

PLAN COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
TOWN OF GRANT  
December 16, 2015

Present: Jim Wendels (Chairman), Kathleen Lee (Secretary), Nathan Wolosek, Ron Becker, Lori Ruess, Sharon Schwab (Committee members), Marty Rutz (Zoning Administrator)

Citizens Present: Kristen Johnson (Portage Co. P & Z), Dale Okray (Portage Co. Sherriff's Office), Charles Rickman, Mike Lukas (Sheriff), Matthew Fleming (Portage Co. Purchasing), Don Bohn (Grand Rapids Fire Chief), Jon Clark (URGC), Greg Nettesheim (URGC)

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Jim Wendels, Chairman

**STATE OF PUBLIC NOTICE**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Nathan Wolosk and seconded by Lori Ruess to approve the November 18, 2015 minutes as revised. The motion was approved with unanimous ayes.

**COMMUNICATIONS TOWER**

Matthew Fleming, Portage County Procurement Director, explained the communication tower project planned by Portage County. Nine towers are being placed in strategic locations throughout the county. The towers would be used for communications for sheriff, fire, and EMS. The communication system would be utilized by a variety of agencies including the DNR, railroad, and UWSP. With the new system, a single page could be utilized when contacting agencies in multiple municipalities. There would be no need to switch channels for communication to occur. A map showing the sites was shared by Mr. Fleming. Eight of the nine sites have been confirmed and those sites are on municipal property. The site in the Town of Grant has not been finalized. The cost to rent an existing tower in the Town of Grant at \$2000 per month was determined to be prohibitive. The proposed tower would be 250 feet tall with a foot print of 60 x 40 feet. The life of the tower is anticipated to be 50 years and the life of the radio 30 years. Portage County has been working with Motorola to determine a site, and a wooded area at the northeast corner of 95<sup>th</sup> and Elm Street has been proposed. There are seven residences close to the proposed site, therefore making the site non-desirable to the Town and its residents.

Representatives of the Up River Gun Club (UPGC) were in attendance. Greg Nettesheim described the gun club's property on 100<sup>th</sup> Street North that would be available as a possible tower location site. There are potential advantages to their property because it is located further north than the Elm Street location. Core samples and archaeological soil testing would need to be completed, in addition to determining signal strength at that location. Matthew Fleming and the UPGC representatives will work together to explore this option.

The county would like to start tower construction in spring. The bid process would begin as soon as the location is determined. A communications tower would require a conditional use permit for any land in the Town and would need to go through the approval process. The two step process (Plan Commission followed by Town Board) was explained by Jim Wendels. The loose sandy soil will need to be considered when planning the construction of the tower.

Sharon Schwab and Ron Becker voiced several concerns and questions related to the proposed “Expanding Responsibilities for the Communications System” policy on the Portage County Public Safety Communications Board’s December 17 agenda. These concerns focused around funding of emergency communications (including the towers), what is considered discretionary, and how services provided by providers located outside of Portage County are impacted by the policy. Sheriff Lukas will take these concerns and suggestions for wording clarification in the proposed policy to the meeting.

### **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Kristen Johnson, Associate Planner – Portage County Planning and Zoning shared how she could help the Plan Commission as they updated the Comprehensive Plan. She distributed a timeline for the project. The work would take between 12 and 16 months. The approach includes reviewing one to two chapters per month. She will complete the census and demographic update. She will help with text changes as needed. She plans to meet with the Plan Commission on a monthly basis.

**ACTION:** Add Comprehensive Plan to January 20, 2016 agenda. Kathy Lee will contact Dorothy Raasch regarding updating the town history section of the plan.

### **FARMLAND PRESERVATION**

Nathan Wolosek talked with Barry Jacowski, chairman of the Farmland Preservation Committee for Portage County to clarify how an overlay program would work. While the county has not completed their plan, they are heading towards an overlay map approach.

Because of the cost of an annual nutrient management plan, the number of farmers participating in the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) would be limited. It is doubtful the vegetable growers would participate, but dairy farmers may participate.

The pros and cons of a standalone Ag Enterprise Overlay District ordinance were discussed. This was compared to adding an Ag Enterprise Overlay District to the Zoning Ordinance and to rewording the Exclusive Agriculture District by including sub points that would apply to farmers participating in FPP.

**ACTION:** Kathy will send the commission members an Exclusive Ag District document with any reference to Wis Statute 91 removed. She will also send a draft of a standalone Farmland Preservation Overlay Zoning District. Kristen Johnson will forward the proposed overlay map to Rod Sutter so the overlay map can be compared to the most recent aerial map and a revised version of the farmland preservation overlay map made.

### **ASSEMBLY BILL 582**

Sharon had previously emailed Plan Commission members information on Assembly Bill 582. The bill is concerning because of limits placed on local land regulation of land use, the need for a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote to enhance zoning regulations, destruction of the farmland preservation component of use value taxation, and limits placed on using of the Comprehensive Plan to prohibit conditional use. Based on talking points provided by the Wisconsin Towns Association, a letter to Representatives Krug and Shankland was drafted and signed by Plan Commission members with N. Wolosek abstaining.

### **TOWN BOARD REPORT**

- Betty Petrusky is retiring. An advertisement has been posted for her position at the transfer station.
- The Galles rezone was approved by Portage County.
- The Slusser/Tosch CUP was approved. They need to abide the CUP including, by March 1, 2016, the Wisconsin DATCP premise registration. While there was support for the animals, a lot of concern continues to be expressed with the number of vehicles stored on property. Dave Tosch has been reminded that he is in control of the property. The Plan Commission may need to revisit a junk car ordinance for residential areas.

### **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

- A hard-copy report of building permits/fees issued for the month of November was distributed. A total of \$390 was collected. Permits were issued for a new residence/address, one accessory building, and two utility accommodation polices.
- Dave Tosch has requested a rezone. A copy of the CSM associated with the rezone and a copy of the application were distributed in anticipation of the January meeting. The wood fence located between the Tosch property and the Town's land needs to be added to the CSM.

### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

January 5, 2016

- Tosch rezone
- ATV use on town roads. Jim Wendels will contact Frank Johnson regarding the roads they wish to access.

January 20, 2016

- Comprehensive Plan Update

February 9, 2016

February 17, 2016

March 1, 2016

March 23, 2016

It was the consensus of the group that meetings should end by 9:00 pm.

**POSSIBLE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- CUP for communications tower
- Zoning Ordinance Revision
- Angle Drive/Birch Street intersection
- Spray irrigation of manure
- Junk car ordinance for property zoned residential

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathleen D. Lee