

JONESFIELD TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
DTE SPECIAL USE PERMIT  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 18, 2020

- 1) Meeting called to order 7:04 pm
- 2) Roll Call:
  - a) Present: Mike Kenny, Mark Gath, Kathy Nock, Richard Bluemer
  - b) Absent: Mike Keenan
- 3) Pledge of Allegiance
- 4) FSBR & Jim Gray (host) to review remote meeting procedures
- 5) Review and approval of the Agenda
  - a) The approval of meeting minutes from November 12, 2020 will be postponed due to the incompleteness of public comments. Minutes will be approved at the next scheduled meeting.
    - i) Motion by Kathy Nock
    - ii) Support by Mark Gath
    - iii) Motion passed unanimously
- 6) Review & Approval of minutes -this was tabled (see above)
  - a) Motion to approve:
  - b) Support:
  - c) Motion
- 7) Public Comment –
  - a) **Correspondence and Calls Received by Planning Commission (Prior to Meeting):**  
FSBR read the names of 178+ residents who had signed a form letter in support of the wind project in February of 2020. Jon Miller has written three letters over the last few years of this process and asked that his final letter which was received Nov. 16, 2020 be read (which was read aloud during the meeting by Chair Bluemer). Chairman Bluemer summarized a phone message from Kathy Alby in support of DTE's proposed wind energy development and a letter from David Zeitler from Mt. Haley Twp who believes that DTE is forward and trustworthy (and also expressed support of the project).  
**Correspondence received related to this meeting is attached.**
  - b) Mike Buza: With ups & downs of the economy, farming has had rough years. Believes the wind energy project will provide steady income for landowners and the community. Stated that DTE has been around for lots of years and they follow through on their contracts. Believes that those who are anti wind turbines are being pushed by coal company propaganda.
  - c) Ruth Coppens: Thanked the commission for doing their due diligence having everything in compliance as well as Porter and Mt. Haley townships. Stated that the economy is in crisis and the DTE wind project would kick start our economy. Glad that Barton Marlow was hired, they have done a great job on other projects. Stated that DTE has started putting in new culverts. She feels that she can turn corners safely now without putting the farm truck in the ditch.

- d) Lee Glazier read his letter in support of the proposed wind energy development. Believes the PC needs to follow the current Zoning Ordinance, which requires approving the project. Stated that the 2019 vote was not pro or against wind and future election results show that the residents support this project.
- e) Paul Prebay: Resident of Richland and a business manager for LIUNA local labor union 1098. He supports local jobs for local people. He worked safely on other wind projects. He supports the project and asks that we move forward.
- f) Jeff Larson: Resides in Saginaw Township and is part of the American Cancer Society. DTE is using their property in Merrill to sponsor a remote feeder event to celebrate those living and remember those lost. It would bring many people to Merrill which would support local business.
- g) Brad Blanchard: Brad covers the Great Lakes region for the Veteran's Coalition. They donate food to food banks and have been a part of the Sanford flood response. DTE has been a great sponsor.
- h) Mitzi Zanotti: She works for the Saginaw Spirit where DTE has adopted school and sponsor tickets for hockey games. Tickets are given to the school to pass out for free to students. States DTE is a good community partner.
- i) Debra Sanchez: She is the director of Saginaw Promise. DTE is very supportive of many non-profit organizations. DTE becomes a part of the communities they are in.
- j) Ron Perry: Stated he is from Mt. Haley Township and owns a farm. He said that the Township should trust their experts, which he believes are recommending approval of the project.
- k) Rochelle Siler (Spoke Twice): Stated phone option of GoToMeeting does not allow the public to view any documents that are shared. Does not support the proposed project and believes any approval will cause a bad precedent. Wants three specific turbines independently reviewed. Believes access roads will cause flooding. Referenced that she believes DTE's application does not adequately address setbacks.
- l) Ron Garrett: Believes the Township should proceed as applicant met all requirements. The Township should not create a new ordinance. We have an ordinance respect the vote of the residents.
- m) Peter Sinclair: He is part of the project in Midland County. This has been hard work under historic hard times. Saginaw, Midland and Great Lakes area stand to benefit, schools and jobs. This is long term clean energy. There has been a lot of harsh and unfair criticism from a few.
- n) Stan Brown: Look at the big picture. Doesn't matter if Republican or Democrat. If there is a new regime, they will get rid of fossil fuels. We could be on the forefront of getting this done. Supports project.
- o) Jon Miller (Also Had Letter Read): Involved in process for two years. He wrote letters on his position of the process. He stated he heard support from members outside of township but believes they don't have to deal with the flicker, sound, or looking at turbines. He is disheartened. He wants a fair ordinance. His land is affected by the turbine to be next his property and that person doesn't live in the township. Jon is concerned with section 606e. He believes his property rights are affected.

- p) Mike Rush: His son works for DTE and is associated with the Junior Achievement program. Supports the project and believes DTE is a good community partner.
  - q) Barry Playford: Thanked the commission for their time and effort. Stated that the PC shouldn't reinvent the wheel. He works with farmers that have them already and there are no concerns. There may be challenges as the project goes forward. DTE takes care of the issues as they come up. There are pains from loss of business in the village. DTE is here to help Merrill move forward. They have done above and beyond to help develop this community.
  - r) Helen Laurenz: She has four turbines already in Lafayette township. She has one across the road from her, which has deer standing underneath it. She doesn't notice any sound from them. They have put in a nice driveway. It has really been a benefit. They help on utility bills. Would like to send a letter to the township to have it on record.
  - s) Close public comment at 8:30PM
- 8) DTE Meridian Wind Park "SLUP" Application.
- a) Conflict disclosures were read by FSBR representative. They were read and accepted by motion to be part of the record
    - i) Motion by: Richard Bluemer
    - ii) Support By: Mark Gath
    - iii) Roll call vote: Bluemer – yes, Gath – yes, Kenny – yes, Nock – yes
    - iv) Motion carries (unanimous)
  - b) Planning Commission deliberation
    - i) For community members who may not have been at the November 12, 2020 meeting, FSBR reviewed activities from that meeting. Tonight's focus will be on sections 606, 611 and 612 of zoning ordinance. There is a proposed resolution with conditions from Spicer's for the commission to review.
    - ii) Commission Deliberation – The Planning Commission deliberated the proposed wind energy project and members Nock, Gath, and Bluemer indicated support for approving the project, but with the requirement of having DTE prepare a plan to address emergency response plan. Member Kenny does not support approving the project and thinks that the PC is working in reverse (fitting an ordinance to a project rather than vice versa). Member Kenny presented a Powerpoint presentation summarizing why he is voting no on the project. **PowerPoint Presentation attached.**
    - iii) R. Bluemer: Based on Spicer's report and conditions now incorporated into the draft resolution, made a motion to accept DTE's SLUP as presented with the additional condition of a fire and emergency response plan.
      - (1) Support by Mark Gath
      - (2) Roll call vote: Gath – yes, Nock – yes, Bluemer – yes, Kenny – no
      - (3) Motion carries by split vote
  - c) Alan Bean from Spicer's will need 3-4 weeks to prepare for site plan meeting.
    - i) A special planning commission meeting will be held on December 17, 2020 at 6:00 pm for a site plan review.
- 9) Next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on January 12, 2021 at 7:00pm.
- 10) Meeting adjourned at 9:39

- a) Motion by Mike Kenny
- b) Support by Kathy Nock
- c) Roll call vote: Bluemer – yes, Nock – yes, Kenny – yes, Gath – yes

**Submitted by Secretary Kathy Nock.**