

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Planning & Zoning Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

Planning and Zoning Committee Meeting
(July 12, 2018)

The Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board met July 12, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the DeKalb County Legislative Center, Gathertorium, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Committee Members: Kevin Bunge, Dan Cribben, Steve Faivre, Tracy Jones, Mark Pietrowski, Craig Roman, and Suzanne Willis; and Community Development Department staff: Derek Hiland and Marcellus Anderson. Also in attendance were: Jim Hutcheson, Larry Smith, Brad Belanger, Kevin Hickey, and numerous members of the public; John Baker, of EDF; and County Board Members: Tim Bagby, John Frieders, Tim Hughes, Diane Leifheit, Roy Plote, Chris Porterfield, Stephan Reid, Paul Stoddard, and Jeff Whelan.

Mr. Faivre, Planning and Zoning Chairman, called the meeting to order, and noted that all members were in attendance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Willis moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Roman, and the order carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes of the June 27th Committee meeting, seconded by Mr. Bunge, and the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Faivre explained to the audience that the purpose of the workshops was to develop language for a wind energy ordinance, which would then be submitted to the DeKalb County Hearing Officer as a proposed Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. He then described the process for reviewing a text amendment. In particular, he noted that the first step of the Text Amendment process would be a public hearing, wherein the public would be given the opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions, and voice its support or opposition to the proposed ordinance. He then presented tentative dates for when the public hearing might be held, when the proposed language would come before the Committee, and when it might possibly go before the County Board.

Kevin Hickey, of Milan Township, informed the Committee that his home was surrounded by several wind towers in the existing wind farm, with the closest being approximately 2,383 feet from his house. He then gave a detailed description of the negative impacts the towers have had on his quality of life, including the various ways his family has tried to address issues such as the noise and shadow flicker produced by the towers. He finished his statement by saying that had he knew then what he knows now, he would have fought hard against the approval of the towers. The Committee members and some County Board members in attendance asked him additional questions about his experiences. Mr. Hickey was asked if he would be willing to allow sound testing on his property, and Mr. Hickey said he would.

Brad Belanger, speaking for the Concerned Citizens of DeKalb County, presented the Committee with a written statement thanking the Committee for all its efforts in drafting a wind energy ordinance and expressing their concerns regarding any potential projects.

John Baker, of EDF, informed the Committee that he had asked to stand in for his colleague, P.J. Saliterman, who was away on family matters. He expressed EDF's concerns regarding the Committee's decision to require full decommissioning, instead of the State's standard of only five (5) feet. He noted that EDF did support the use of an aircraft detection lighting system (ADLS) system.

Curt Lang, the Mayor of the City of Sycamore, read a statement wherein he extolled the positives of the Sycamore and DeKalb County, and expressed his concern regarding the heights of the towers being proposed by EDF, and described the wind turbines as a form of visual pollution on the landscape.

Kathy Stelford expressed her belief that in addition to causing bird deaths, the towers resulted in the deaths of hundreds of bats every year. She also expressed her belief that the towers would be violating the Zoning Ordinance in that they would dominating the landscape of County.

Jean Sofranko suggested that EDF should be required to do a rendering of just how the towers would look among the farms and residences.

Larry Sofranko asked about the suggestion made at the previous Committee meeting that flicker be addressed by requiring the turbines to be turned off in the evenings. Mr. Faivre responded that the Committee had not finished discussing that topic and would be returning to it that evening.

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Don Sheppard made a comparison to the placement of wind turbines to the restriction of residences in the A-1 District to zoning lots of at least 40 acres.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS – WIND ENERGY ORDINANCE & DISCUSSION

Mr. Faivre referred to the list of issues regarding wind energy systems that the Committee had been using, and noted that the next items for discussion was the potential for RF/EMF interference caused by wind turbines. The Committee had an extended discussion amongst themselves and with the audience regarding the issue. Mr. Hiland noted that he would explore what other counties had done regarding the issue.

Mr. Jones moved to require that a fund be established by the applicant to help mitigate any interference caused by their wind turbines to RF/EMF transmissions, that a study would be done prior to the construction of any turbines to establish the baseline status of RF/EMF transmissions in the area of the turbines, and that the fund be tied to the decommissioning financial guarantee, seconded by Ms. Willis, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Faivre moved on the next item, Shadow Flicker. The Committee discussed the matter at length with the audience.

Mr. Jones moved that zero (0) shadow flicker be allowed beyond the property line of the property containing the wind turbine and that it be left up to the applicant to determine how that standard would be achieved, seconded by Mr. Roman, and the motion carried unanimously.

The next item addressed was Noise Levels. The Committee began by questioning Lisa Bergeron regarding materials submitted the previous Committee meeting by the Concerned Citizens for DeKalb County. The Committee then questioned Mr. Baker regarding the noise produced by the turbines proposed to be used by EDF. Mr. Baker responded to the questions, but noted that due to the technical nature of several of the questions, he would have to refer several of those questions to EDF's engineers and submit those responses once they had been returned to him.

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Mr. Jones moved to set a noise limit of 30 decibels between 10pm and 7am and a limit of 35 decibels between 7am and 10pm, seconded by Mr. Bunge.

Mr. Jones amended his original motion to include the provision of sound equipment to County staff to verify the sound levels, seconded by Mr. Bunge.

The amended motion was carried unanimously.

The next item was the provision of a property value guarantee. After much discussion amongst the Committee and with other attending Board members, the matter was tabled to the next meeting.

Mr. Faivre noted the next item on the list was Economic Impacts. Mr. Faivre distributed to the Committee additional data submitted to him by Dr. Loomis in response to questions of him asked at the previous Committee meeting. The data was discussed by the Committee, with several audience members disputing the data's significance and validity.

Mr. Faivre noted that further discussion on the matter would be continued at the Committee's next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pietrowski motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Roman, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Faivre
Chairman, Planning and Zoning Committee

MOA: moa

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