

Approved 10/10/12

Casco Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting of September 12, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

1. **Call to order and review of agenda:** Chair Bruce Barker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present: Bruce Barker, John Stroud, Dan Fleming, Dave Campbell, Paul Macyauski, Judy Graff; Julie Cowie was recording secretary pro tem; and Patrick Hudson, Planning Consultant was present, as were approximately 30 people from the public. Dian Liepe was absent.

The Chair reviewed the agenda. Mr. Barker invited public comment related to the agenda; there was none.

Marcy Fitch asked if the Planning Commission would deliberate on the rezoning matter, and have public comment only at the end of the meeting. Chair Barker explained that the August 27 meeting, ending in a tie, did not end the rezoning matter (although that was the Commissioners' understanding at the time). The Township Attorney has subsequently clarified that, when a public hearing is held, the Planning Commission needs to make a recommendation to the Township Board.

A question from the public was asked about bylaws. Barker explained that the Planning Commission bylaws are not related to the rezoning vote; the rezoning vote is guided by State law.

Barker outlined the following options:

- a) The Township board has to receive a recommendation (which can be to either adopt the rezoning or deny the zoning ordinance amendment);
- b) The Planning Commission can table it until an odd number of people are present; or
- c) The Planning Commission can send it to the Board as a tie.

Bruce Barker moved that the Planning Commission approve the High Density residential district chapter 9A. This motion failed for lack of support.

Bruce Barker moved that the Planning Commission recommend a denial of the High Density Residential District 9A; Stroud seconded;

Discussion ensued:

Paul Macyauski spoke to the need to have the text be as good as it can be for the community; if an applicant makes a request, the Planning Commission will do everything all over again. Macyauski felt the Planning Commission did the best it could do in its deliberations.

Barker acknowledged that there was last minute information from the Drain Commissioner.

David Campbell concurred that the new information from the Drain Commissioner shed a lot of light on the issue (especially west of the Blue Star).

Macyauski asked if we are simply considering the text of the district, or the location of the district. Barker responded that it is only text for this district that is being considered—there is (not yet) any land designated as a high density area.

Dan Fleming asked for clarification regarding drainage issues. Barker responded that the school and other development have caused runoff issues. The drainage issues have not yet been resolved and that is for the Drain Commissioner to address.

Campbell suggested holding off on approving the text until we have a proposal to deal with.

Macyauski pointed out that the density difference between MDR and HDR is the difference between 6 and 10 units.

Fleming asked about the benefit of having a district (text) on the books so a district could be crafted in response to what a developer might want.

Patrick Hudson clarified that it is possible to have text in the Zoning Ordinance even though Casco may not have land zoned in that category. But he also cautioned that there is land noted in the Master Plan that could be zoned high density, and if a resident requested it and the text is on the books, the Township would be hard pressed to deny such a request for rezoning.

Macyauski urged that Becky Rininger come to the Planning Commission and educate the Commission on standards that will improve problematic issues in the Township.

Graff asked about pursuing a capital improvement plan. Barker stated that the Board of Trustees had instructed the Planning Commission not to pursue capital improvements. There are several things from a broader perspective (policing, 10 year policy, etc.) that need to be addressed. Graff did not favor adopting text without designating land. She was not in favor of delaying the vote until an odd number of Commissioners was present.

Macyauski made the point that the Board's unwillingness to have the PC address capital improvements stifles the Commission's ability to make decisions.

Barker thanked the Commission and commended them for their work, and asked the public to be more regularly involved in Planning Commission deliberations.

The motion was reiterated, with **Bruce Barker moving that the Planning Commission recommend a denial of the High Density Residential District 9A; supported by Stroud; in a roll call vote, Barker, Stroud, Fleming, Campbell, Macyauski, and Graff voted yes. There were no abstentions. Liepe was absent.**

Barker invited public comment.

Marcy Fitch asked when the minutes would be posted on the website. Cowie responded that there have been FOIA requests, the staff is part time, there are different recording secretaries, and it is more complicated than it seems to get minutes on the internet. She hoped to have the minutes posted within a week. The idea of getting funding for the transfer of documents to the website was raised.

Bob Baker believed that the Chair has not remained neutral. He felt the lack of minutes on the internet was a problem.

Mr. Super asked if the Drain Commissioner really had influence over the Planning Commission. Mr. Super urged the board to review the drainage problems first hand.

Greg Knisley expressed frustration about the difficulty of locating material regarding meetings and decisions pertaining to infrastructure.

Eric Schlanser, 45 North Shore Drive N. pointed out that the whole board has expressed that if there will be high density, it will be in the southern/southwestern area of the Township.

Steve & Peggy Hunt of Baseline Road are interested in keeping open spaces.

The Chair announced a recess at 8:05 pm. Meeting resumed at 8:17 p.m.

2. Minutes:

- Regular meeting of August 6, 2012, moved by Fleming, supported by Stroud; with the following amendments: *p. 3, Campbell stated that he had specifically asked that the process be more comprehensive than the high density, with input not just from experts interested in Casco, but also other Townships' experience with wind. P. 4, motion to adjourn was made by Dan Fleming; MSC.*
- Special meeting of August 27, 2012: p. 5, 3rd paragraph, spelling should be *Eric Schlanser*; Fleming moved, Stroud seconded; MSC.
- Special meeting of August 29, 2012: Fleming moved, Stroud supported; *p. 1, should be Road Commission and DRAIN commission, as amended; MSC.*

3. Correspondence was received, dated 9/12/12, from Marcy Fitch & Peter Klan.

In public comment, Marcy Fitch thanked everyone for their hard work.

4. **Township Board Representative:** The shortage from the Stefan acquisition has been resolved with a payment of \$140,000+ received from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund; renovation of the Township Hall is underway to make space for the Senior Care Program; on 9/21 at 11 a.m. is the grand opening of the Nature Preserve; the Board raised Building Inspector fees to be compatible with neighboring municipalities; the family of Toni Carroll donated motorized scooters to the Township.
5. **ZBA:** no report, no meetings.
6. **Water/Sewer Representative:** Graff asked the Supervisor for a report on mandatory hookups to the system. Bruce Barker reported that Miami Park's private system will be hooked into the public system.
7. **Resolutions requiring Planning Commission action:** none.
8. **New Business:** Zoning Ordinances review, Wind energy ordinance, By-laws, draft Ordinance for Wind Energy (letters received from several residents)

Bylaws: Judy asked that the Planning Commission By-laws be amended to instruct the Planning Commission on how to address tie votes. Recording Secretary Janet Chambers will re-distribute the most recent version of the bylaws and should remove the draft denotation from the top right hand corner.

Patrick Hudson's draft **Wind Ordinance** will be distributed. If a public hearing is scheduled, the Commission will have to make a recommendation, so addressing this ordinance through workshop meetings is preferred. Priorities will be set at the regular October meeting.

Paul Macyauski asked that the Planning Commission work more efficiently. He also asked that Patrick Hudson provide information so that it's available in advance, so commissioners can come to the meeting having reviewed information and make decisions and move to the next topic.

Hudson clarified that the document he presented is a sample draft. Graff asked Hudson to help the Commission from becoming biased toward or against any particular supplier. Hudson may bring a colleague to the next meeting, someone who sits on a regional committee for wind energy.

There is a need to clarify both large scale wind energy uses and household use of wind turbines.

Barker also invited the Commissioners to add more items to the list of things to be addressed. He has a working draft of the list to be prioritized.

9. **Roundtable Discussion:** Dan Fleming reflected on the HDR process, the many months devoted to the topic, and felt the ~~Planning Commission~~ process was ~~dragging its feet~~ inefficient thus waisting time and using a lot of Township money. He wanted the Planning Commission to be more streamlined.

David Campbell respects Dan's perspective, yet feels the growing complexity of the Township may require more meetings.

Graff agreed with Fleming over the HDR issue taking 10 months to come to a resolution. She wondered if there was a more efficient way to do the job; she doesn't want to spend 10 months on every topic.

Paul also felt that better organization was in order.

10. **Public Comment:**

Marty Graber asked if it is possible to get information about wind energy. He has been using solar and wind energy at a home not located in Casco Township. Mr. Graber was referred to Patrick Hudson for the information.

Mr. Russ Latchaw asked how to get on the agenda. He said the wind energy topic was on the agenda but it wasn't addressed. The farmers in Casco want to be organized and get their agenda addressed in a constructive way rather than reacting to outside pressures/interests. Mr. Latchaw said Casco, Ganges, and Clyde are being approached. Mr. Latchaw presented some letters signed by Casco farmers requesting that the Planning Commission address wind energy. (1 copy of this document, signed by multiple people, is included with attachments).

Graff said it would be helpful to hear the farmers articulate what they want. She requested that farmers be put on the Wednesday, October 10 agenda.

Motion to adjourn moved by Stroud, supported by Graff; msc.

Adjourned at 9:25 p.m. **Next meeting: Wednesday, October 10, 2012.**

Respectfully,

Julie M. Cowie
Clerk, Casco Township

attachment: Correspondence from Marcy Fitch and Peter Klan dated 9/12/12;