

Thomas County Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 18, 2019

The Thomas County Planning Commission convened in open and public session at 2:01 p.m., April 18, 2019 in the courtroom of the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford, NE. Members present were Mark Nutter, Bob Childers, Lemoyne Dailey, Bobbi Scott, Carolyn Warren, Al Atkins, Miles Maseberg and Jay Jones. Absent – Larry Haake. Also present were Zoning Administrator/County Clerk Lorissa Hartman, Keith Carl of Hanna:Keelan, County Sheriff Gary Eng, Deputy County Sheriff Joseph Smith, Virgil Uhrmacher, Barb Bryant, Diane & Allen Andersen, Lisa Eng, Linda Cowdin, Lee Ray, Linda Kuenle, Jack Johnston, Seth & Becca Ray, Lewis Herbaugh, Tom & Twyla Witt, Dan Wadas, Terry Higgins, Norma Butler, Allen Ewoldt, Marion & Merrial Rhoades, Judy Rath, Tyler Rath, Ann Warren, Jeri Huddle and Tim Bickett. 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 April 4, 2019, letters were sent to surrounding counties and the villages in Thomas County.

Motion made by Dailey and second by Scott to adopt the April 18, 2019 meeting agenda. Roll call vote: Ayes – Childers, Maseberg, Dailey, Scott, Warren, Atkins, Jones, Nutter. Nays – none. Absent – Haake. Motion carried.

Motion made by Atkins and second by Jones to approve the March 15, 2019 planning commission minutes as published in the Thomas County Herald on March 21, 2019. Roll call vote: Ayes – Maseberg, Jones, Dailey, Atkins, Warren, Scott, Nutter, Childers. Nays – none. Absent – Haake. Motion carried.

Chairman Nutter recessed the regular meeting at 2:03 p.m. to open the public hearing on Amending the AGR district. Two letters of comment were received in the County Clerk's office. Secretary Lemoyne Dailey read the letters from Vaughn Blauvelt and Shari Kenton requesting not to allow the amendment to the AGR district.

Chairman Nutter offered the public the opportunity to speak, giving each person a five-minute time limit.

Lisa Eng stated that she was against the amendment to allow the cow/calf dry bed confinement facility in the AGR district. Some of the concerns were this would hurt businesses and property values with the odor and flies. Also concerned about the river and any contamination.

Barb Bryant was concerned about the well water on her property. She reminded the board about the dog kennels that used to be on the old sale barn property and the noise from barking.

Norma Butler voiced concerns about the Village streets and the additional traffic this would cause to the already deteriorating streets. The facility would not pay taxes to the Village to help with the cost. Another concern was what other confinement facilities would want to come into the AGR district. Also was concerned about odor and flies.

Jack Johnston was concerned that if we changed the AGR district it would open a can of worms. Future lawsuits are a concern. The AGR district was zoned this way for a reason.

Twyla Witt was against the amendment and had the same concerns as everyone else. Very concerned about future requests.

Allen Andersen stated there was no reason to change the AGR district after hearing all of these concerns.

Terry Higgins-Village of Thedford maintenance person stated that the Village of Thedford had no concerns about the Wellhead Protection District area and there was no concern about the existing water wells. They have an Ordinance that states confinement facilities need to be 1,000 feet from their wells, the proposed site will be far enough away from the well.

Lewis Herbaugh questioned whether there is a conflict with the Village having a one-mile jurisdiction from their village limits. Keith Carl stated since the Village of Thedford is not zoned they do not have the one-mile jurisdiction.

Linda Cowdin asked for a larger map of Halsey to show the AGR district.

Terry Higgins had questions about the compost pile.

Mark Nutter, Carolyn Warren, Al Atkins and Lorissa Hartman reported on the trip to Rising City to see a facility such as the one that Lee Ray would like to build. Pictures of that facility were taken and passed around to the Planning commission board and members of the public.

Tim Bickett, contractor for hoop buildings, addressed questions and concerns about EPA and DEQ specifications. 100 square feet per cow/calf pair is typically figured when building this facility. He also stated that flies are usually not a problem with these buildings.

Al Atkins stated that the feed would cause more smell than the manure due to the cattle being on a high roughage diet. He also felt that you had to deal with more sickness with the cattle in this type of facility than on cattle grazing in the sunlight.

Virgil Uhrmacher voiced concern about the weight limit on the bridge. The trucks would not have to cross the bridge to get to this facility.

Ann Warren questioned if this would be a year-round facility. Lee Ray answered that the pairs would be in the barn approximately 90 days and would keep rotating with new cattle. Questions about using the building for weaning were asked.

Tom Witt asked questions about how to determine the animal units would be figured. The Thomas County Zoning definitions define cow/calf pair as 1.2 X _____ number of head. Some in the crowd and planning commission felt that the cow/calf pair counted as 1.

Miles Maseberg questioned the feeding process. Concerns were if the feed was run through a grinder and what type of dust would be produced.

Chairman Nutter asked for any other public comment.

Chairman Nutter closed the public hearing at 3:01 p.m. and reconvened the regular meeting.

Chairman Nutter asked for a motion on the proposed amendment.

Motion made by Atkins and second by Jones to amend the AGR district to allow a maximum of 200 head cow/calf dry bed confinement facility by special use permit. Roll call vote: Ayes – Jones, Dailey, Warren, Atkins, Childers. Nays – Maseberg, Nutter. Abstain – Scott. Absent – Haake. Motion carried.

Keith Carl of Hanna:Keelan discussed and reviewed with the board the existing and future land use maps. No changes were suggested.

Thomas County goals and policies were reviewed. Under the General Goals the board asked Keith Carl to remove item #7, monitoring energy consumption. On page 3, Land Use Goal 1.5 is to be removed also. On page 4 Goal 2.5 the Republican River needs removed and Dismal River and Middle Loup River need added.

Discussion was held on annual review of the Comprehensive Plan. Every agenda always leaves the option open to review the comprehensive plan and zoning regulations at every meeting.

The next meeting with Hanna:Keelan will be held on Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

Public comment. The County Clerk advised the board that she had received correspondence from Logan County about a hearing for their amendments to the Logan County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Regulations to be held on Monday, April 29 at 2:00 p.m. at the Logan County Courthouse, Stapleton.

No other public comments at this time.

Chairman Nutter adjourned the meeting a 4:01 p.m.

Thomas County Zoning Administrator
Lorissa Hartman