

Stutsman County Planning & Zoning Commission Minutes – August 21, 2024

Meeting was called to order at 8:35 AM by chairman Brian Amundson. Roll call taken. Present were Brian Amundson, Duane Andersen, Joan Morris, David Steele, Levi Taylor, and Tyler Perleberg, Zoning Administrator. Absent was Robert Toso. And there is still one at large position that is currently vacant.

Others in attendance: Kris Koch, Todd Langston, & Jamison Veil representing Otter Tail Power. Dwight & Janet Hendrickson, Dorinda Andres, Keith Larson, Gary Beckman, Kathy Blouir, Zach Rode, Darron & Barb Orr, Diane Carlson, Jeanne Bernston, Chris Finch, Leon & Mary Westerhausen, & Jake Emo.

One correction was to be made on the July 24th meeting minutes on the last paragraph it states “Mr. Amundson mentioned doing a one mile setback.” It was actually Mr. Andersen that stated that. Mr. Steele motioned, Ms. Morris seconded, to approve the July 24, 2024 meeting minutes with the correction. Motion approved.

Chairman Amundson introduced the agenda item for Otter Tail to give a presentation on the JETx Project. Mr. Koch from Otter Tail had a PowerPoint presentation pulled up to give an in depth look at the project they’re working on from Jamestown to Ellendale. He explained what MISO is, the size of the project, the make up of the structures, the distance of the project and the siting of the towers. He showed a map with the location of the towers and the distance from residences along the current route they’re working on. He explained the challenges that they would deal with if the setback were to stay at 2,600 feet. After the presentation, there was discussion about re-routing, additional costs to re-route, public forums, landowner discussions, 500 foot setbacks that the Public Service Commission has established, Otter Tail’s process of contacting landowners and residents. Leon & Mary Westerhausen gave some public input. Mr. Amundson talked about townships that have their own zoning ordinances and the possibility of relinquishing parts of their ordinances to the county zoning ordinance. Mr. Perleberg clarified the process of how townships would adopt certain sections of the county ordinance. Mr. Andersen stated that with this particular JETx project, he was informed of two properties in Montpelier Township that would be affected by the 2,600 foot setback and that those two landowners would have to ability to ask for a variance if they so choose and stated that with the current townships we have zoning authority for are more sparsely populated than the others that are locally zoned. He added that the other townships this project goes through has the ability to set their own standards and setbacks however they so choose. Further discussion took place about who the power serves & where the power comes from. Mr. Amundson asked the committee if there are any motions anyone wanted to make. Ms. Morris expressed her concern about the same setback distance being applied for both urban and rural areas and she would like to see the PSC give a different rule for those different areas. Jake Emo gave a history of when the 500 foot setback was established by the PSC, which he stated came from legislation in either 1981 or 1983. Mr. Amundson added insight about the PSC and their

rules and how they viewed setbacks from wind towers based on size. He went on to express how he sees this committee as being obligated to protect landowner rights and we have a recommendation approved from our prior meeting to have a setback of 2,600 feet and asked the committee if there is a motion to change that. No motion was made for a change.

With no further discussion, Mr. Andersen motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Taylor. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 AM.