

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 24, 2007**

The Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on October 24, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room East located in the DeKalb County Administration Building. In attendance were Committee Members Roger Steimel, Marlene Allen, Eileen Dubin, Anita Turner, Vince Faivre, Michael Haines, Pat Vary, and staff members Paul Miller and Rebecca Von Drasek. Also in attendance was Dewaine and Carol Nelson.

Mr. Steimel, Planning and Zoning Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order, and noted that all members from the Committee were present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Ms. Vary moved to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2007 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Committee, seconded by Mr. Faivre, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Mr. Haines moved to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Ms. Dubin, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT**

Mr. Miller briefed the Planning and Zoning Committee on Zoning Text Amendments which are proposed by Al Winters. Mr. Winters filed the petition for three Amendments to allow small wind turbines to be located on properties in unincorporated DeKalb County. Mr. Miller explained that the proposed changes to the Ordinance included: definitions for Small Wind Energy System, Wind Small Energy Turbine, and Wind Small Tower; revisions to the Supplementary District Regulations height exceptions to accommodate towers; and to the Accessory Structure regulations to establish regulations for such structures. The application distinguishes between large wind electric production as a turbine producing over 100 kW, and a “small” wind electric production as producing 100 kW or less.

A public hearing for this Zoning Text Amendment was conducted by Hearing Officer Ron Klein on September 27, 2007. Mr. Miller highlighted the Hearing Officer’s findings and recommendations. The Hearing Officer recommended approval of Text Amendments with revisions to the initial application. The revisions included: restricting such towers to properties of two acres or more in area; restricting tower height to 100 feet; requiring towers to be set back a minimum of 120 feet from a property line; and restricting the number of wind towers to one per zoning lot. The Hearing Officer further revised the application by recommending against the proposed neighbor notification regulation. Mr. Miller supported this decision, as notification is impractical unless it is part of a public hearing process. Mr. Miller emphasized that approval of the Amendments would allow for structures which could alter the appearance of the countryside in unincorporated DeKalb County. He also acknowledge the County Board’s support for

alternative energy sources and noted that these wind towers are one such option. He added that these towers can already be constructed on farms by right, as they are considered agricultural structures and are thus exempt from most County regulations.

Mr. Steimel inquired as to the differences these tower have with the commercial towers. Mr. Miller responded that these towers are considerably smaller scale turbines and blades, and that the power generation is a 10 times smaller at 100 kW versus 1 megawatt on the wind farm towers.

Ms. Vary noted that these proposed towers were taller that the old windmills.

Ms. Allen asked if the towers could only be used for personal use. The representative for the applicant, Mr. Nelson, responded that ComEd deducts the power generated from the owner's bill, but only to the point where that bill has a zero due amount. ComEd does not pay the individual for remnant power generated. Mr. Miller reiterated that both commercial and residential uses could have these towers, provided that the meet all the other zoning requirements they just unable to sell the power generated.

Mr. Haines inquired if these towers were considered safe by utility companies, for example feedback on the line? Mr. Nelson responded that the system could not feedback onto the lines if correctly installed, and that individuals with these towers would also lose power during a blackout if they did not have battery storage.

Mr. Haines stated he understood the concern about catastrophic failure but asked why the setback from the Hearing Officer was exactly 120 feet, he felt that this might create an unnecessary restriction for some property owners and asked for an alternative. Mr. Miller explained that since the towers were limited to a 100 ft or less, the Hearing Officer was intentionally creating a larger space from the largest tower.

Mr. Haines asked the applicant's representative what the average height of the structures were? Mrs. Nelson suggested that the current models are designed to be about 30 ft above any obstacles, and that a average height estimate was between 60 - 80 ft.

In response to Mr. Haines concern that the towers be adequately set back, but not necessarily 120 feet, Mr. Miller suggested that the standard could require a setback equal to the height of the tower plus 10 percent.

Ms. Vary agreed that the County should be a leader in energy conservation, and stated she did not believe the towers to be damaging to the ascetics if the DeKalb County.

*Ms. Vary then made a motion to approve the amendments to the zoning ordinance as proposed in the Hearing Officer's findings, with a revision of the setback requirement to be the height of the tower plus 10 percent, seconded by Mr. Haines. The motion passed unanimously.*

Mr. Steimel inquired as to the average cost of such a system. Mr. Nelson stated approximately \$18,000 - \$20,000 before state subsidies to set up the system and with good maintenance that the

towers had a life expectancy of 20-25 years. Mrs. Nelson stated that the generation begins with winds at 7 mph and works at peak efficiency at 12 mph, and highlighted that it is predicted to take 6-7 years to break even.

### **DEPARTMENT BUDGET FY 2008**

The draft budget for the Planning, Zoning, and Building Department for fiscal year 2008 was provided to the Committee members for their review and suggestions. Mr. Miller pointed out that there were no major increases in the Department budget. He reiterated that in the Special Projects budget he had made the request for \$5,000 the Comprehensive Plan update planned to begin in FY 2008, if so directed by the County Board visioning process, with the bulk of the work to be done in FY 2009 and possible adoption by FY 2010.

Mr. Faivre noted that Zoning Officer line item was not projected to meet the budgeted amount. Mr. Miller said that this line item is dependent upon requests for a hearing by property owners, which have decreased this year.

### **NOVEMBER & DECEMBER MEETINGS**

The Committee briefly discussed the upcoming meeting schedule and decided to meet November 28, 2007 as scheduled and to cancel the December 26, 2007 meeting. The regular January meeting date will begin 2008 on the normal schedule, meeting the fourth Wednesday of every month.

### **PERSONNEL**

This item concerned the annual performance review of Mr. Miller as the Planning Director. The Committee briefly discussed the positive correspondence from County Administrator Ray Bockman regarding Mr. Miller's performance over the past year. Mr. Miller reminded the Committee of the criteria by which they are asked to evaluate department heads, including whether or not the Standard Work Plan has been met, and the continuing professional development activities. The third area concerns merit pay for extraordinary service.

Mr. Steimel recognized correspondence sent by Ms. Vary nominating Mr. Miller for merit pay, and highlighting his handling of the recent flood event and his ability to explain a confusing aid system to the residents of Evergreen Village. She noted that a recent County Board meeting attended by many residents of Evergreen Village could have been unpleasant without Mr. Miller's explanations.

Following further discussion, Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Vary and the Committee for their recognition and acknowledged his staff for their diligent service.

*Ms. Vary then made a motion to move the recommendation by Ms. Vary to Executive Session, motion was seconded by Ms. Turner. The motion passed unanimously.*

**ADJOURNMENT** -- *Ms. Allen moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Turner, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Roger Steimel**  
**Planning and Zoning Committee Chairman**

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