

ALGOMA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, January 16, 2007

A meeting of the Algoma Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, January 16, 2007, at 7:00 P.M. The meeting was held at the Algoma Township Hall located at 10531 Algoma Ave., Rockford, MI 49341.

Chairman Witham called the meeting to ORDER at 7:01 P.M. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PRESENT: Chairman Witham, Vice-Chairman Newberger, Secretary Poolman, members Bigney, Ensley, Heminger, and Lecceadone.

Also Present: Supervisor Hoemke, Site Plan Review Committee Members Bates and Sjogren, Township Attorney Brown, Township Communications Advisor Andy Felde, and four citizens.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the December 19, 2006, meeting - Member Lecceadone motioned to APPROVE the minutes of the December 19, 2006, meeting as presented, seconded by Vice-Chairman Newberger. The motion PASSED.

Acceptance of Site Plan Review Committee's report - Secretary Poolman motioned to ACCEPT into the record the report from the Site Plan Review Committee for Site Plan #0701 as presented, seconded by Vice-Chairman Newberger. The motion PASSED.

7:05 P.M. - Member Bigney arrived at the meeting.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

Secretary Poolman motioned to APPROVE the agenda as presented, seconded by Vice-Chairman Newberger. The motion PASSED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments given.

CORRESPONDENCE SENT & RECEIVED:

Building Inspector's report - The Commission received and reviewed the report.

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Any Other Correspondence - There was no other correspondence received.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

SITE PLAN #0701 (SPECIAL USE - TOWER)

T-MOBILE CENTRAL, LLC

C/o Haley Law Firm

11116 Pine Island Dr.

Sparta, MI 49345

Parcel #41-06-17-400-009

Mailing Address:

8065 Grand River

Brighton, MI 48114

Mr. Wally Haley, with the Haley Law firm was present along with property owners Mr. and Mrs. Frank Vanderhyde and their son, Mark Vanderhyde. Mr. Haley stated their firm represents T-Mobile and said he personally knows our Communications Expert, Andy Felde, and has worked previously with him. He said T-Mobile has expanded into the Grand Rapids area and when people move out from the big city their next stage would be to start covering those residential areas. He said this application is not to cover the major highways but the sections of township to the north and southwest. He said their firm is the contractor for them and they do this for T-Mobile and other carriers. He said the proposed site is the Vanderhyde property and they are proposing a 185' tall tower, not lit. He explained if they were to go over 200' they would have to light but they are only proposing 185'. The tower would be a brand new monopole but would be built for co-location. He said he submitted some radio frequency maps. This site is located north of 13 Mile Rd., east of the Sparta co-location on their water tower, and west of Mrs. Hockey's property on 13 Mile Rd.

Vice-Chairman Newberger said he was looking at the coverage maps and the symbols for the different towers and asked if these are either for T-Mobile sites that are co-locating, or maybe they are brand new towers.

Mr. Haley said there could be other carriers on these towers and that would not be reflected on this site. He said there are other towers they are planning on co-locating but they haven't applied yet so some are already built T-Mobile sites and some are proposed. If towers are not for T-Mobile they are not shown on the map. He said when they do their job that is how it works for T-Mobile. They look at a design for coverage in that area and

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they look for structures to co-locate on because it is cheaper and it makes more sense to co-locate and they have taken advantage of that. If that doesn't work, they look to build the raw site. He said if you look at the map provided, there is a big whole in that area.

Chairman Witham said there is a structure on Rector St. and 13 Mile Rd. in the township.

Mr. Haley said it would still create a whole for coverage.

Vice-Chairman Newberger said the point is that there is one tower on the east side of US131 and in Sparta there is one on the water tower, so between those two sites this one is proposed but the Commission will want the Rector site looked at because it is only a quarter of a mile from 13 Mile Rd.

Mr. Haley agreed he would verify that the Rector site is probably too far over and if they co-locate on the Hockey site, they will still have a hole. He said they try to make a continuous flow.

Member Lecceadone stated he would like to see all of the area towers "turned on" to show the coverage areas and see where the holes really are. He also would like some idea of what kind of customers they are talking about serving number wise.

Mr. Haley said he would do that but when you design a system you try to design it without holes even if there are spots with fewer customers because if thousand are going through that area no one is going to be happy if their calls are dropped.

Member Ensley said he knew that Pine Island Dr. and 13 Mile Rd. are the noisiest areas in the township for transmissions and air noise and asked how they work with that.

Mr. Haley said that doesn't interfere with them and they haven't run into any problems in the last three years. He said they cannot co-locate on Consumers towers because Consumers owns their towers and won't give leases for them and in two and half years no one has been able to work that out.

Member Heminger asked how they were different than water towers.

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Mr. Haley said Consumers is a private company and not a governmental agency so they cannot be made to lease.

Chairman Witham noted for the record that this was a Public Hearing and legal notice was published according to law and neighbors within 300' were properly notified. He called the Public Hearing OPEN to public comments.

Mark Vanderhyde of 11031 Grange Ave. said his family has been around the township for a long time and owns a big chunk of land here. He said it is a perfect place for a tower in the township and they all have cell phones and some days they work better than other days. He said there are a lot of people that drive this road and it doesn't matter if you live there or not. He said he didn't see why the township would not want it and it will generate revenue and people would not see the tower from their homes because they own the six or seven homes that can see it. He said it would be a mile from 13 Mile Rd. and they own the land all the way to Broman St. to the west, to Grange and beyond on the east, and to 13 Mile Rd. and 14 Mile Rd., so we are the ones most affected as far as seeing it. He said they had walked the farm with the applicants and adjusted it where we wanted it so it was better for us. He said barn there is rubble now and will be taken care of in the spring but the driveway is still there to be used for the tower.

With no further public comments given, Chairman Witham CLOSED the public hearing portion of the meeting to public comments.

Communications Advisor, Andy Felde stated that at this point he has a preliminary report done but he was waiting for responses from other carriers he had contacted for more information. He said he wanted to validate some of his findings before submitting a final report. He said he has worked with this firm for a few years now in different communities and found them easy to work with. He has reviewed the F.A.A. (Federal Aeronautics Administration) issues of this site and has cleared those questions up. He said the township has really analyzed its eastern portion of the township for coverage but we haven't looked at the north or west side to see how Algoma's available tower system capabilities will marry with Sparta Township and Sparta Village. He said now that someone has submitted an application we will look at those and review the whole traffic densities of

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the area to see how this application will tie into existing, along with reviewing where today's technology is going and where we want to go in the future. He said he understands T-Mobile's goal is to be half way between Sparta and the 13 Mile Rd. site and if they use the Powell/Rector site it might leave a gap. He wants to confirm this information with his own generated models and wants to hear back from the other cell companies he has left messages with. He said he also would like to see how this site marries up with 17 Mile Rd. but his first concern is what goes on in Algoma Township and then they try to be a good neighbor to see what should be allowed that makes sense to other townships. He asked for more time to review all the information.

Vice-Chairman Newberger asked if he would provide more maps with his report.

Advisor Felde stated yes, he has already run the profiles and will get a report ready late next week but he would have time to turn on all the area towers and look at a couple of "what-ifs".

Member Bigney questioned the fall zone mentioned in the Site Plan Review Committees report.

Advisor Felde explained there is usually a weak point in the middle of the tower and because of the weight on top, in the worse case scenario with ice, it would buckle over but wouldn't buckle in the lower sections, about 30' to 35' down.

Mr. Haley said it is 4' off the corner of the house and it takes a pretty strong wind, in fact, no mono-poles fell over during the hurricanes.

Member Ensley asked how close they would be allowed a tower to an airport.

Advisor Felde stated it depends on many factors. The angle, size of runways and types of planes, approaches are not the same in every direction from the airport and then there are minimum ceiling heights. He said there is an imaginary surface that the F.A.A. cannot even explain it.

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Member Heminger asked if he was also going to review co-locating for other companies to go on.

Advisor Felde said he would always consider that.

Secretary Poolman said he has tried different carriers and where he lives he always shows a weak signal but said he is not the expert.

Vice-Chairman Newberger stated that the site appears to look like a good spot but he would like the reports to say that they have looked at the whole area and found this would be the best location to fill the spot so they won't be looking at someone else coming back for another one in this area.

Chairman Witham agreed that when the calculations are done and it makes sense for this area for coverage to eliminate having two towers, then they may still have to look at the aesthetics.

Member Bigney said it might all be Vanderhyde property but they need to determine the best location for this.

Mr. Haley asked to address the Site Plan Review Committee's report for using "Michigan Grey" as a color for the tower. He said it would be galvanized steel and that is better than painting it. He said it would not be a hazard to aviation and that is why they don't anticipate needing a light.

Secretary Poolman asked about ultra-light planes because there are a number of them that fly out of the Sparta Airport.

Member Lecceadone said they are not a licensed aircraft and they also don't fly at night.

Member Ensley said this would be close to the loop they go in.

Mr. Haley explained how an approach test is calculated and from there where a tower would be allowed.

Vice-Chairman Newberger stated pilots don't want to fly into them and must look out for towers. He addressed the Site Plan Review

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#9410, Pitsch Special Use Permit, Removal of Natural Resources:
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Pitsch submitted a letter dated January 10, 2007, stating they are working with developers to try to sell the farm as their reclamation plan. The Commission said to place this in the Tickler File for another six months.

5-Year Master Plan Update:

The sub-committee of Chairman Witham, Secretary Poolman, and Member Lecceadone were appointed. They were advised to incorporate the Northland Dr. Corridor committee's reports into that plan. They should look at commercial zoning and if any further should be considered. Farmland Preservation also needs to be addressed. They will review and see how much information and assistance will be needed from the township planner but it was decided that a township-wide survey would not be needed this time.

Attorney Brown stated the future land use plan should be reviewed for multiple-family housing that has become an issue to review, and mixed uses including commercial and light industrial. Heavy industrial sites are not being considered in the surrounding area for expansion.

Ordinance Amendments -

Condominium Ordinance Amendments:

A draft for Condominium amendments was submitted to the Commission.

Vice-Chairman Newberger stated that they got together and Attorney Brown gave them some proposed language. He said what seemed fairly simple has become more involved so they decided to come to the Commission for feedback.

Attorney Brown explained the idea of condominium was that not all would be site condominiums but the only thing owned was the space within the interior walls and all else would be owned by the association. This would allow clustering of the condominium buildings if they wanted to work around larger natural areas. The density would not change. He also asked if condominiums were to be allowed, would they be only single-family homes. Or, leave the

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language the way it is and do not make any changes.

Supervisor Hoemke said they need to consider whether duplexes should be allowed in the P.U.D. ordinance.

There was much discussion with some concerns that if buildings were allowed closer together, the developers would try to add to the density. It was stated that this language would not provide for more density than what is already allowed.

The sub-committee will review further.

Slopes & Unregulated Wetlands:

Chairman Witham stated this language was changed to encourage developers to leave Secondary Conservation areas alone. He said after debating 20% slopes they decided to do nothing with them and leave the language the way it is. He said Attorney Brown has made some clarifications in the language and they had discussions on how accurate the Existing Zoning plan has to be.

Attorney Brown said they could tighten up requirements for the Existing Zoning Plan to show more accurately what could be built.

Supervisor Hoemke asked that when the sub-committees are finished with their proposed languages, that they move together so both public hearing are held at the same time.

Representative reports -

Township Board: Member Bigney said the Board did nothing.

Board of Appeals: Secretary Poolman reported they had four appeals, two left from last month's meeting. He said all four were turned down.

Any Other On-Going Business -

Minor Change: Site Review Committee Sjogren submitted a report for Site Plan #0115, North Kent Service Center, stating they had requested a 6' chain-link fence be installed to help with

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security. They are trying to stop people from dumping junk at the site. The Review Committee found this to be a Minor Change to an approved site plan and no further action is needed.

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING: Tuesday, February 20, 2007 - 7:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT:

Member Bigney motioned to ADJOURN the meeting at 9:23 P.M. The meeting was ADJOURNED.

Jack Poolman, Secretary

Julie M. Sjogren, Recording Secretary