

Thomas County Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2017

The Thomas County Planning Commission convened in open and public session at 2:01 p.m., November 21, 2017 in the courtroom of the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford, NE. Members present were Mark Nutter, Bob Childers, Lemoyne Dailey, Judy Rath, Carolyn Warren, and Miles Maseberg. Board member Al Atkins arrived at 2:05 p.m. Absent board members were Jim Purdum and Larry Haake. Also present were Thomas County Zoning Administrator Lorissa Hartman, County Attorney Kurt Arganbright. Guests in attendance were Twyla Witt, Tyler Rath, Chase Rath, Melissa Licking, Jacob Alishouse-Nebraska Land Trust, Merrial Rhoades, Ann Warren, Dusty Paxton, and Melanie Coffman. Chairman Nutter stated open meeting guidelines are posted as required by law and copies are available, if requested. Notice of meeting was given by publication in the Thomas County Herald on November 9, 2017.

Motion made by Warren and second by Childers to adopt the November 21, 2017 meeting agenda. Roll call vote: Ayes – Dailey, Maseberg, Childers, Nutter, Atkins, Warren, Rath. Nays – none. Absent- Purdum, Haake. Motion carried.

Motion made by Childers and second by Dailey to approve the August 10, 2017 planning commission minutes as published in the Thomas County Herald on August 17, 2017. Roll call vote: Ayes – Maseberg, Childers, Rath, Dailey, Warren, Atkins. Nays – none. Abstain – Nutter. Absent – Purdum, Haake. Motion carried.

Discussion was held on the proposed acquisition by Nebraska Land Trust regarding a conservation easement on property owned by Riley & Melissa Licking, and Jacob Licking. The board asked questions for both Melissa Licking and Jacob Alishouse. The comprehensive plan was reviewed to determine if the conservation easement met with the district in which it is located, which is the AG District. Motion made by Warren and second by Maseberg to make a recommendation to the Thomas County Board of Commissioners to approve the conservation easement with Lickings and Nebraska Land Trust. Roll call vote: Ayes – Atkins, Rath, Maseberg, Warren, Dailey, Childers, Nutter. Nays – none. Absent – Haake, Purdum. Motion carried.

The board then reviewed each page of the suggested changes to the Zoning regulations that had been received from the public. Once the changes have been updated the Planning board will hold another meeting to review the changes to the regulations. No action taken at this time.

No discussion was held on the comprehensive plan changes at this time.

Motion made by Atkins and second by Warren to recommend the reappointment to the Thomas County Commissioners for board members, Mark Nutter, Bob Childers and Lemoyne Dailey. Roll call vote: Ayes – Warren, Childers, Dailey, Maseberg, Nutter, Rath, Atkins. Nays – none. Absent – Haake, Purdum. Motion carried.

Public comment:

Twyla Witt advised the board about various counties in Nebraska and how they are handling wind energy regulations. She also addressed her concerns about placing the Zoning Administrator in charge of decisions solely. She also expressed her concerns about how the fire response will be handled for wind towers. Information from a lawsuit on wind energy in another state was handed out to the board members. Another topic discussed was Blue Stem and easements. Twyla also complimented Mark Nutter on how he as the chairman of the board ran the meeting.

Mel Coffman asked that the board consider putting into the regulations of taking video of the site and surrounding area, including roads, be done before construction begins. She also asked the board to consider adding an inflation rate to the cost of the liability bond. Also requested that each tower have a test well rather than every 10 towers.

Merrial Rhoades asked the board if they would like to hear real life stories from people living next to wind towers.

Ann Warren told the board about a family in Colorado and the issues they are dealing with living next to wind turbines. She also requested that the board “Just say NO to wind turbines”.

Twyla Witt also commented that Senator Tom Brewer is still working on LB504 and is also looking into the possibility of changing the language to include the whole state rather than just the Sandhills.

Correspondence from Barb Welch was passed out to the board.

No other public comment at this time.

Chairman Nutter adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Thomas County Zoning Administrator
Lorissa Hartman

