

Watson Township Planning Commission

March 26, 2014

Regular Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order-

Chairperson David Carter called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll call and recognition of visitors-

Present: David Carter, Bruce Bos, Chuck Andrysiak, Michelle Harris, Bev McKinnon

Absent: Troy Baker, Barb Wrobleski

Visitors- Bill Mitchell, Geologist from the Department of Environmental Quality

4. Approval of Minutes- motion made by Chuck Andrysiak to approve the minutes. It was seconded by Bev McKinnon. All approved.

5. Public comments or communications concerning items not on Agenda- none

6. Approval of Agenda- motion made to accept with the added item under new business made by Michelle Harris; seconded by Chuck Andrysiak.

7. Old Business-

a. Fracturing presentation by Bill Mitchell a Geologist from the State of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality; office of Oil, Gas and Minerals

- He began by describing their role as one of regulation and enforcement of the rules as they are written; not pro/con toward the industry.
- Horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing have been around for years. In the early 2000's they were combined as a new type of exploration technique.
- Historically, 800 of 11,000 wells were hydraulically fractured in northern Lower Michigan. Allegan County has 217 natural gas storage wells, 10 natural gas wells and 196 oil producing wells.

- The Michigan Regulatory Authority regulates the location, spacing, completion of wells, production, waste/emission management and plugging and restoration activities of wells.
- There are 25 inspectors in the state.
- If a well produces, the drilling company then has to present plans for building a facility, there's a hydro geologic investigation and they are required to provide an emergency response plan.
- Pollution prevention measures are taken.
- For final site restoration the surface has to be returned to the original state along with well-established vegetation being planted.
- Only four gas wells, located in northern Lower Michigan, are currently producing high volumes.
- The pipe that is installed has to go 100 feet deeper than the deepest fresh water aquifer.
- The fluid that is injected into the pipe for physically fracturing the rock consists of 99.5% water and sand and .5% chemicals.
- The size of the drilling site foot print is typically 1-2 acres. He showed us a picture of one that was five acres in size. The area is needed for all logistics of the tanks, trucks, water storage, and etc.
- Water level data is submitted during the drilling process.
- Sometime this summer, 2014, it's expected to be official that the drilling company must sample all existing water wells within a quarter mile radius of the well site to establish a baseline for the water quality prior to drilling. These samples are sent to a third party laboratory for testing.
- Local emergency response teams are typically welcomed at the sites to review MSDS information along with storage tank locations, etc. This is not regulated by the state. So, local governmental bodies could include this in an ordinance.
- The drilling companies can request confidential status which begins at the time of initial drilling through 90 days after completion of drilling.
- A letter is sent to the county clerk's office when an application for drilling is submitted to the DEQ. Any individual or governing body can add their name to a weekly email notification of such application submissions via their website.
- Anywhere from 50,000 to 30 million gallons of water can be used during the drilling process. The DEQ requires monitoring of water levels within 1320 feet of the site.
- Flaring is not a noise issue. The DEQ has a noise restriction of 60 decibels at the edge of the property.

- Any berms that are formed are done for the purpose of erosion and not noise control. There is no fencing required in the statute.
 - Once the drilling has begun, it has to continue 24 hours/day, seven days a week.
 - Michigan has the most stringent and complete rules of any states regulating hydraulic fracturing.
 - When permits are issued a 60 day notice is provided to the townships so they have opportunity to hold meetings for public notification of the drilling potential.
- b. Chuck Andrysiak shared that Gun Plains Township has a set of specific goals for their hydraulic fracturing ordinance proposal. Their next step is to review their master plan.
 - c. Dave Carter mentioned that there is state legislation concerning the chemical listings and consideration of passing controls down to the local governmental level for further zoning regulation.
 - d. We as a planning commission are not planning to take any immediate action toward developing a hydraulic fracturing ordinance. We are waiting to see the results of proposed state legislation and awaiting the actions, if any of other townships.
 - e. Budgeting- eight meetings for this year have been confirmed by the Watson Township Board. Our goal is to keep any outside expenses to a minimum by doing as much of the work ourselves that we are able to.
 - f. Campground- Kathy Rex of Schnable Lake Campgrounds still has not returned any of Dave Carter's inquiries as to expansion plans. This request was for budgeting purposes. There have not been any actions taken to comply with her special use permit in regards to the fencing. We understand the weather has been inhibiting. In the next month or so we expect this to be rectified.
 - g. Tabled ordinances- there was no response from Watson Township Board as to what action they wish to take on the ordinances we, the planning commission have already assembled.

8. New business-

- a. B93 Birthday Bash- Chuck Andrysiak attended a preparatory meeting. He reported that Watson Township may be facing an enforcement issue concerning camping and parking activities. Also, Allegan County may be cracking down on business activities surrounding this event. He also noted that Otsego Township will be meeting April 7th to discuss the "cowboy camp" regulations.

9. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:32pm by Michelle Harris; support given by Bruce Bos.

Submitted by,
Michelle Harris

Watson Township Planning Commission Secretary