

DICKINSON COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
March 26, 2012
7:00 P.M.

The Dickinson County Board of Adjustment met Monday, March 26, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the community room, Dickinson County Courthouse.

Members present were: Don Oleson, Bob Duncan, Dennis Jackson, Jeff Ashland, and Mary Dannatt.

Don Oleson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

First on the agenda was roll call.

Second on the agenda was election of officers. Duncan moved to accept the present slate of officers: Don Oleson as Chairman, Jeff Ashland as Vice-Chairman, and Dennis Jackson as Secretary. All members were in favor.

Third on the agenda was new business.

- 1st item of new business was Al Blum with North Star Wind, a request for extension of the deadline for temporary conditional use permits for four meteorological towers.

Al Blum, Chairman of North Star Wind said they have had 4 meteorological towers gathering data in Dickinson County for several years. They are 60 meters high. They have to prove they have good wind with good data. This data is an important part of completing their proposed wind farm project. They had hoped to have the wind farm project up and running by now, but with the economic downturn and gas prices going up, there has never been a lower time for wind projects. Maybe after the election, things will change. Right now the country is married to coal, gas and oil.

He said they would like to think that two to three years would be the longest they would have to wait, but there is no way to know. They need a power purchase agreement. The power companies don't need the power right now and gas prices are going up.

Oleson said the met towers are 8 months out of compliance.

Blum said he would take the blame for that.

Oleson said their board doesn't give extensions forever. Blum is asking for two to three years in the future. Utilities are looked at in a favorable light by this board. His opinion is he would give an extension tonight but no future extensions.

Kohlhaase said the Nextera Wind project needs to have their building permits issued by June 30, 2012 or they may be before the Board of Adjustment again.

Oleson asked how the meteorological towers are marked.

Blum said there is nothing on the existing ones. He talked to his engineer and he said the towers would have to be taken down to apply spherical markers.

Ashland said he feels strongly about having these met towers marked because it is so hard for small planes and aerial sprayers to see the guy wires. He won't even consider an extension without spherical markers on the guy wires.

Duncan asked about the instruments on the met towers.

Blum said the instruments read the humidity, density, temperature, and wind speed every hour.

Duncan asked if any of these would be permanent towers.

Blum said when the project gets built there will be 100 towers. The company will then install 80 meter permanent towers.

Oleson asked Blum how much extension is he asking for.

Blum said he is looking at two years and 8 months extension. Two years from today.

He said they will put spherical markers on the guy wires as far as they can reach with a crane.

Kohlhaase asked who is the owner of this project.

Blum said 80 investors in Emmet and Dickinson County.

Duncan asked if all four towers were owned by North Star Wind.

Blum said they are co-owners with Iowa Lakes Electric.

The members discussed a stipulation to be added to their vote on an extension deadline for the towers. Stipulation agreed upon as follows: All four meteorological towers are to be marked with colored spherical balls on the four upper guy wires on each tower as high as can be reached.

Oleson also wanted to add that this will be the final extension allowed on this project.

Dannatt disagreed as there could be different board members in two years and different economic times. She wanted it reflected in the minutes that it was Don Oleson's opinion that this will be the final extension.

Lonnie Saunders suggested the wording be: "The board reserves the right to consider this to be the final extension allowed on this project. The deadline is extended to April 1, 2014."

Duncan moved to vote on the deadline extension with the stipulations attached. Dannatt seconded. The vote was recorded as all aye.

Blum said he will contact the wind guy tomorrow for the industry standard on meteorological marking balls and will contact someone with a lift to install them. He will then contact the zoning office with their plans.

Fourth on the agenda was approval of the minutes of November 28, 2011. Jackson moved to approve the minutes as written. Ashland seconded. All were in favor.

Fifth on the agenda was communications. Kohlhaase said there are two variances pending. One is a residence in East Okoboji Beach and the other is a commercial property at Marble Beach Marine.

Sixth on the agenda was report of officers and committees. There were none.

Seventh on the agenda was old or unknown business. There was none.

Eighth on the agenda was other. There was discussion of the Planning and Zoning Workshop put on by the ISU Extension on March 20th. Oleson said that presenter Gary Taylor explained that the way Board of Adjustment meetings are normally run is that after the board receives all information from the applicant and public, they close the meeting, then the board debates and votes.

Saunders pointed out that questions often come up after discussion so it is good to be able to ask questions of the public and the applicant. He saw nothing wrong with the way this Board of Adjustment handles their meetings.

Ninth on the agenda was adjournment. Duncan moved to adjourn. Ashland seconded. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Donald Oleson, Chairman

Jeff Ashland, Secretary