

**PLAN COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
TOWN OF GRANT  
August 20, 2014**

Present: Jim Wendels (Chairman), Cynthia Welling (Secretary), Marty Rutz (Zoning Administrator), Lori Ruess, Sharon Schwab, and Nathan Wolosek (Committee Members). Ron Becker (Committee member) was unable to attend.

Citizens Present: There were several citizens present. Those who signed in included: Charles Rickman, Rich Rashke, Gary Barten, Charles Gussell, Kitty Gross, and Steve Hahn.

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Jim Wendels.

**STATE OF PUBLIC NOTICE**

Cynthia Welling stated that the agenda was posted over a week ago at all posting sites and was placed in area newspapers.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Sharon Schwab motioned to approve the June minutes with minor changes; Lori Ruess seconded. Motion carried and minutes were approved. Sharon Schwab motioned to approve the July minutes with minor changes; Nathan Wolosek seconded. Motion carried and minutes were approved.

**CONTINUE GENERAL AGRICULTURE ZONED DISTRICTS DISCUSSION**

Jim Wendels began by asking if anyone had received any feedback since the last meeting. Discussion points ensued as follows:

- Charlie Gussell stated that 10+% of ground water use goes to municipalities and that water is gone after use. Not so with irrigation. The water farmers use goes right back into the ground.
- Rich Rashke stated that there is a lot of speculation, open letters, etc., but there has been no proof that the aquifer is affected negatively.
- Jim Wendels asked if Okray Farms had ever had a complaint about a residential well going dry or elevated nitrate levels. None had ever been received.
- Rashke stated that farmers generally test their wells far more than most private parties.
- Jim Wendels asked if neighboring parcels are notified if a high capacity well is installed. No, they are not.
- A conditional use permit requires notification of neighboring parties.
- Rashke argued that notification would not work; it would only give people a “place to point.”
- Kitty Gross pointed out that Wisconsin Rapids checked with every homeowner and private well along Quarry Road prior to test drilling on their property in the Town.
- Sharon Schwab shared that lack of transparency is a prevalent theme in all recent newspaper articles. Maps were distributed to identify all current high capacity wells in the Town of Grant as well as high nitrate test results.
- Charlie Gussell loudly stated that this was a “witch hunt” on the farmers.
- Jim Wendels stated that he was so tired of the negativity and push back when all the Commission was trying to do was get honest feedback that he intended to resign the Commission when this task was complete.

- It was brought up that the DNR has jurisdiction over this kind of zoning anyway which was recently affirmed by the State Supreme Court. All were in agreement that court was probably where all of this was going to end.

There was more general discussion around why zoning was started in the first place. Kitty Gross pointed out that no matter which side you are on, reviewing the ordinance is good practice every 10 years. More comments were made about the Corps of Engineers, farmers' rights, how high cap wells affect the value of abutting parcels, and producing safe food being the ultimate goal, among other comments. Chairman Jim Wendels stated that he felt he had heard from all sides of the discussion and is now comfortable with the ordinance as it is currently written. There may be minor changes made to other parts of the document, but the references to high capacity wells will remain silent.

The next meeting of the Commission will come full circle and other issues will be reviewed starting with implements of husbandry at the next meeting.

There was some discussion about whether or not an open letter would be appropriate giving an overview of the Town's discussions over the last two meetings. Went without resolution.

### **TOWN BOARD REPORT**

- Plan Commission members were thanked for their participation in the sesquicentennial event.
- Southwind Salvage – Marty Rutz will research.
- Sign in Kellner – Marty Rutz will research.
- Temporary address numbers – should be issued to new residences through a Portage County Ordinance that exists and the address remains temporary until permanent address is resolved at the Town level. Currently, on the Town of Hull is doing this but the County would like to increase awareness and enforcement more into the future. Encourage Marty to try and issue the permanent address number as soon as possible. This could avoid the use of a temporary number and the costs of the temporary number for our residents. (See attached.)

### **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

- Devon's Salon – They will need a sign permit at double the costs since it is after the fact. Marty is working with owner to get them squared away. Sign meets standards stated in the ordinance, so no CUP is required.
- Southwinds Auto Salvage – Commercial zoned and could be conducting a business. Need to research the file a bit to determine if it is a junk dealership or just storage or sale of parts.
- Houteveldt Pond – Complaints that their pond exceeds what they were permitted for. Marty will ask Portage County to determine size of the pond from aerial imagery. If it exceeds the permitted size, then they may be in violation regarding compliance. Plan Commission could choose to issue a letter informing them of non-compliance. Zoning Administrator would just as soon leave it alone. Discover the facts of size first and discuss resolve from that point on.
- Julie Marcks Issue – Can she cut trees on town road right of way that are affected with oak wilt? Adjacent property owner states that it is his land and not the town's. Encourage Marty to contact Register of Deeds and see if they can provide proof of

town ownership or dedication to the town when land was platted. (Retain attached with the minutes.)

- Building permits:

Bob Konopacky	820 Townline Road	Accessory building	\$50.00
Russ Brody	10310 90 <sup>th</sup> Street S	Accessory building	\$30.00
Ton Moh	7700 100 <sup>th</sup> Street S	Accessory building	\$50.00
			Total: \$130.00

Sharon Schwab motioned to adjourn the meeting; Lori Ruess seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cynthia Welling  
Plan Commission Secretary