

City of Escanaba
PLANNING COMMISSION – OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
January 10, 2019

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

A meeting of the Escanaba Planning Commission was held on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at 6:00pm in Room C101 at City Hall, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829.

ROLL CALL

Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Chair Kel Smyth		X	Comm. Dominic Benetti		X
Vice-Chair Christine Williams	X		Sec. Brian Black	X	
Sec. James Hellerman	X		Comm. Paul Caswell		X
Dep. Sec. Craig Gierke	X		Comm. Richard Clark	X	
			Comm. Stephen Davis	X	

A quorum of the Planning Commission was present.

ALSO PRESENT

City Administration	Others
Blaine DeGrave, Planning & Zoning Administrator	Mark Hannemann
Roxanne Spencer, Confidential Secretary	Glendon Brown
Ron Beauchamp, City Council Liaison	Richard Pichette
Marc Tall, Mayor	Joe Kaplan
Ralph Blasier, City Council Member	
Peggy Schumann, City Council Member	

Approximately three unnamed individuals were also present.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Gierke, seconded by Hellerman to approve the December 13, 2018 minutes as submitted. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

AGENDA

DeGrave suggested that the Unfinished Business Item #1 regarding the Zoning Map Review should be moved after the Public Hearings.

A motion was made by Williams, seconded by Hellerman to approve the agenda with the following adjustments: move the Unfinished Business Item #1 regarding Zoning Map Review to after the Public Hearings. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS - None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Wind Turbine Energy Ordinance

Williams commented that she was exercising her authority to extend the public comment time allotment from two minutes to three minutes each for this ordinance hearing.

Williams then explained the development history and the basic layout of the proposed ordinance, including the three types of wind energy implementation (residential units, small-scale with multiple installations on one property, large industrial). Discussion followed regarding topics including defining output, blade size, height, set-

back distances, noise levels, frequencies, and how advancing technology affects some of these factors. Safety concerns and electrical code regulations were also discussed. Williams noted that the recommended maximum heights of the wind turbines were based on the maximum heights of buildings currently allowed in the residential and heavy manufacturing zoning districts. Discussion also took place regarding the possibility of prohibiting large-scale turbines within city limits; it was determined that while they can't legally be prohibited altogether, they could be restricted to certain zones such as heavy industrial. There was general consensus that one of the primary focuses of the ordinance should be the reduction or elimination of nuisances (noise, flicker, etc.) to people on neighboring properties.

Williams opened the floor for general public comment.

Glendon Brown, member of the City of Escanaba's Electrical Advisory Committee, made a recommendation to have Mike Furmanski of the Electric Department review the proposed ordinance before finalizing it. He also referred to the City's new Solar Generation facility and program as a model for including energy credits based on avoided costs for private wind generation energy.

Richard Pichette, Garden Township Supervisor, spoke about the great contention that the recent wind turbine additions have created in their community and warned about being careful in dealings with the larger companies. He noted that having a good ordinance (including restrictions on height, setbacks, and de-commissioning plans) in place prior to any having project applications submitted would make a big difference in controlling negative reactions and experiences.

Joe Kaplan, of 2315 Lake Shore Drive, stated that the most important principle is to avoid creating a nuisance to neighbors for any scale of wind turbine (shadow flicker, lights at night, and sound, especially in residential districts) and that the ordinance should address these concerns specifically.

Vice-Chair Williams closed the floor to general public comments.

The Planning Commission continued discussion with regard to which districts the different types of wind turbine systems should be allowed. Consensus was that the large-scale utility systems should only be allowed in heavy manufacturing districts. Additional discussion centered on controlling associated nuisances, with the Commission agreeing that the wind turbine ordinance should be similar to current zoning ordinance language regarding home occupations, prohibiting the projection of noise, flicker, and vibrations beyond the property line. Clarification of the approval process was also discussed, culminating in the recommendation that small systems could be approved by the Code Official as long as they met all the standards. Larger systems would be subject to Planning Commission approval via the established site plan review process.

Summary of Next Actions: Williams will modify the proposed ordinance based on discussion and recommendations from this meeting; Administration will submit the revised ordinance to Mike Furmanski for review and comment; the revised ordinance will be placed on the February Planning Commission agenda for further review.

2. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

DeGrave explained that the Planning Commission is tasked with reviewing the zoning ordinance and had reviewed Chapters 18 & 19 regarding Site Plan and Sketch Plan Standards and Development Standards at a previous meeting and approved the changes shown in the proposal. This evening's meeting serves as the public hearing for the proposed ordinance change prior to the recommendation to City Council for approval.

Vice-Chair Williams opened the public hearing.

No public comments.

Vice-Chair Williams closed the public hearing.

Gierke made a motion, seconded by Davis, to submit the proposed changes to Chapters 18 and 19 of the Zoning Ordinance to City Council for approval. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Discussion: Zoning Map Review

DeGrave explained that the Planning Commission has been reviewing the corridor along North Lincoln Road for recommended changes in zoning designations, primarily to "E – Commercial". Maps showing all the specific recommended changes were submitted in the agenda packet. Review of other sections of the map will take place in the future.

Gierke made a motion, seconded by Hellerman, to accept the proposed zoning map changes to the North Lincoln Road corridor to E-Commercial as presented. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Planning Commission Annual Report Review

Gierke made a motion, seconded by Clark, to approve the Planning Commission annual report as submitted and to present it to City Council. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

2. Project Updates

a. Zoning Board of Appeals Hearings/Decisions

- Approved a use variance for U-Haul to place storage units in front yard space at 801 North Lincoln Road, with conditions on location, aesthetics, and landscaping. Discussion followed on whether this decision would set a precedent for other similar requests. DeGrave noted ZBA did discuss the possibility and decided that each request stood on its own and would have to prove their own hardship case before the ZBA.

b. Delta County Planning Commission Update: No Report. The meeting scheduled on Monday was cancelled due to weather and has not yet been re-scheduled.

c. Zoning/Land Use Permit Update: No report presented, as annual report was already reviewed in the meeting.

d. Goal Progress Review – DeGrave noted that he will be trying to get form-based training for February/March meetings.

e. Training Updates – Final training hours numbers for 2018 were recorded in the annual report. Please update Roxanne with any training hours completed throughout the year.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Pichette added to his earlier comments regarding wind turbines that the large ones in Garden Township make a very loud whooshing sound.

COMMISSION/STAFF COMMENTS

Gierke requested an additional copy of the warning letter sent to the contractor on the Chamber of Commerce project as he was unable to open the one forwarded previously.


ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Hellerman, seconded by Davis, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12pm..



Kel Smyth, Chairperson
Escanaba Planning Commission



Blaine DeGrave, Planning and Zoning Administrator
City of Escanaba

Minutes approved at the February 14, 2019 meeting. RS