no changes to agenda.
- 2. Approval of minutes:**

Motion by Fleming, supported by Liepe to approve minutes of 1/9/13 Regular Meeting as written. All in favor, MSC.

Motion by Fleming, supported by Liepe to approve minutes of 1/16/13 Public Hearing on 433 Drain as written. All in favor, MSC.

Motion by Fleming, supported by Liepe to approve minutes of 1/16/13 Open Hearing on WECS as written. All in favor, MSC.
- 3. Public Comment & Correspondence:** Diana Ostermann, 7364 North Shore Drive, South Haven, stated that she read the latest edits to the proposed wind turbine ordinance and feels if it is passed it would be clear to her that the Planning Commission does not care about the health and welfare of the Casco Township residents. Ostermann submitted a written copy of her statement to the Planning Commission. (attachment)
- 4. Report from the Township Board of representative:** Graff gave a report on the Board of Trustees meeting of 1/21/13. Senior program has moved to the township hall. Allegan County will not be providing funds for senior citizens this year. Susan Katt will look into grants for senior's transportation.

David Dobreff will be a new Parks member, replacing Samuel Fleming, who has resigned.

Supervisor Overhiser forwarded the 433 agreement to the Allegan County Drain Commission for approval. If Allegan Drain Commission approves, it could come to the Board of Trustees for approval at their February meeting.

There will be a joint meeting between South Haven Township, Casco Township, the Water & Sewer Authority and Auditor on March 27th 7:00 PM at the township hall.

Road millage was discussed. Mike Werkema and Dan Way were present and requested Lakeview, west of Blue Star, be considered for pavement.

Judy Graff was appointed to the Planning Commission and Josiah Jessup to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Dianna Ostermann, present at the Board meeting, requested the Board replace Patrick Hudson as Planner. She stated that he is not an expert on WECS and that he has a bias leniency in the Ordinance. After discussion, the Board was not inclined to replace Hudson.

After Graff's report of the Board meeting, Chairman Barker stated that the PC has been working on WECS for about 14 months now. They have made changes, gathered information, and input from public comment. All the information is funneled through Hudson who has talked with experts in the subject. Ostermann said that Hudson does not know the terminology on the subject of WECS. She questioned if he does not understand, how the PC could depend on him to bring information to them. Chairman Barker said that the PC will ultimately make a decision, but asked that information be funneled through Hudson to the PC.

Graff shared a conversation she had with Supervisor Overhiser. She suggested to Overhiser, if and when there is a request for a wind farm, there should be an independent engineer to advise the Planning Commission throughout the process. Chairman Barker agreed that an expert on WECS might be a good idea, and could be required in the Site Plan Review. He suggested that Hudson's firm should be able to supply names of experts. Liepe felt there should be at least 3 names.

Campbell expressed concern about moving forward without having all the information. Once the numbers are in the ordinance, Casco is more or less stuck. He would like more information about risks and benefits to Casco Township. If one windmill requires 40 acres of land, how many could there be in the township. Chairman Barker said there could be 40 or 50 wind towers if towers were on consecutive lots, which would not require the same setbacks. Campbell stated that a company is not going to be interested in just putting up a couple of towers here and there.

Campbell inquired about the location of the 50 farmers that signed a letter in support of the Wind Farms. He suggested if the interest for wind farms is in the northeast part of the township, then just allow them in that area for now and see how things go. Chairman Barker stated that the agricultural area east of Blue Star Highway is the area where the interest is.

Campbell questioned why, in other areas, the approval for windmills is at the county level, yet a small town like Casco should take the risks on by themselves.

Fleming stated that the company will have a certain amount of accountability, why not let the farmer decide what they want to do with their property. He cautioned about too much regulation.

Campbell suggested that the Wind Company put up as much performance guarantee money as possible to cover any unforeseen liabilities to the township. Chairman Barker stated the performance guarantee is covered under Site Plan Review. Campbell said he would like to hear actual numbers. Fleming stated there could be liabilities to the township and liabilities to the farmer. Chairman Barker stated the PC's concern is to protect the common infrastructure. Campbell stated that there are more risks than just the road. Chairman Barker said that WECS will be brought up at the joint meeting on February 9.

Liepe offered to check for more information from MSU. Chairman Barker asked that she funnel any information through Hudson.

Janet Chambers asked, as a resident of Casco, what companies are interested in building WECS in Casco, how many towers are they considering, and what will that look like, physically and financially. Chairman Barker said that Jewi Wind has inquired about WECS in Casco. Also, Holland Public Works is experimenting with wind energy and currently buying electricity from Ithaca.

5. **Report from the ZBA representative:** There have been no ZBA meetings.
6. **Report from Water/Sewer representative:** Chairman Barker said there will be a meeting between South Haven Township, Casco Township and the Water & Sewer Authority on Wednesday, March 27th at 7:00 PM. Supervisor Overhiser asked that the PC be present at that meeting.
7. **Comments on Saturday 2/9/13 Township Joint meeting:** Chairman Barker urged everyone to attend. Water and sewer have driven the township to the need for growth. High Density, WECS, infrastructure, parks and grants will be covered.
8. **New Business:** Feb. 20th 6:00 PM will be a Public Hearing on the WECS Ordinances. Chairman Barker encouraged citizens to attend to be sure there is a good cross section of people there. Because it is a Public Hearing, it will require a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The options will be to recommend adoption, recommend not adopting, or tabling for further discussion.
9. **Old Business:** Chairman Barker talked to Ellingsen about making a list of problems he finds in the Zoning Ordinances. The Planning Commission will go over the list at the March 6 regular meeting.
10. **Public Comment:** Diana Ostermann asked how she could get involved in the township. Graff suggested working on Grants for Seniors or Parks. Chairman Barker said that members of the various groups will be at the Saturday, February 9 meeting and that would be a good time to meet them and let them know she is interested.

Motion to adjourn by Graff, 2nd by Campbell. All in favor. MSC Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Public Hearing on WECS Ordinance will be held February 20, 2013, 6:00 PM

The next Regular Planning Commission meeting will be March 6, 2013, 7:00 PM

Minutes by Janet Chambers, Recording Secretary

attachment: Statement from Dianna Ostermann in opposition to the WECS ordinance