

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
VILLAGE OF NEW LENOX PLAN COMMISSION

Held in the New Lenox Village Hall, 1 Veterans Parkway

Tuesday, March 16, 2010 7:00 p.m.

#10-03-B

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Village of New Lenox Plan Commission was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, with a quorum present.

Chairman Muehlnickel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, the following were present: Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, Commissioners Annette Boyd, John Kuchler, Gary Berner and Rob Moss.

The following were absent: Commissioners Robert Lash and Joan Byerley.

Also present was: Planning and Development Administrator Robin Ellis, Senior Planner Jeff Smith, and Secretary Lorrie Sowko.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF A REGULAR PLAN COMMISSION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 16, 2010

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2010, Plan Commission meeting. Commissioner Boyd made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kuchler. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

WIND AND SOLAR ENERGY REGULATIONS
DISCUSSION

Robin Ellis stated that in November of 2009, the Plan Commission was given an overview by Staff of issues to consider when drafting an ordinance governing wind and solar energy systems. The draft ordinance was also discussed by the Village Board and Development and Land Use Committee.

The solar units would be permitted as an accessory use and are not permitted in the front yard unless it is in an industrial or commercial district, and not within the minimum setback areas.

The wind turbines must comply with minimum setback and maximum height requirements. The minimum setback is 110% of the height of each unit.

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
VILLAGE OF NEW LENOX ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Held in the New Lenox Village Hall, 1 Veterans Parkway

Tuesday, March 16, 2010 7:00 p.m.

#10-03-B ZBA

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Village of New Lenox Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 7:32 p.m., by Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, with a quorum present.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, the following were present: Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, Commissioners Annette Boyd, John Kuchler, Gary Berner and Rob Moss.

The following were absent: Commissioners Robert Lash and Joan Byerley.

Also present was: Planning and Development Administrator Robin Ellis, Senior Planner Jeff Smith, and Secretary Lorrie Sowko.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF A REGULAR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING OF FEBRUARY 16, 2010

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2010, Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. Commissioner Boyd made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kuchler. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m. Motion was made by Commissioner Berner, seconded by Commissioner Moss. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

Lorrie M. Sowko – Secretary

There is no minimum lot size requirement for a wind turbine system. A freestanding small wind energy system shall be located entirely within the rear yard, and not located in any required building setback, drainage and utility easement or other established easement. A freestanding wind turbine cannot be included when calculating the maximum accessory structure lot coverage allowance within a rear yard.

For properties less than 5 acres, the maximum permitted total system height is 60 feet. For properties larger than 5 acres and less than twenty 20 acres, the maximum height is 80 feet. For properties 20 acres or more in size, the maximum permitted total system height is 120 feet. The minimum height of the lowest part of the rotor is recommended to be either 30 feet above the highest structure allowed in the zoning district or tree height, whichever is higher, only if it is within 300 feet of any property line. The maximum permitted total system height shall be established by the Village Board through the Special Use permit.

Vertical-axis wind turbine systems have similar requirements. For all properties, the maximum permitted total system height is 35 feet in any residential district or 60 feet in all other zoning districts. Upon recommendation from the Plan Commission and approval by the Village Board, a taller total system height may be permitted, which is subject to the applicant justifying the proposed total system height request with documentation. The maximum permitted total system height is established by the Village Board through the Special Use permit.

The maximum permitted total system height of an attached wind energy system is 15 feet above the highest point of the principal structure.

The minimum distance between the base of a horizontal-axis wind turbine and any property line, must be a distance equal to 110% of the total system height.

For properties less than 1 acre in size, the minimum distance between the base of a vertical-axis wind turbine and any property line shall be a distance of 50% of the total system height. For properties 1 acre and greater in size, the minimum distance between the base and any property line shall equal to the total system height.

The Village Board reviewed the draft ordinance in January of 2010 and issues discussed included a fall zone and the fact that the wind turbines may be undesirable due to the fact that Com Ed will still need to provide energy services.

There was a representative at the March 15, 2010 Village Board meeting, and he recommended that the ordinance not establish a maximum height for a wind turbine, but rather establish minimum setbacks and maximum noise regulations. He stated that the fall zone for a wind turbine should be the same as the fall zone for trees.

The Village Board suggested that there be a minimum lot area requirement established to install a wind turbine system.

Senior Planner Jeff Smith added that there needs to be a minimum wind speed of 8 to 9 miles per hour for wind turbine operation.

The height and setback restrictions are most important and also that the systems are located within the rear yard.

Each wind turbine system request should be reviewed on a case by case basis.

The noise of an average wind turbine system is 6.8 decibels, which is quieter than a residential central air conditioning system.

Commissioner Boyd questioned requirements for commercial wind turbine systems.

Robin Ellis informed that the focus of this ordinance is on residential installations.

Chairman Muehlnickel noted that he did not have any issues with the wind turbine systems, but wanted assurance that there would be requirements in the ordinance that addressed the maximum height and size of the systems.

Commissioner Berner wanted to know if the ordinance addresses “do-it-yourself” wind turbines and questioned the noise issues related to the systems.

Jeff Smith stated that the representative suggested that the turbines be professionally installed. The smaller lots should have vertical turbines and the larger lots should have horizontal turbines.

Chairman Muehlnickel questioned the long-term maintenance on the systems.

Jeff Smith explained that the systems have a 20- to 40-year lifespan and consist of steel and aluminum.

Commissioner Kuchler questioned the 50-foot height allowance for the roof-mounted wind turbines.

Jeff Smith informed that the height allowance was dictated by the requirements Will County ordinance.

Commissioner Moss commented that he didn't feel that any of the turbines were aesthetically pleasing.

Commissioner Kuchler felt that there would not be much return on the turbines, and therefore, assumed the wind turbines would not be in abundance.

Jeff Smith added that Prairie Ridge Estates Subdivision would like to incorporate wind turbine systems for each lot in that subdivision, but this issue is still in discussion.

Chairman Muehlnickel asked if solar panels could essentially be used as a canopy in front of a business.

Robin Ellis announced that solar panels on the front of a business would be an aesthetic issue. The panels are not allowed on the front of a business unless it is approved through a Special Use.

Jeff Smith explained that the panels will be installed at the most efficient location of the roof.

Chairman Muehlnickel asked if the Prairie Ridge Estates Subdivision planned to incorporate green landscaping.

Robin Ellis stated that the Village Code requires that the sump pumps tie into stormwater systems.

Prairie Ridge would like individual cisterns to be used to water the lawns, wash vehicles, etc. However, the Village Board has concerns with the maintenance of the cisterns.

Jeff Smith mentioned that the Prairie Ridge Estates Subdivision would like to eliminate some of the interior trails around the ponds because they will not get points from LEED.

Commissioner Boyd asked if permeable materials will be used for the trails at Prairie Ridge.

Robin Ellis explained that permeable materials could be used for the trails, if requested.

The wind and solar ordinance may be scheduled for the Plan Commission to hold the public hearing at the meeting of April 20, 2010.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Robin Ellis announced that there will be a Text Amendment for special event signs and an annexation and rezoning request, on the April 20, 2010, agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m. Motion was made by Commissioner Berner, seconded by Commissioner Moss. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.