

LAKE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Unapproved Minutes

April 15, 2009

The special meeting of the Lake Township Planning Commission was called to order at 11:15 a.m. by Chairman Colletta. Members Gerry Geppert, Rich Ehrlich, Tim Lalley, Dale Hartsell and Mary Johnson were present along with approximately 37 guests. The meeting was held at Sleeper State Park Headquarters, 6435 State Park Rd., Caseville, MI.

Tim Lalley made a motion to delay the meeting ten minutes to wait for Burr Fisher of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to arrive being that the meeting was quite centered around the information Mr. Fisher was to be presenting. Motion was seconded by Rich Ehrlich. Motion carried – all ayes.

Lou Colletta started the meeting at 11:30 a.m. with what we had (being a letter from the United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service). Mr. Colletta informed the Board and guests that Burr Fisher was on leave at this time and would not be attending the meeting. Mr. Colletta went on to say that Mr. Fisher stated that he sent an e-mail to this effect but the e-mail went to the wrong e-mail address. Mr. Colletta then stated he would open the meeting up to the board and have Tim Lalley read the letter from the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Tim Lalley stated he is really disappointed that the Fish and Wildlife Service is not here and he felt that it is not fair for DTE to speak if the Fish and Wildlife Service were not here to participate in the discussion and would rather postpone the meeting. He further stated that he would read the letter but felt it would not be right for DTE to participate in the open discussion.

Matt Wagner fully agreed and expressed that it is not fair for DTE to take their time to come out to our meeting and be disappointed by the Fish and Wildlife Service not showing up for the discussion.

Tim Lalley proceeded to read the letter from the United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service which is recorded and attached to these minutes.

Lou Colletta commented that the Fish and Wildlife Service letter would be available on the website at www.laketownship.net or at the Lake Township Hall for the public to pick up.

Matt Wagner commented he fully agreed with Tim Lalley to postpone the meeting, but now that the letter was read, it had become a very

one sided situation and felt it only fair that DTE be allowed to comment on the letter during open discussion.

Lou Colletta stated he wanted the Fish and Wildlife Service letter read for discussion by the Planning Board.

Motion by Lou Colletta to cancel the meeting. Motion failed.

Tim Lalley stated that he did not want to read the letter, but would like to let DTE make a statement now that the Fish and Wildlife Service letter had been read.

Tim Lalley made a motion to let DTE make a statement concerning the Fish and Wildlife letter that was read, seconded by Dale Hartsell. Motion carried – all ayes.

Matt Wagner of DTE stated, let the data lead the process, that DTE has not presumed any forgone process. He stated that DTE is monitoring discussions at the federal level as they look at the guidelines and are updating them and they are not the same as the 2003 guidelines. The three mile and five mile one-size fits all approach is not reasonable and stated that USFWS would agree with him on that. Their task is in doing no harm to fish and wildlife or wind turbines. There is a rapid battle going on about how to go about siting turbines.

Kim Chapman, Ecologist, Wildlife Biologist stated he is from Michigan and has studied in the Thumb area since 2006. Mr. Chapman stated that he and his partner have embarked on a 2 ½ year turbine project as to where the turbines should go. The Tundra swan migration is a very important factor they have been watching in the Thumb and Saginaw Bay.

Kim Chapman also stated another issue is the Bald eagle nests, which Bald eagle nests are active, where they are and the behavior of the birds themselves. Bald eagles are very intelligent animals and learn to habituate to new things in their environments. There are “country Bald eagles” and “city Bald eagles”. “City Bald eagles” have been known to adapt to city environments, such as car noise, etc. in their environment and the same would be true with the “country Bald eagles” and their environment.

Kim Chapman continued, stating they have been doing studies on Kirkland warblers, in flight migration from areas as far away as the Bahamas to Michigan and it takes many team members and a lot of effort to track migration that distance. He stated because of this and

the fact that their numbers are limited, they are very difficult to evaluate and conclusions will be based on inference and evaluation of risks turbines might pose.

As far as the Indiana bat, Kim Chapman stated that the Thumb area is well north of its summer range, but we need to be very careful of that species, also. He stated they tend to forage around streams and forested areas, and they will be thinking about that bat species when considering turbines.

Kim continued that the Thumb is starting to be known as an area for migrating raptors, like hawks, falcons, etc. They do not like to fly across water, they are very dependant upon thermal uplift with favorable southern winds to gain altitude. We are studying where these raptors are moving across the Thumb.

Kim stated the risk to woodpeckers by turbines is particularly during migration periods, spring and fall, and peak breeding season in June. DTE has set up several migratory studies concerning this issue.

Kim stated their concern is the setback question from great lakes shorelines, refuge parks and stream corridors. He explained that they will set up sampling points inside habitat areas and then go outside approximately 100 meters and set up another sampling point so they can compare the samples from within the habitat and determine how far the spill over of birds is into the farmland and determine as we move from the shoreline inland how does the variety of bird species change.

Following Kim Chapman's comments, a motion was made by Lou Colletta to postpone the meeting for any further questions or discussion, seconded by Gerry Geppert. Motion carried – all ayes.

Motion by Gerry Geppert to adjourn, seconded by Rich Ehlich. Motion carried – all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Mary E. Johnson
Secretary