



**Minutes**

THOMAS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
Thomas Township Public Safety Building, 8215 Shields Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609  
January 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Rod Iamurri called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present in addition to Mr. Iamurri were: Ruth McDonald, Diane LaMountain, Pat Lynch and Steve Yockey. Also present were Dan Sika, Director of Community Development, and Connie Watt, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer.

**1. *Call to Order and Roll Call***

**2. *Pledge of Allegiance.***

**3. *Approval of Agenda:***

It was moved by McDonald, seconded by Lynch to approve the Agenda for the January 20, 2016 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. *Approval of Minutes:***

It was moved by LaMountain seconded by Yockey to approve the minutes of December 16, 2015 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. *Communications – Petitions – Citizens Comments – None.***

**6. *Presentations-None***

**7. *Sign Board of Appeals-None***

**8. *Hearings-None***

**9. *Sign Board of Appeals-None***

## ***10. New Business***

### ***A. Thomas Township Planning Commission Annual Report for 2015***

Sika explained that this was part of the duties of the Planning Commission to receive, vote and file the annual report which shows the activity of the Planning Commission for the previous year. This report gives the Board an opportunity to see a list of all the items the Planning Commission dealt with in 2015. The report is also sent to the County for them to receive and file. There were no questions regarding the annual report. A motion was made by McDonald, supported by LaMountain to receive and accept the 2015 Planning Commission report. Motion carried unanimously.

### ***B. Windmills and Wind-Powered Electricity Generating Devices-Discussion Only***

Iamurri noted that wind energy had been discussed prior to this meeting. The information provided here was a lot of good information but he added that the Planning Commission needs to stay on top of this to make sure they understand it and have the right information moving forward. He also mentioned that previously it was remarked that we (Thomas Township) does not meet the average wind speed necessary to have windmills and this is a plus. He asked Sika if the Township has been approached by someone interested in a wind farm. Sika said only a few smaller windmills have popped up residentially that are for personal use. Iamurri questioned if a change in the Ordinance is needed to make sure any concerns are covered. Sika said that is a question that the Planning Commission would have to answer. Right now these are allowed on certain zoning districts, M, B-4, B-5 and A. They are not permitted in residential areas, B-1, B-2 and B-3. The ordinance they were given is one that Cindy Winland put together and was adopted about three years ago. He stated he believed it to be very up-to-date with state and federal law as well as court rulings. The Planning Commission however, dictates if it is not strong enough. This concern comes up every year. Sika added that just outside of our community you can see these windmills. He added that fortunately as Iamurri noted, there is not enough sustained wind speed here but with changing technology who knows. Maybe that won't be a big factor someday and someone will be looking at putting them here. He urged the Planning Commission to review the ordinance and come up with any questions they'd like answered and make sure they are comfortable with it. McDonald questioned if it was mandated that the Township have areas for windmills. Sika answered if you don't then there are court cases where they have decided for communities so you'd be at the mercy of the courts. McDonald asked if there was a minimum area for windmills. Sika answered that in the ordinance now they must be 1,400 feet from a residence. After further discussion it was decided by the Planning Commission that they would like the ordinance reviewed to see if it is current and focuses enough on their concerns for the Township. Sika stated he will turn the ordinance over to Spicer for review. This process can take anywhere from 2-3 weeks and it should then be ready to be discussed at the February Planning Commission meeting.

*11. Old Business-None*

*12. Receive and File All Correspondence-Planning & Zoning News-December 2015.*

*13. Adjournment*

Motion by LaMountain seconded by McDonald to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. **The next meeting date is February 17, 2016.**

*Respectfully submitted by Connie Watt, Planning Assistant/Code Enforcement Officer*