

Thomas County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
February 24, 2022

The Thomas County Planning Commission convened in open and public session at 4:30 p.m., February 24, 2022 in the Commissioners meeting room of the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford NE. Members present were Royce Jennings, Carolyn Warren, Shane Pettit, Jay Jones. Absent – Miles Maseberg, Bobbi Scott, Linda Cowdin. Also present were Thomas County Zoning Administrator Lorissa Hartman, Keith Hartman, Tom Witt, Twyla Witt and Melanie Coffman.

Chairman Jones 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 February 10, 2022.

Motion made by Warren and second by Jennings to adopt the February 24, 2022 agenda. Roll call vote: Ayes – Jones, Pettit, Warren, Jennings. Nays – none. Absent – Maseberg, Scott, Cowdin. Motion carried.

Motion made by Pettit and second by Warren to approve the January 5, 2022 meeting minutes as published in the Thomas County Herald on January 13, 2022. Roll call vote: Ayes – Warren, Jennings, Jones, Pettit. Nays – none. Absent – Scott, Cowdin, Maseberg. Motion carried.

Planning Board member Maseberg arrived at 4:32 p.m.

Chairman Jones opened the discussion of Conservation Easements and the lack of language in the current Thomas County Comprehensive Plan to address these easements. Chairman Jones recounted the conversations that he has held with the Thomas County Attorney and Dave Sands of The Nebraska Land Trust. He presented information that he had found from the proposed language in the Cherry County Comprehensive Plan and the current state statutes about conservation easements.

The board and public reviewed and discussed the information provided to them.

Motion made by Jones and second by Maseberg to draft an amendment for the Thomas County Comprehensive Plan that would incorporate the language and state statutes for conservation easements. Roll call vote: Ayes- Jennings, Pettit, Warren, Jones, Maseberg. Nays – none. Absent – Scott, Cowdin. Motion carried.

Discussion was held on the inquiry from CPPD of permit needed to install EV chargers at an existing convenience store/service station. After review of the Commercial District and conversations with the Thomas County Attorney and the Lincoln County Planning Administrator, it was determined that no permit would be required to add this to an existing commercial business in the Commercial District. The installation would still need to comply with the setbacks set forth in the Commercial District.

Discussion was held on whether a permit would be required for a cell phone company to update equipment on an existing tower but not change the foot print, height or structural integrity. The current regulations do not state how this type of scenario should be handled. The board agreed that language needed to be added to the tower regulations that would state the following.

No permit shall be required for infrastructure changes, such as updating/changing out equipment on existing towers as long as there are no changes to height, structural integrity or footprint.

Chairman Jones and Zoning Administrator Hartman will work on the drafted information and once complete will have the Thomas County Attorney review the documents. Public hearings will then be held before changes can be recommended to the Thomas County Board of Commissioners.

No other public comment at this time.

Chairman Jones adjourned the meeting at 5:24 p.m.

Thomas County Zoning Administrator
Lorissa Hartman