

**PLAN COMMISSION  
TOWN OF GRANT  
February 19, 2014**

Present: Jim Wendels, Lori Ruess, Ron Becker, and Cynthia Welling.

Citizens Present: Rich Rashke of Okray Farms

Excused Absent: Marty Rutz and Sharon Schwab

Meeting called to order at 6:32 pm by Jim Wendels.

**MINUTES**

The January 2014 minutes were reviewed and approved. Motion made by Jim Wendels, seconded by Lori Ruess. Motion passed unanimously.

**STATE OF PUBLIC NOTICE**

The agenda for the February meeting was posted 24 hours prior to the meeting in the three public areas as assigned.

**ZONING UPDATE**

- No formal requests had been received since the last meeting. Marty Rutz was absent from the meeting due to preparations for the impending storm.

**CITIZEN INPUT**

Rich Rashke of Okray Family Farms was in attendance for the meeting.

Discussion points were as follows:

- It was mentioned that the Plan Commission meeting dates are not posted in the newspaper. It was agreed that the dates of future Plan Commission meetings will be posted in the Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids newspapers. A complete agenda may not always be available, but every effort will be made to announce the meeting dates. It was also mentioned that Jim Wendels gives Plan Commission updates at most full Town of Grant meetings. The Commission meeting dates could also be announced at that time.
- After some discussion, it was pointed out that a full 10-year review of the zoning ordinance is being undertaken, not just high cap and pivot well details.
- The meetings that Representative Krug holds could be beneficial for interested citizens to attend. Scott Krug has invited Adams, Wood, and Portage counties and all are represented. Ron also mentioned a Citizens Advisory Group that is a good source of information for the public.
- There was some discussion about how different the growers are in each of those respective counties. It was emphasized that Okray Family Farms does strive to be good stewards of the resources.
- At the last Commission meeting, general ag vs. transitional ag definitions were discussed. Currently, all ag areas have some controls in place. It is suggested that general ag might benefit from its own permitting and conditional use parameters.
- The idea of protecting property value and water quality was again emphasized.
- The Commission acknowledged that valid points have been raised by citizen input. Therefore, the Commission will be seeking more input through a work group.
- Conditional Use Permits were originally thought to be a reasonable solution. CUPs are very discretionary; rezoning is more equitable and once the rezoning takes place, it can only be reversed via rezoning, which may provide more protection for the landowner.

- It was acknowledged that the former Rickman property seems to be the catalyst for a good deal of discussion.
- The fact that a property's worth can be affected by its zoning was discussed.
- Jim distributed a proposal letter seeking citizen input/work group membership.
- There was some discussion around parcel size and its effect on potential zoning decisions.
- A subcommittee might be able to look at discussion of overlay districts.
- Rich Rashke pointed out that Okray Farms has to be very controlled about what they can put on their fields. The average resident has no control placed on them as to what they can put on their lawns for instance.
- There was some discussion about whether the Town Board and the Plan Commission were in agreement with regard to some of the suggested changes.
- Jim emphasized again that the Committee is seeking input and is eager to look at new ideas.
- An invitation is being created right now.
- Ron Rashke stated that after the last Commission meeting he had received phone calls from landowners concerned that if their land was rezoned, it would no longer be desirable for purchase by an organization like Okray Farms.
- There was more discussion about how high capacity wells were being defined. Wells that were granted permission by the state years ago now need to be replaced, and the rules are changing. Emergency permits can be obtained, but 1,000 gallons per minute permitted wells are not all being granted replacement permits.
- There should be more definition about how high capacity wells areas/properties are defined.
- The current definition in the ordinance will be reviewed.
- It was agreed that the Town of Grant website is very difficult to find. The website address should be published on all documentation. [townofgrantportageco.com](http://townofgrantportageco.com)
- The Committee will go on with completing its review of the other parts of the ordinance and will return to these contested issues when the work group has been assembled.
- There was lengthy discussion about the details required by the State/DNR in drilling wells near water that may make concerns about rezoning mute. The parameters already in place may preclude the worries that have been expressed thus far.
- Roberts Irrigation would be a good resource for the DNR requirements that are in place and that are changing for where wells can be drilled. For instance, definitions like navigable water being defined as where you can float a canoe. Very open to interpretation.

Action items: Roberts Irrigation will be contacted. Jim and Sharon will work to design a post card inviting people to an open meeting. Cynthia stated that she might have access to some marketing ideas for that post card. The goal is to have the card designed and sent out by March and target April for the meeting.

#### **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE**

- No formal report as Marty was preparing for the impending storm.

#### **TOWN BOARD REPORT**

- Sharon Schwab was not in attendance at this meeting to provide a report.

## **REVIEW ZONING ORDINANCE**

- There were no changes made to the ordinance at this meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08p. Lori motioned, Ron seconded. All in favor.

Next meeting Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, at 6:30 pm

Minutes prepared by Cynthia Welling  
Plan Commission Secretary

## **ACTION ITEMS**

Check into creating a logo for the Town of Grant.

Review Quarrying Ordinance to be sure we are in compliance with NR 135.32. (Print out all of NR 135 and review with our Quarrying Ordinance within the next 6 months.)

Update Quarrying Permit Process with NR updates.

Farmland Preservation: Contact Jeff Schuler to meet with us.

NR 135: Review w/Quarrying Ordinance

Review Zoning definitions

August 8-10, 2014 – create logo prior to celebration