

**MINUTES of the GRANT COUNTY
AREA PLAN COMMISSION
November 7, 2011**

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AREA PLAN COMMISSION OF GRANT COUNTY was held on Monday, November 7, 2011 at 7:00 PM in a regularly scheduled meeting on the first floor of the Grant County Office Complex at 401 South Adams Street, Marion, Indiana. Members present: Chuck Briede, Mike Burton, Jim McWhirt, Tony Manry, Dick Treon, Dick Trobridge, and John Bonham, President. Members absent: Bob Bothwell, Myron Brankle, Robert Couse, Bob Monroe, Kim Windle, and John Woodmansee. Staff present: Executive Director Steve Niblick, and Recording Secretary Debbie Wallace.

John Bonham opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Tony Manry moved Dick Trobridge seconded to approve the minutes from August 1, 2011; all members present voted yes. Vote 7 – 0, motion carried.

There were no petitions filed for this meeting.

Other business:

2012 meeting schedule:

Dick Trobridge moved Jim McWhirt seconded to approve the 2012 APC & BZA meeting schedules as printed. Vote 7 – 0; motion carried.

2012 appointments:

Some appointments to the APC board are up January 1, 2012. Those members will need to be either re-appointed or someone new appointed. The jurisdictions that have members whose terms expire will be notified.

The election of officers for the Plan Commission will be held on the first meeting of 2012. Any existing members whose terms expire will continue to serve on the board until they are reappointed or someone is appointed to replace them.

Wind farms

Steve Niblick, on August 17th, met with John Needler, and his son Josh to discuss some concerns they have regarding the existing ordinance for wind farms. There were four issues that the Needlers' suggested changes with the existing ordinance:

1. setbacks (153.559 of AWZO) – Mr. Needler feels that the setbacks should be different for small and large WECS; currently the same formula is used for both sizes; would like to see the small WECS change to 1.5 times the tower height and diameter of the blade. The large WECS would be change to at 1600 feet or 1/3 mile minimum; would prefer ½ to ¾ mile
2. noise vibrations; (153.562.C of AWZO) maximum is 60 decibels they think it should be reduced to 40 – 45 decibels
3. signage (153.562.E of AWZO) identification on the towers – signage on fencing or towers; have a local contact number, rather than a 1 – 800 number
4. off-site drainage (153.568B of AWZO) – access towers could cause surface and subsurface drainage problems, and if tiles are damaged questioned how would that be handled.

Starting with the last two items, good ideas and concerns, however at this time the APC office would not recommend changing the ordinance to address those two. When the permit is applied for staff will find out if the number is a local number or a 1 -800 number. The Surveyor and highway superintendent will be consulted prior to any permit being issued, to insure there would be no damage to the highways or drainage issues.

The first two issues addressing the setbacks and noise vibration –representation by EON has indicated that the towers will be built farther apart then what the ordinance would require, which would decrease the noise vibration. At this point nothing has been submitted to the APC office for review. Understand that the project will start in Madison and Tipton Counties first, will stay in contact with those two directors to see what they are building in those counties prior to coming to Grant County. Would not recommend changing any part of the ordinance at this time.

Jim McWhirt questioned if EON had been contacted about any of the suggested change, what their reaction is. A possible problem is that the County has an agreed contract with EON based on the current ordinance.

Niblick – this should be Grant County's decision and not EON. Steve has received three emails in addition to Mr. Needler's son and the gentleman from Madison County that voiced objections, no one else has contacted the office.

John Bonham went to Benton County, which has an existing wind farm, and spoke with some of the residents that live there. He talked with people that live on property that has a wind tower. Spoke to employees in a dollar store and also customers. No one had negative comments; most felt the wind farm was a positive thing for the town.

Niblick – attended the annual Indiana Planning meeting some of the changes to Indiana Planning Law allow handguns to be brought into public meetings. The process by which you appeal the Plan Commission final decisions, has been rewritten, part of the notification of anyone who files suit against the Plan Commission or BZA that has also changed. One thing that will have to be changed is the sign in sheet; you would list your name and address and if you want to be noticed of any suit filed you would check a box on the sheet.

The comp plan meeting will be held immediately after this meeting.

Public input:

John and Josh Needler: voiced their concerns regarding wind farms and the effect on property values, noise vibrations, setbacks etc. Stated they would take their concerns to the County Commissioners.

There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 7:53 PM

John Bonham, President