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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

Planning and Zoning Committee Minutes
(February 22, 2017)

The Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on February 22, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Legislative Building, Gathertorium, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Committee Members: Kevin Bunge, Dan Cribben, Steve Faivre, Tracy Jones, Mark Pietrowski, Craig Roman, and Suanne Willis. Also in attendance were numerous members of the public, County Board members: Laurie Emmer, John Frieders, Dianne Leifheit, and Roy Plote, Gary Hanson, and Planning, Zoning, and Building Department Staff: Derek Hiland and Marcellus Anderson.

Mr. Faivre, Planning and Zoning Chairman, called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Jones moved to amend the agenda to move item 7 to after item 5, to then be followed by item 8.b, with the rest of the agenda to follow as listed, seconded by Ms. Willis, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jones moved to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Ms. Willis, and the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Pietrowski moved to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2017 meeting, seconded by Mr. Roman, and the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ann Carlson requested that the County Board impose a moratorium on the establishment of any new wind farms until the County Board has time to conduct a full analysis of the effects and effectiveness of the existing wind farm towers.

Brad Belanger read a statement asking the Committee to comment on the alleged Open meetings violation, and that the Committee develop and implement an ordinance governing wind farms, and suggested some steps to include in the process.

Chris Bonine stated that he wanted to go on record as supporting the statements of the previous two speakers.

Cindy Brown stated that she was in opposition to another wind farm being approved and elaborated on her reasons for being in opposition. She also suggested several conditions that should be implemented should a special use permit for a new wind farm be approved.

Sue Galkie described her discussion with various realtors regarding the negative effects of the presence of wind towers on surrounding properties.

Ray Hambone stated he was in opposition to another wind farm, and described the negative effects on the surrounding lands he perceived would occur if wind towers are approved for the proposed area.

Ms. Willis informed the speakers that she had been attempting to take notes regarding their concerns and suggestions, and requested that they write down what they said and send it to either a Committee member or Staff, so that they could have an accurate record of their comments and suggestions.

NEW BUSINESS – SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Mr. Faivre introduced Petition SG-17-01, which was filed by EDF Renewable Development, for an Interim Special Use Permit to allow the construction and operation of two “wind testing towers” on 1) portion of a property located on the east side of McQueen Road between Mowers Road and State Route 64 and 2) on a portion of a property located at the southeast corner of Glawe and Byers Roads both in South Grove Township, the subject properties being zoned A-1, Agricultural District. He noted that a public hearing was held on January 26, 2017, and that the Hearing Officer forwarded a recommendation for approval of the Special Use Permit, with the conditions: permit be valid for maximum of 1.5 years (18 months); that an irrevocable letter-of-credit insuring the towers are removed; and that only one such wind testing tower shall be permitted on each subject property for the purpose identified in the background materials.

Mr. Jones informed the Committee and attendees that per the advice of the States Attorney’s Office, he would not be speaking on or voting on this Special Use Petition, due to a possible conflict of interest regarding the petition. He did note however that he would be free to participate in the discussion regarding the creation of a wind farm ordinance.

Mr. Pietrowski moved to reopen the public hearing, to be held at 5:30 pm or later, and in a larger facility than the previous public hearing was held, seconded by Mr. Cribben, and the motion carried, six (6) aye and one (1) abstention.

Mr. Hiland stated that the staff would begin arrangements to reopen the public hearing. He estimated that due to scheduling and notification requirements, it would be at least three (3) to six (6) weeks before the public hearing could be reopened, and that a public notice regarding the hearing would be prepared and distributed once the exact date was determined.

There was a discussion regarding how the public will be notified regarding the reopened public hearing. Mr. Hiland explained the notification process and noted that the public notice will also appear on the

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DeKalb County website and Facebook pages, and that interested parties can also contact the DeKalb County Planning, Zoning, and Building Department to find the date, time, and location of the reopened public hearing.

Mr. Faivre explained that the reopened hearing is only regarding the interim Special Use application for two (2) wind testing towers, and would not be addressing any possible future wind farms.

OTHER BUSINESS - WIND FARM ORDINANCE UPDATE

Mr. Jones noted that the County did not currently possess an ordinance governing wind farms, and that the existing wind farm is governed solely by a Special Use Permit. He expressed his belief that the County needs to establish a wind farm ordinance, and that this discussion should be about what they (the County Board) should do and how. Mr. Jones suggested that a series of “listening sessions” be set up to allow for public input on what should be included in such an ordinance. He added that the Committee should investigate other existing wind farms and wind farm ordinances to better inform themselves as to what language such an ordinance should contain.

Mr. Jones reviewed an outline, created by Mr. Hiland, regarding the steps the Committee could take regarding the creation of an ordinance governing “wind farms”. Mr. Jones inquired as to what steps would be needed to establish a moratorium on the construction of new wind farms. Mr. Hiland responded that the Committee can adopt his timeline as proposed or in parts. He then described his proposed outline in detail, adding that for a moratorium to be adopted a motion would have to be passed by the Committee.

Ms. Willis suggested that instead of a moratorium for 18 months, as suggested in the timeline, that the moratorium last until such time as the County Board adopts an ordinance governing wind farms.

Mr. Pietrowski moved to recommend that the County Board adopt a moratorium on the construction and establishment of any new wind farms until such time as the County Board adopts an ordinance governing the operation and establishment of such uses, seconded by Mr. Jones, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jones elaborated on why he believed an ordinance was needed.

Mr. Plote suggested that the moratorium should cover all forms of sustainable energy “farms”, not just wind farms. Mr. Jones and Mr. Bunge agree with this suggestion. Mr. Hiland noted that the previous motion could be amended to say “commercial sustainable energy farms”, instead of wind farm.

Mr. Pietrowski moved to amend the previous motions to replace the phrase “wind farm” with “commercial sustainable energy farm”, seconded by Mr. Cribben, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. Jones noted that as the County worked through the process, any information regarding future meetings, “listening sessions”, etc. would be posted on the DeKalb County website.

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Mr. Jones and Ms. Willis reiterated that anyone who wished could always email them with any ideas, comments, etc. they may have regarding this issue.

The Committee took a 10 minute recess.

OLD BUSINESS – ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS

Mr. Hiland reintroduced Petition DC-16-04. This was a petition filed by the Planning, Zoning, and Building Department, under the direction of the Planning and Zoning Committee, for a number of zoning text amendments intended to make it easier for businesses to locate in the unincorporated portion of DeKalb County, to clarify definitions and remove inconsistencies, and to address several small, proof-reading-type errors in the Code. He explained that the required public hearing was held on June 16, 2016 by the DeKalb County Hearing Officer Ron Klein, who recommended approval of the proposed zoning text amendments, with one added change. Mr. Hiland then related to the Committee that the petition had first appeared before them at the July 2016 Committee meeting, the matter being tabled at both that meeting and the following August meeting, and finally postponed at the September meeting to be revisited at the Committee's January meeting.

Mr. Hiland explained that at its January meeting, the Committee tabled the matter because the DeKalb County Farm Bureau requested an opportunity to meet with him regarding the proposed amendments. Mr. Hiland explained that he met with representatives from the Farm Bureau, and had learned much regarding the proposed amendments. However, Mr. Hiland expressed that he would like more time to further meet with the Farm Bureau, so that he could properly prepare himself to present said amendments to the committee. Thus, he asked the Committee if it would table the matter to give him more time.

Mr. Pietrowski moved to table the petition until such time as staff brings the petition back before the Committee, seconded by Mr. Bunge, and the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS – TEXT AMENDMENT DISCUSSION FOR BUILDING CODE WAIVER

Mr. Jones moved to table further discussion on establishing a building code waiver in the A-1, Agricultural District, so that it can be brought forth as part of the text amendments mentioned in the previous item, seconded by Ms. Willis, and the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS – UPDATE ON DEPARTMENT STAFFING CHANGES

Mr. Hiland informed the Committee that the Chief Building Inspector position had been filled, and that he was anticipated to start Monday, February 27, 2017. He also informed the Committee that the new Building Inspector would be attending its March 23, 2017 meeting, so that they may meet him.

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(February 22, 2017)

Mr. Hiland informed the Committee that he was working with County Administrator Gary Hanson to craft a posting for a Economic Development Coordinator. The position was vacated with the retirement of Mary Supple. Mr. Hiland stated that after Ms. Supple retired, Brad Burzynski has stepped in as an interim replacement until the position is filled. He noted that he was working out the details of the position with Mr. Hanson and anticipated having the posting listed within the next couple of weeks.

OTHER BUSINESS – MEETING TIME PZC MEETING

Mr. Hiland noted that in its January meeting, the Committee asked that he add the possibility of changing the start time for its meetings as a discussion item for its February meeting.

Mr. Jones moved to change the start time for the Planning & Zoning Committee meeting from 7:00 pm to 6:30 pm, seconded by Ms. Willis, and the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Faivre
Chairman, Planning and Zoning Committee

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