

1 **CASNOVIA TOWNSHIP**

2
3 **PLANNING COMMISSION**

4
5 **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON JULY 26,2018**

6
7
8 A regular meeting was held by the Casnovia Township Planning Commission on
9 Thursday, July 26, 2018 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Casnovia Old School, 142 N. Main Street,
10 Casnovia.

11
12 Members Present: Jeanette Mansfield, Chairperson
13 Todd Willick, Vice Chairperson
14 Kim Anderson, Secretary
15 Craig Montgomery
16 Dan Winell

17
18 Members Absent: None

19
20 Also present were Township Zoning Administrator Terry Harrison, Township Attorney
21 Catherine Kaufman, Township Engineer Lee VanderMuelen (Progressive Engineering).

22
23 **CALL TO ORDER AND REVIEW OF MINUTES**

24
25 Chairperson Mansfield called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and said that the first item
26 on the agenda would be consideration of the proposed minutes of the last Planning Commission
27 meeting. Upon motion of Anderson, seconded by Montgomery, the Planning Commission voted
28 unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

29
30 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

31
32 There being no suggested changes to the agenda, and upon motion of Winell, seconded
33 by Willick, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

34
35 **PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL USE REQUEST OF SGS DEVELOPMENT LLC FOR**
36 **UTILITY GRID WIND ENERGY SYSTEM (KENOWA RIDGE WIND PROJECT)**

37
38 Attorney Kaufman provided introductory comments. She said that the Township had received
39 an application for special use approval from SGS Development for a utility grid wind energy
40 system. Attorney Kaufman said that by law, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing
41 on the special use request. The Planning Commission are appointed, they are not elected
42 officials. They are members of the community who have volunteered their time to serve on the
43 Planning Commission.

44
45 Attorney Kaufman said that after the public hearing, the Planning Commission will consider all
46 information submitted. The Planning Commission will then deliberate and consider as to
47 whether the special use application will meet the standards for approval of a special use in
48 Section 3.24 of the Zoning Ordinance and in Article 17 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning
49 Commission will ultimately make a recommendation to the Township Board. The Planning
50 Commission can recommend approval, approval with conditions or can recommend denial.
51 The Township Board will make the final decision on the special use application.

1
2 Attorney Kaufman noted that there was a lot of information for the Planning Commission to
3 consider, in addition to the comments from the public that are presented during the public
4 hearing or through correspondence. Attorney Kaufman said that is likely that the Planning
5 Commission may not get to the point of making a recommendation at tonight's meeting.
6 Attorney Kaufman also pointed out the rules for public participation at the Planning
7 Commission meeting, which had been printed on the reverse side of the meeting agenda and
8 were available for distribution in the room.
9

10 Chairperson Mansfield opened the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.
11

12 Rich Nerzig, Sempra Renewables, presented the applicant's special use request. Mr. Nerzig said
13 that Sempra Energy (SGS Development) has tried to be transparent and work collaboratively
14 with the Township since day one. He said that Sempra has reviewed the Township ordinances
15 and standards and believes that their application has met or exceeded the Township
16 requirements. Mr. Nerzig said that Sempra is requesting a special use approval of 3 years
17 duration, as they cannot complete this scope of project in a 12 month period. He said that
18 Sempra started work on this project one year ago.
19

20 Mr. Nerzig said that Sempra has brought its team of experts to the meeting tonight, to address
21 questions from the public. Mr. Nerzig introduced his accompanying staff and consultants, who
22 represented a variety of specialties such as environmental issues, project engineer, construction
23 manager, plant manager for Sempra's Apple Blossom Wind Farm in Huron County, Michigan,
24 acoustics expert, attorney and others. He said that Sempra welcomed public input on the
25 project.
26

27 Mr. Nerzig presented a powerpoint presentation. He said that Sempra Renewables, based in
28 California, is in the energy delivery business. They are a commercial development group and a
29 Fortune 500 company. They have 17,000 employees worldwide. They have 1200 MW of solar
30 and 1200 MW of wind facilities across the country. Their company has an existing wind energy
31 project (Apple Blossom) in Huron County, Michigan. They expect Kenowa Ridge Wind Project
32 to build on the success of the Apple Blossom wind facility. Their company takes a collaborative
33 approach to development and wants to create a relationship with the community. Mr. Nerzig
34 listed several projects their company has across the country, including projects in Indiana.
35

36 Mr. Nerzig said that Kenowa Ridge Wind Farm is proposed as a 100 MW wind farm – which the
37 company feels is the appropriate size and scope for this area. It is similar in size and scope to
38 the Apple Blossom Wind Farm in Huron County. Sempra feels that this is not too large.
39 Moreover, because of the availability of new technology from Vestus, this area is no appropriate
40 for wind energy. Mr. Nerzig noted that the components are 90% US made.
41

42 Mr. Nerzig said the proposed special use is for 25-30 wind turbines. Sempra has 800 acres
43 under lease; there are 85 landowners involved in the project. He said that there are already
44 RFPs out for utilities to purchase the energy generated from the proposed project. Mr. Nerzig
45 outlined the proposed project schedule as follows: 2018 – MET Tower erected, seeking special
46 use approval; 2019 – major contracts executed, construction of the turbines; 2020 –
47 construction would start on site. Mr. Nerzig said that once started, construction will take 6-8
48 months to complete.
49

50 Mr. Nerzig said that the project would bring many benefits to the community. The project
51 would assist the State of Michigan in reaching its renewable energy goals. The project is
52 compatible with farming; farming can continue around the wind turbines. There will be

1 economic benefits for the 80+ landowners who have leases with Sempra. There will be
2 additional property taxes paid to the Township, based on increase valuation. There will also be
3 an economic boost to the area during the construction period, including jobs for contractors and
4 vendors. Following construction, there will be additional long term economic benefits from the
5 project as well. Additionally, Mr. Nerzig said wind energy is clean and will have no impact on
6 the area's waters (including Lake Michigan).

7
8 Mr. Nerzig said that Sempra has a good record on health and safety issues. The company has a
9 zero tolerance policy to protect its workers and the public. They do not have a lot of hazardous
10 materials on site. They work closely with local emergency services to prepare and coordinate
11 responses. This project will not place undue obligations on local public safety or emergency
12 responders. He said that is not common for there to be a fire at a wind energy project; there are
13 fire detection systems in each turbine. He also said that it is uncommon for ice throws and that
14 each turbine is monitored 24/7. This monitoring can detect ice build up, which would lead to
15 the shutdown of the turbine for a period.

16
17 Mr. Nerzig concluded by saying he and Sempra representatives were available to address any
18 questions the Planning Commission or public had.

19
20 Chairperson Mansfield opened the hearing to public comment at 7:20 p.m.

21
22 Dennis Deems, Fire Chief, addressed the Planning Commission. He asked for more information
23 on possible dangers to firefighters and emergency services personnel who would respond to
24 emergency situations at the wind farm. He said that he had concerns with icing and fire,
25 perhaps from a lightning strike. He said that firefighters and other emergency service personnel
26 would face increased risk of harm because of the proposed turbines. He said that the Fire
27 Department only had equipment to respond to small residential fires. The Fire Department
28 would need additional equipment to respond to emergency incidents at the proposed wind farm.
29 The Fire Department would also need a larger building to store such equipment. He also asked
30 about the possibility of medical issues arising at the wind farm.

31
32 Jack Hoffman, 915 Peters Road, Bailey, said he is a lifelong resident of the area. He said that the
33 proposal is for about 30 towers, which cost \$2 million to \$3 million each to construct. He
34 asked about the amount of increase tax revenue the Township would realize from this project.
35 He asked about the depreciation rate that would apply to the turbines and equipment.

36
37 Paul Black, 210 N. Canada Road, said he has lived in Casnovia Township since 2007. He
38 congratulated Mr. Nerzig and the Sempra team for a good presentation. He said he had several
39 questions and had contacted Debra Reed for answers. His questions were as follows: 1) who
40 called Sempra Energy and invited them to Casnovia Township? 2) Did anyone read the Planning
41 Commission applications? – he spent 9 hours reviewing it; 3) He asked the Planning
42 Commission to table this matter tonight so that people could get more information on the
43 application; 4) He told the Planning Commission that their decision would have a long term
44 effect; 5) He urged residents and township officials to talk to each other.

45
46 George Rusco, 775 Behler Road, asked how the turbines would be maintained and how often
47 they would be inspected. He asked who he could call if something went wrong.

48
49 Lisa Symko, 14945 White Road, asked what impact the project would have on property taxes?
50 She also asked what kind of revenue would the project bring in and if the township would
51 benefit? She asked if the electricity would be for Casnovia Township or if it would go to other
52 counties.

1
2 Randy Abend, 1250 Behler Road, asked what the life expectancy of the turbines is. He asked
3 when they were no longer in operation, what would happen? He asked if there would be
4 compensation for people living near the turbines? He asked about the impact on the township
5 roads, noting his road is in very bad condition now. He asked if there would be power outages
6 during construction and thereafter. He asked if there would be an impact on wildlife. He asked
7 where the power grid would be built – and if it would be before or after the turbines were put in
8 place? He felt that if the project is approved, it needs to benefit the community as a whole. He
9 asked for an explanation on the long term community benefits. He asked if any Planning
10 Commission members had property in the project.

11
12 Rick Sible, 920 S. Orchard Hill, said that he previously lived in an area where there was a wind
13 farm in Oceana County. He cited an article from Forbes Magazine (6/23/15) that wind energy
14 projects lower surrounding property values. He said there can be health impacts from shadow
15 flicker and red lights on the top of the turbines at night. He urged everyone to drive up US 31
16 towards Hart at night to see the lights on the turbines at night. He feels it is intrusive. Mr.
17 Seidel said that if you drive north on Canada you can see Muskegon Lake – he would hate for
18 that view to be obstructed by wind turbines. He also said that a whispering noise emanates
19 from turbines which can affect cell phones and hearing aids.

20
21 Helen Sands, 68 Ball Creek, asked how the hearing was advertised, as she did not know about it.

22
23 Attorney Kaufman explained that notice was mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the
24 parcels involved in the project at least 15 days before the meeting, as required by the Michigan
25 Zoning Enabling Act. Attorney Kaufman pointed out the map of parcels in the project and all
26 parcels that got a public hearing notice mailed to them, which was hanging on the meeting room
27 wall. She also said that notice was published in three newspapers at least 15 days before the
28 meeting, as required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act: the Ravenna Independent, Hi-Lites
29 and the Northwest Advance (MLIVE).

30
31 Rich Porteen, 17110 White Road, asked if anyone at the meeting had talked to people who lived
32 near wind turbines? He does not want turbines in the township. He is concerned about
33 environmental issues and feels there is no need for wind or solar power in Casnovia Township at
34 this time. He asked the Planning Commission to give careful consideration to this issue, before
35 making a decision on this. He said that land can never go back to the way it was – you cannot
36 return to the natural state once it is lost. He opposed losing wetlands and farmland to this
37 project. He also is concerned about the impact on bird migration.

38
39 Rebecca Sible, 920 S. Orchard Hill, said she received her notice postmarked July 10, 2018. She
40 asked who was paying for the project and what the benefits were. She asked about side effects
41 for humans and how far beyond Casnovia Township the project went. She asked if the turbines
42 would affect cell phone and internet service. She said she is not convinced that we need wind
43 energy and felt that solar energy would be less invasive. She said if the project is approved it will
44 lower her property values and she will sell her home.

45
46 Alisa Finkler, 2282 Shaw Road, said she lives on a gravel road; she likes the quiet, dark, country
47 area she lives in. She said she has health issues and noise, vibrations will be bad for her health.
48 She said if the project is approved, she will have to sell her house and move. She asked if there
49 would be property value guarantees from the company, like in Riga Township, such that if your
50 property value decreased, the company would reimburse you.

1 Doug Weston, 110 Waterloo, Casnovia. He asked about the federal involvement in underwriting
2 solar and wind energy project. He felt that the federal government was underwriting and
3 sustaining the renewable energy industry. He said that Warren Buffett said that wind energy
4 does not make sense.

5
6 Jesse Sincler, 1376 Behler, said he has lived in Casnovia Township for over 10 years. He likes
7 the quiet country atmosphere. He is concerned about shadow flicker and the appearance. He
8 feels that turbines will spoil the view. He is also concerned about noise and vibrations and the
9 impact on hunting and wildlife. He felt that the township was “being used” and was concerned
10 he would not be able to sell his house. He asked the Township to seriously review this
11 application before making a decision.

12
13 Al Dietrich said he owns apple orchards in both townships. He said that the Township should
14 require a surety bond or other guarantee for decommissioning. He said that when the turbines
15 break, the township needs to be able to guarantee that they can be removed.

16
17 Maggie Baker, 1376 Behler, said she drives an hour to work so that she can live in Casnovia
18 Township. She grew up in an area that had wind farms and felt that they contributed to
19 migraines, anxiety, cognitive function problems and that they ruin people’s health and safety.
20 The health impacts vary among people. She feels that wind turbines have an impact on people’s
21 lives and that the community will become a ghost town.

22
23 Mary Riley, MSU Extension, said she dealt with wind farms in Mason County. She commended
24 the Planning Commission in all the work it has done and said it is a very difficult job. She said
25 there are 80+ landowners participation – she said that the company should make the payout
26 structure known – is everyone within 1000 feet getting a payment? What about everyone in the
27 section? She also said that the company should clarify who should be called if there is a
28 problem. She asked for clarification on how far a wind turbine could be from a hour or form a
29 property line. She asked that the proposed site plan map be posted online. She also asked for
30 clarification on the height of the turbines and to the top of the blade. She said sound modeling
31 should be provided. She said that the FAA has now approved lighting that turns on when a
32 plane is in the airspace – so that it is not on all the time.

33
34 Tina Mortensen, 16080 Hall Road, said she is frustrated with the notice she got in the mail. She
35 said she did not know she would be within 300 feet. She felt that the Planning Commission and
36 the public need more time to review the information and get questions answered. She asked
37 what the benefits were for the township. She doesn’t want the good view she enjoys to be
38 obstructed.

39
40 Brandon Hellbeck, Canada Road, said that 85 people would benefit from this project, but many
41 more would be affected. He said there may be health impacts for everyone in the area.

42
43 Janetta Cr, 2160 N. Shaw Road, asked for further investigation as to: what interconnection with
44 existing power lines means? Will there be more power poles? Will the power poles cross
45 people’s land? Will roads have to be built to reach the turbines? She noted the expansion of the
46 wind energy project near St. Louis, Michigan.

47
48 Frederick Clingen, 360 Moon Court, Half Moon Lake, said he has lived in this area most of his
49 life. He asked about impact on the water fowl on Half Moon Lake – can there be a study? He
50 said that the Fire Department needs new apparatus to respond to fires in the proposed turbines.
51 He suggested a partnership agreement and asked what benefits the Township will get – he
52 suggested a new fire truck and road improvements.

1
2 David Jones, 2060 W. 140th, said he is also on the Fire Department. He asked about economic
3 benefits to local contractors; what were anticipated dollar figures that local contractors and
4 vendors might see. He asked if there would be local employees monitoring the wind farm 24/7.
5

6 There being no further public comment, Attorney Kaufman read two letters received by the
7 Planning Commission into the record.
8

- 9 1. Letter from Ross D. Plont, which said:
10 To Whom It May Concern,

11
12 I reside at 740 Shaw Rd., in Bailey. I would have loved the opportunity to appear
13 in person, however, I will be vacationing with my family when the hearing is
14 conducted.
15

16 I am firmly against the proposed project for two reasons; first, the company
17 proposing the project is a large, international corporation that only cares about
18 its profits, and, second, I believe that the environmental impact of the proposed
19 wind project has not been studied/accounted for sufficiently.
20

21 As I mentioned, this project is proposed by a subsidiary of Sempra Energy, which
22 is a San Diego, California based, international, publicly traded company. Large,
23 profit-hungry corporations like Sempra control the vast majority of energy
24 production in the United States and have kept us behind the curve in
25 sustainability, environmental impact, and cost. This international company does
26 not care about the residents of Casnovia Township, nor the environmental
27 impacts that its wind project will cause. Sempra Energy only cares about its
28 profits, which is why it is making the proposal. Sempra would not have applied
29 for this land use variance if it did not intend to make substantial profits off of
30 Casnovia Township residents. The township's residents would be better served if
31 a local, smaller company was approached with a similar idea if a wind project is
32 desired.
33

34 Second, I would encourage all of the Township Planning Commission members
35 to research the many negative environmental impacts that these wind projects
36 are having across the country. Bird and bat populations have been severely
37 harmed by many wind projects nationwide. Articles discussing these problems
38 are abundant. I am not saying that the wind project, as proposed, is necessarily
39 bad. However, I am asking that the Planning Commission actually conduct an
40 environmental impact study to see how it will impact the environment and local
41 flora and fauna. All too many times in my lifetime, I have watched rural local
42 governments bend to the wills of large corporations due to promises of fortunes
43 to come to the small, rural towns. Never in my lifetime have any of these
44 promises led to anything but the large corporations making profits off of the
45 backs of rural Americans.
46

47 If this proposal is approved, I would like not only the residents of Casnovia
48 Township to benefit, but that the project will also be completed in such a way as
49 to ensure that the local environment is not permanently damaged or polluted like
50 we are seeing happening all over West Michigan as a result of large corporations
51 putting profits first (think Wolverine Worldwide). I hope that the members of
52 the Township Planning Commission take the time to actually consider this

1 proposal before rubber stamping it like usually happens as large corporations run
2 roughshod through rural America. After All, I guarantee that Sempra Energy will
3 file bankruptcy or otherwise leave Casnovia Township behind in the event that
4 this deal goes bad. Sempra Energy will not be here to take care of the residents if
5 there are no profits to be had.

6
7 Best
8 Ross D. Plont
9

- 10 2. Letter from George Awana, 136 N. Shaw Road, which said:
- 11 a. What are the criteria used for determining the location of a wind energy system?
12 Why here?
 - 13 b. What does the wind energy system do to property values of nearby property?
 - 14 c. What effects should we as neighbors expect to experience as far as noise, vibrations,
15 flicker and sight?
 - 16 d. What about noise? If it is right next to my property will I be able to hear it?
 - 17 e. What is the closest it can be from a house? Is that the blade or the base?
 - 18 f. How are wildlife affected by the system?
- 19

20 Paul Black asked if his email dated 7/25/18 was received by the Planning Commission. Mr.
21 Harrison said it was not received. Mr. Black read his email dated 7/25/18 into the record. In
22 summary, it said, that since receiving the notice of the public hearing, several questions have
23 arisen that he believes need to be considered in the public dialog and debate, prior to any
24 decision by the Planning Commission. He said that the questions are the result of two reference
25 points: a real need for broad based pubic discussion and debate to fully air the concerns and
26 questions of all who may have opinions that can positively impact the decision making process
27 and the consequences, intended and unintended, of a final decision on the special land use
28 request that could be made without braod based input from the public. Mr. Black noted that
29 some residents received notice of the public hearing, while others did not. He noted that 30,000
30 people live in Casnovia and seven adjoining townships who did not receive notice of the public
31 hearing. He felt that many others would like to participate in the public hearing and noted that
32 summer is not a good time for people to attend public hearings or to read and understand the
33 special use application. He noted his review of the special use application, Township Master
34 Plan, Township Zoning Ordinance. He asked the publicly elected and appointed officials to
35 seriously consider the application and the many details contained therein. Mr. Black then
36 referenced a second email that contained 60 questions about the project.

37
38 Barb Wexford, Laketon Avenue, asked when the public would get answers to their questions.
39

40 Chairperson Mansfield asked for further public comment; there was none. There being no
41 further public comment, Chairperson Mansfield closed the public hearing at 8:15 p.m.
42

43 The Planning Commission next asked Mr. Nerzig and Sempra representatives to answer some of
44 the questions brought forward during the public hearing.
45

46 Mr. Nerzig answered questions from the public and the Planning Commission as follows:
47

- 48 1. The turbines will not be 300 feet from a property line – the Michigan Zoning Enabling
49 Act requires that any property owner within 300 feet of a parcel included in the project
50 get notice of the public hearing on the special land use application. The setback for a
51 wind turbine is the height of the turbine, which in most cases will be about 500 feet.
52

- 1 2. Regarding who is proposing the project - Sempra Renewables is proposing the project.
2 Regarding whether Sempra is only this for the profits – Sempra is a for profit
3 corporation, but there is no guarantee that they will make a profit on this project. Some
4 profit may be made, but it won't be a large profit. Sempra takes the risk; it is the nature
5 of their business. Regarding whether a local company would be better to run such
6 project, Mr. Nerzig said that Sempra has submitted a special use application and the
7 township is processing it. No local company has submitted a special use application.
8 Moreover, Mr. Nerzig said that this type of project takes expertise and financial backing
9 and financial strength of the company will be considered.
10
- 11 3. Regarding the use of local contractors – Sempra will make every effort to use local
12 contractors. Typical local services/contractors include gravel, concrete, dirt moving,
13 electrical, grading. He also said that wind turbine technicians will be brought over from
14 Huron County to start this project. They will then look to hire local employees to run
15 this project.
16
- 17 4. Regarding a partnership agreement – there will be an agreement with the Road
18 commission regarding use of roads and repair/maintenance of roads. The roads will be
19 reviewed as to condition before the project and will be restored after the project.
20 Sempra does this on all their projects.
21
- 22 5. Regarding whether roads will be built through fields for turbine delivery and installation
23 – yes, roads will be built for cranes – after the turbines are erected, the roads will be
24 narrowed back to normal width. The wind farm is operated with pick-up trucks – if a
25 road is temporarily disturbed it will be restored per the lease agreement.
26
- 27 6. Regarding the St. Louis, Michigan project – that is not a Sempra project. That is a much
28 larger project. Sempra is requesting a much smaller project with no planned extensions.
29
- 30 7. Regarding interconnection to existing power lines – There is a north/south power line
31 through Casnovia. Sempra does not have to build power lines. Sempra will connect to
32 the existing lines; there will be no additional overhead lines. There will be lines
33 underground. This is a positive feature for the community.
34
- 35 8. How far will a turbine be from a property line – it must meet Zoning Ordinance
36 requirements. All turbines shown on the site plan meet Zoning Ordinance requirements.
37
- 38 9. What is the turbine height? Sempra is considering using two different models – one is
39 284 feet with a blade tip of 493 feet; the other is 275 feet, with a blade tip of 463 feet +/-.
40
- 41 10. Regarding the blinking red lights on top of the turbines – there is a new software
42 program that detects aircraft and turns on the light when aircraft in the vicinity. Sempra
43 is reviewing this product now; they are willing to consider using it. This software
44 represents the industry's efforts to be responsive to the public's concerns.
45
- 46 11. Regarding a financial surety for performance (decommissioning) – Sempra agrees to
47 provide a performance bond.
48
- 49 12. Regarding hunting and wildlife – Wind projects are located in hunting/wildlife areas
50 across the country. During construction, wildlife many leave. Animals are not affected
51 by the turbignes and generally return once the project is built.
52

- 1 13. Regarding why this location was picked – the existence/location of the transmission
2 lines. Mr. Nerzig gave the example of needing to build transmission lines in Texas – the
3 state of Texas made that investment into the power grid. That power grid is already
4 here. This location was picked because of location adjacent to existing transmission
5 lines.
6
- 7 14. Regarding federal tax credits – historically fossil fuels received more tax credits than
8 renewable energy. The tax credits are phasing out in 2020.
9
- 10 15. Regarding health issues – there have been numerous studies on potential health impacts
11 from wind turbines. There is no quantifiable evidence that wind turbines cause health
12 impacts. There are impacts that are annoyances, such as noise and flicker, but these
13 impacts can be managed by siting. The zoning ordinance requirements help to manage
14 those impacts. Also, some people hear the noise, while others don't.
15
- 16 16. Regarding cell phone and internet service – Sempra has done studies on this issue; the
17 studies are included in the application. They have moved turbines when needed to get
18 them out of bands.
19
- 20 17. Regarding who is paying for the project – Sempra is. The company hopes to make back
21 their investment over time.
22
- 23 18. Regarding life expectancy of a turbine – Turbines last 20 -25 years. Each lease requires
24 removal of the turbine by Sempra and decommissioning. Sempra must also restore the
25 land.
26
- 27 19. Regarding power outages during construction – There shouldn't be any power outages
28 during construction. The grid is already built. ITC owns the transmission system.
29
- 30 20. Regarding long term benefits – Mr. Nerzig cited direct benefits to lease holders, property
31 taxes and secondary effects during construction.
32
- 33 21. Regarding how turbines are inspected and maintained – Sempra has a two part
34 maintenance program – every 6 months the turbines are inspected. A turbine will be
35 down 1-2 days during maintenance and inspection.
36
- 37 22. Regarding the Fire Department concern re emergency situations – Sempra is open to
38 engaging with the Fire Department, to find out what will make the Fire Department feel
39 more comfortable. If there is a fire in an turbine, the fire typically does not spread.
40

41 The Planning Commission next directed questions to Sempra. Commissioner Winell asked
42 what drew Sempra to Casnovia Township. Mr. Nerzig replied that the market is good here, as
43 DTE and Consumers are buyers of wind power energy; the wind here is enough to make the
44 project viable; there is a good electrical grid in place; and Sempra has a successful project in
45 Huron County.
46

47 Vice Chairperson Willick asked if a wind energy project will cause surrounding properties to
48 decrease in value. Mr. Nerzig referenced a study from Lawrence Berkley Labs that said wind
49 farms do not move property values up or down appreciably. He did note, however, that other
50 studies say different things.
51

1 Vice Chairman Willick asked what the Township will get in revenue if the project is approved?
2 And how much will be allocated to schools and roads? Mr. Nerzig replied as follows: Sempra
3 pays any increase on personal property tax; Sempra will have to restore and improve roads in
4 order to bring turbine components in; Sempra is open to discussing other road improvements as
5 well; the property tax payments on the turbines will be significant.

6
7 Commissioner Montgomery asked how close a turbine could be to someone's house and what
8 would happen if it fell? He also asked about sound impacts. Mr. Nerzig answered that the
9 Zoning Ordinance requires a setback from the property line of the height of the turbine – so this
10 would be approximately 500 foot setback (more or less) from the property line. He also said
11 that the Township limits sound to 55 dBA at the property line – which Sempra meets. Sempra
12 uses very quiet turbines. Mr. Nerzig noted that a refrigerator running in the kitchen is about 55
13 dBA.

14
15 Next, Chairperson Mansfield asked the Township's Engineer to review his report, which report
16 is incorporated in the record of this meeting. Lee VanderMuelen from Progressive A/E in Grand
17 Rapids said he was under contract as the Township's engineer on this project. He reviewed his
18 report dated July 24, 2018 for the Planning Commission. Mr. VanderMuelen noted that the
19 utility grid wind energy system is allowed in the Agricultural zoning district as a special land
20 use. When considering a special land use request, the Planning Commission can ask for
21 additional information needed to help the Commission make its decision. Section 3.24 of the
22 Zoning Ordinance contains the regulations for wind turbines. Mr. VanderMuelen said that the
23 applicant submitted sound level diagrams that met requirements.

24
25 Mr. VanderMuelen said their preliminary review was intended to make sure that the Planning
26 Commission has all the information it needs when considering this application. Mr.
27 VanderMuelen made the following recommendations to the Planning Commission, for
28 consideration and discussion with the applicant:

- 29
- 30 1. Tower and visual appearance: visual impact of the project on the community.
- 31 2. WES lighting: light levels and possible new technology which comply with FAA
- 32 requirements.
- 33 3. Maintenance and Operation: removal of WES towers after 12 months of non-production,
- 34 annual review of the WES, establish escrow for Township reviews and establish
- 35 guidelines for changes to the project.
- 36 4. Performance guarantee: assurance guarantees to cover the full cost to remove the WES
- 37 project.
- 38 5. Environmental: wildlife study and post construction follow up.
- 39 6. Noise: pre-construction and post-construction noise study to confirm compliance.
- 40 Applicant update plans to show 55 dBA and 45 dBA contours at each turbine location.
- 41 The way that sound moves should be shown on the drawings.
- 42 7. Shadow Flicker: require shadow flicker project analysis.
- 43 8. Safety: applicant shall address ice throw and fire suppression. Applicant shall register
- 44 with Miss Dig and be responsible for all 8911 calls related to WES project. The applicant
- 45 has addresses this in their comments tonight. Is the Township satisfied with the
- 46 answers?
- 47 9. Electromagnetic interference: applicant to provide sign off by impacted carriers.
- 48 10. Electrical distribution: as-builts and surface marking of distribution lines. Planning
- 49 Commission should consider a waiver for overhead electric distribution lines at two
- 50 locations (allow overhead lines in sensitive areas). Applicant shall review and confirm
- 51 all locations where overhead lines will be requested as part of the Special Land Use.

- 1 11.Substation: detailed site plan approval documents shall be submitted for review and
2 approval as part of the Special Land Use. No details have been provided on this.
3 12. Roadway improvements: a roadway repair escrow be established.
4 13. Stormwater management and Erosion Control: require detailed grading plans for each
5 turbine location and access drive.
6 14. Complaint Resolution: establish timelines for response times and resolution. This
7 process should be formalized.
8

9 Mr. VanderMuelen said that the Township has submitted the plans to the County Road
10 Commission and County Drain Commissioner and are waiting for those comments. Mr.
11 VanderMuelen recommended that the Planning Commission get those comments and review
12 them, before moving forward.
13

14 Mr. Nerzig said that they had received Progressive's Report that night and are willing to accept
15 all conditions and requirements listed in the report as conditions to the Planning Commission's
16 recommendation of approval for the special use request.
17

18 The Planning Commission discussed the need to get more information and to have time to
19 review the information and comments made at tonight's meeting. There was discussion that the
20 Planning Commission and Township Engineer were still waiting for comments from the
21 Muskegon County Road Commission and Drain Commissioner. Upon motion of Winnell,
22 seconded by Anderson, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to table its consideration
23 of the special use request of SGS Development LLC for a utility grid wind energy system
24 (Kenowa Ridge Wind Farm) until August 21, 2018 at 7 p.m., at the Casnovia Old School, 142 N.
25 Main Street, Casnovia (same place). Roll call vote: Mansfield: Yes Willick: Yes Anderson:
26 Yes Montgomery: Yes Winell: Yes. Motion carries 5-0.
27

28 **PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

29
30 None.

31
32 Zoning Administrator Terry Harrison announced that he was available at the Casnovia
33 Township Hall Monday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. if people wanted to review the site plan
34 and special use application.
35

36 There being no further matters to come before the Planning Commission the meeting
37 was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.
38
39
40

41 _____
42 Kim Anderson, Secretary

43 Minutes Prepared: August 6, 2018
44 Minutes Approved: September 18, 2018
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