

PLAN COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
TOWN OF GRANT  
October 20, 2021

**PRESENT:** Thomas Reitter (Chairperson), Charles Gussel, Nathan Wolosek, Ron Becker, Ron Patterson (Commissioners), Kathleen Lee (Secretary)  
**CITIZENS:** Case Schoepke (McCain Foods), Sharon Schwab, Lucas Reinbler (Bright Diamond Consulting via phone)

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by T Reitter.

**STATE OF PUBLIC NOTICE**

It was stated that the agenda was posted at two posting stations (the Grant Town Hall and the Grant Transfer Station) and on the Town's website.

**MINUTES**

It was moved by N. Wolosek and seconded by C. Gussel to approve the September 15, 2021 minutes. The motion passed with unanimous ayes.

**METEOROLOGICAL TOWER**

Case Schoepke (McCain Foods) and Lucas Reinbler (Bright Diamond Consulting via phone) joined us to describe a project they are planning. Phase 1 IS TO erect a 242 foot tower meteorological tower. McCain Foods has sustainability goals to add green, renewable energy to their plants with a target of being net-zero by 2030. As part of the strategy, McCain Foods would like to add a small wind farm of 2 or 3 wind turbine towers at their Plover facility. The energy harvested would be used to power the plant. The installation of the actual wind turbines would be several years out, but the first step is to collect data with a meteorological tower to determine if wind power is feasible. The meteorological tower would be temporary being in place about two years. It would be tilt-up, guide wire tower with wires on four sides anchoring it to the ground. The goal is to erect the tower in March or April 2022 depending on weather and soil conditions. They are working with the FAA, the Town of Plover/Portage County, and Town of Grant. The site of the tower is not certain. It could be in the Town of Grant or the Town of Plover. Site assessments and consultation with the FAA will help determine the actual location of the tower.

Discussion continued regarding the wind turbines. The project is at an early stage, still in concept. A maximum of 15 megawatts is desired. The technology is advancing rapidly and 5 to 5.5 megawatt, on-shore towers are in use. A 3 or 4 megawatt turbine would be obsolete by the time they would be erected. Currently McCain Foods needs data regarding the economic viability of the wind resource. As they proceed, they would need wildlife studies and conversations with the neighbors.

They have looked at the Town of Grant's Communication Tower Ordinance. They would be able to meet all of the setbacks, separations, and requirements cited the ordinance. The tower would require a conditional use.

Sharon Schwab suggested that the Wireless Telecommunication Tower and Antenna Ordinance be amended to include temporary meteorological towers. This could be done by the Board. There would be time for the Plan Commission to develop a separate wind turbine or green ordinance.

Many unknowns remain. It needs to be determined if the size of the property can support 2 or 3 wind turbines.

Case Schoepke stated the McCain Food property is 634 acres. The plant itself is in the Town of Plover. The western portion of the property is in the T. of Grant and the eastern in the T. of Plover. All power harvested with a wind turbine would have to go to the plant. It cannot be sold or given away because of the way energy grants/tax credits are structured. The plant uses 12 to 15 megawatts daily. If enough power is not created by the wind, they would purchase power through use of a diode.

C. Schoepke was provide information on where to locate the CUP application on the Town website and dates of future Plan Commission and Town Board meetings.

It was questioned why wind generators are mentioned in A2 and A3, but not in A1 in the draft of the amended zoning ordinance. No one was able to answer that question.

Matt Johnson, a Field Operations Director for the Wisconsin Land and Liberty Coalition, a nonprofit effort focused on building education, awareness and support for renewable energy projects, is interested in doing a presentation for the Town. He has sent a power point to the Town Chairperson. S. Schwab is interested in having a joint meeting between the Board and Plan Commission.

R. Becker asked if the Town is aware of the controversies in other towns regarding renewable energy. When driving through Fond du Lac and Waushara Counties, he was surprised by the organized opposition. T. Reitter said there is loud, organized opposition in Minnesota, saying wind is not the answer. Cleanpower.org is a proponent of wind and solar, he suggested looking at that website. There are a lot of sample ordinances, but we will need to be aware of opposition as we develop an ordinance. Concerns include migratory birds, interference with radar including communication with airplanes, and loss of life of birds particularly at night. He searched Department of Energy for information on 5 megawatt turbines. They have guidelines for off-shore turbines. The turbine size increases with the power amount desired. Tip speeds are also an issue as it creates noise. Manufactures are researching noise control. Flickering off the blades is a health concern. R. Becker believes there is a standard that towers should be at least one-quarter of a mile from residences, but some groups say that is not adequate. A map that was received regarding the possible location of the meteorological tower indicates tower placement at Glenwood Drive and 110<sup>th</sup> Street. The potential height of a wind turbine was discussed. The tower for a 2 megawatt turbine is 90 meters and the blade adds an additional 60 meters to the height (150 meters equals 492 feet).

S. Schwab will talk with the Board regarding setting up a joint, green energy meeting. She also suggested that the Plan Commission consider meeting twice a month in order to complete the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

## **DOG SHELTER IN GENERAL AGRICULTURE**

The property owner was not present to answer questions. The anticipated number of shelter dogs is not known. Because the property is zoned General Ag, goats are not a concern.

It was deemed that a Conditional Use Permit is not required for sheltering rescue dogs in General Agriculture. County and State regulations should be followed. K. Lee will verify with Treasurer Hakala that Mr. Sparhawk has received the DATCP information on Dog Sellers & Dog Facility Operators, Rescues and Shelters, and Premises Registration.

### **CITIZEN INPUT**

N. Wolosek reported that the lights on the tower at 130<sup>th</sup> and Buena Vista Road are not working properly. The strobe light is flashing at night and lighting up the side of his house 1 ½ miles away. The red lights do come on, but the middle strobe does not turn off.

S. Schwab repeated her suggestion that the Plan Commission meet twice a month while completing the zoning ordinance. As a follow-up to the September meeting, on 10/21/21, she will be submitting an application to Wisconsin Department of Transportation Discretionary Grant Program for monies for Buena Vista Road. This is a program for projects exceed \$100,000. It will qualify under a safety aspect because of the flooding in that area. The estimated cost of the project is \$290,000. This grant competes at the state level, not the county level. The decision is made in February. N. Wolosek stated at this time the road could use some grooming and M. Rutz will work on that.

After talking with the board, S. Schwab will suggest several potential dates for a “green meeting” in December.

### **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

In September, there were nine permits for a total of \$1170. This includes two new residences with a penalty, one address, four accessory buildings, a driveway, and a UAP.

Adam Flatoff is not interested in proceeding with a CUP for an auto repair business on his Mill Road property at this time. After he sells his prior home, he will reconsider the business and contact us when he is ready to move forward.

S. Schwab asked about the person on Lake Road who sells docks. M. Rutz stated the property owner does not sell docks at that location, but installs them on lakes. He spoke with Tracy Pelky and learned that Portage County’s shoreline zoning does not regulate business. R. Becker stated there is not an advertising sign, it is not know for certain if customers come to his home, it is clear he has materials stored in his yard, and he has a substantial amount of equipment related to his business in the yard. N. Wolosek suggested the Plan Commission needs to come to consensus on what is a home business and what triggers the need for a CUP. He stressed we need to be clearer. This can be done as the amendments to the zoning ordinance are made. After that is accomplished, we will revisit the need for a CUP related to the dock business.

M. Rutz received a call from a realtor regarding an individual who would like to live in a house 10 months of the year and rent out the house the other two months through Airbnb or Vrbo. There was disagreement regarding the need for a CUP. CUPs have been granted to Kathy Rogers and Witts Linger Longer, LLC as short-term rentals in the past. The length of the rental stay could dictate if a CUP is needed. T. Reitter stated this should be a future agenda item. At this time, we are not recommending a CUP for the situation in question.

M. Rutz and S. Schwab met at the Hughes property (formerly Rekoske) on Town Line Road. The new owner seems sincerely interested in cleaning up the property and fixing the house. Many visible improvements have taken place already.

The Arbor Lane chain link fence issue has hopefully been resolved.

## **ACT 67 OVERVIEW**

Slide 18 of the Conditional Uses PowerPoint related to Act 67 was displayed for review.

C. Gussel had points he wanted to make after talking with three individuals from Portage County Zoning. He said they do not remember what the Act addresses. In talking with the Town's Association representative, C. Gussel said the Act is 36 pages and is dormant. It is his opinion that the state government has come to the understanding that they have made a mistake. He is concerned that we will incorporate Act 67 into our ordinance and then the Act will be repealed. He suggests we should do nothing regarding Act 67 because no one else is paying attention to it. He had received documents from the Towns Association. T. Reitter read the letter introducing the documents noting most towns and counties in the state were already compliant and did not need to make changes to their zoning ordinances because of Act 67. It was recommended to have the WTA's legal staff review our ordinance to see if it is compliant. In S. Schwab's experience with the WTA legal counsel, they are there to guide and give advice. Regarding specific, individual documents, they typically refer towns to their own legal counsel.

We returned to slide 18 for a to-do list:

- Review conditional uses listed your ordinance (*T. Reitter has done this*)
- Review standards, requirements and conditions listed in your ordinance
- Review purpose statements to make sure they support conditions you are likely to attach
- Review process for granting conditional uses (class 2 notices, public hearing) (*We do have a process*)
- Provide specific authority in your zoning ordinance if you wish to assign review of conditional uses to a body other than the zoning board.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathleen D. Lee*

Plan Commission Secretary

Approved 11/17/2021