

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
TOWN HALL – AUGUST 6, 2009 – 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Chairperson Marilyn Cummings, Planning Commissioners Lois Cutler, Lynne Murphy, Richard Robbins, Troy Schifsky and Carole Yoho, Supervisors Linda Countryman, David Johnson and Sheila Marie Untiedt, Town Board Liaison Jim Hiniker, Planner Sherri Buss and Park Committee Member Barbara Riehle.

**PUBLIC HEARING – BROWNLEE CUP AND VARIANCE – 7:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to notice in the Stillwater Gazette and to surrounding property owners a public hearing was held to consider a request from Peter Brownlee, 10061 Manning Avenue North, for a Conditional Use Permit for a Wind Energy Conversion System and for a Variance from setback requirements for the system. Made a part of the record are the names and addresses of attendees (7) at the hearing.

Chairperson Marilyn Cummings opened the public hearing and introduced Planner Sherri Buss who gave a brief description of the request. The proposed structure is 50 feet tall and requires a 100 foot setback. The applicant is looking for a 50 foot setback. Neighboring houses are 400 to 1,000 feet away. In other respects, the application conforms to our ordinance.

There were the following questions and comments:

- ? Barbara Riehle – What is the address? Sherri Buss – 10061 Manning Avenue.
- ? Sheryl Palmer – She lives directly to the west. She would like to know more about the system. Sherri Buss had a picture of the structure. Jim Ashman (representing the applicant) had a sample of the blade.
- ? Carole Yoho – [Note: As an interested neighbor, Carole Yoho stepped down from the Planning Commission for the public hearing portion of this meeting.] – It is their property line that is impacted by the setback. They do not object to the system, but they do object to the variance. This sets a bad precedent. He has 10 acres and he has other options. He does not want to put it in the front because of the woodlands and shrubs which were not there when he moved in. This is not a case of hardship.
- ? Jim Ashman – When they did a site evaluation, the other neighbors had large trees which would obstruct wind.
- ? Carole Yoho – He is building the system to 50 feet. If he wants more efficiency, then he should go higher.
- ? David Johnson – What is the elevation difference if he goes 50 feet further in?  
Ashman – There is about a 6 foot drop. Also, they would be behind the house. This is the only high spot in the pasture.
- ? Sherri Buss – They looked at it for other options. There is a high spot in the front yard but they would need to remove a lot of trees.

- ? Lois Cutler – Have they ruled out other options? Sherri Buss – No, they did not give a recommendation. One option would be a taller system that would get higher above the house.
- ? David Johnson – What is the sound level? Ashman – This system has only 55 decibels and that is only with very high wind.
- ? Lynne Murphy – Are the blades 10 feet in diameter? Ashman – That is correct. Each blade is 5 feet.
- ? Troy Schifsky – How do they test for how trees affect the wind? Ashman – Models have been done.
- ? Lois Cutler – Are you making assumptions that you will have consistent 25 mph wind speed? Ashman – That is at peak performance. Cutler – This is not a windy area. Would a taller system work better? Ashman – With 5 blades, we are generating at lower wind speeds.
- ? Sherri Buss – Why not a taller system? Ashman – We already went taller than usual because of the terrain. We would not be gaining efficiency because of the structures there.
- ? Linda Countyman – You have looked at every location on the property? Ashman – He looked with Planner Angele Torres.
- ? Marilyn Cummings – The 100 foot setback would be 6 feet lower? Ashman – And it would also be behind the house and there would be turbulence.
- ? Carole Yoho – The report says the efficiency would be reduced by 25%.

The public hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m.

### **REGULAR MEETING – 7:30 P.M.**

1. AGENDA – M/S/P Robbins/Cutler moved to adopt the agenda as written. (6 ayes)
2. MINUTES – M/S/P Cutler/Murphy moved to approve the June 4, 2009 Stillwater Township Planning Commission meeting minutes as written. (6 ayes)
3. BROWNLEE CUP AND VARIANCE – There was discussion about this application. Wind energy is wonderful and we should try to promote it, but if the first one requires going around the rules, maybe this is not a good location. They applicant should find a way to make it work or not do it. There was also discussion about the testing procedures.

M/S/P Cutler/Robbins moved to recommend we deny the variance request for a 50 foot setback instead of the required 100 foot setback. (4 ayes, Cummings, Yoho abstain)

M/S/P Murphy/Cutler moved that residents should be encouraged to pursue alternative energy systems. (6 ayes)

4. PRESERVING FARMLAND, MAINTAINING RURAL CHARACTER AND PARKS AND TRAIL SYSTEMS – Mike Greco, Director of Community Growth

Options at the University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, was present to discuss “Preserving Agriculture and Planning for Trails”. Their funding comes from the McKnight Foundation and most of their work is done by graduate students. He gave a power point presentation and answered questions.

5. WEBSITE/NEWSLETTER – The next meeting is in September. Bob Ranalla is doing a good job keeping the website up to date. The above presentation will be posted on the website.
6. NEW BUSINESS – There was none.
7. TOWN BOARD LIAISON REPORT – Jim Hiniker reported on recent Town Board activities.
8. ADJOURNMENT – M/S/P Murphy/Yoho moved to adjourn the meeting. (6 ayes)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by: Kathy Schmoeckel  
Planning Commission Clerk