

Emmetsburg VFW
Emmetsburg, Iowa
Wednesday, June 15, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

The Palo Alto County Board of Supervisors met in special session. Members present: Keith Wirtz, Chair; Ronald Graettinger, Roger Faulstick, Craig Merrill, Linus Solberg. Present: Carmen Moser, County Auditor; Peter Hart, County Attorney; Walter Davis-Oeth, County Engineer; Jordan Morey, Auditor's Office; Therese Geelan, Auditor's Office; Rob Allen, County Conservation Director; Aletha King, Zoning.

Peter Hart, County Attorney, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the VFW, 3205 Main St, Emmetsburg, Iowa. Peter led the Pledge of Allegiance. Peter welcomed everyone to the public hearing to consider amending the Wind Energy Conversion System Ordinance.

Carmen Moser, County Auditor, was asked to speak on the tax increment financing information that was distributed to show the amount of estimated tax revenue from the current 170 wind turbines.

Peter Hart opened the public hearing and read the supplemental agenda that was sent out and posted by law. Peter called the names of persons who requested to speak at the hearing. The following people made comments at the public hearing

Delray Bredehoeft, Mike Kundel, Carla Larson, Bertha Mathis, Stephanie Parsons, Sharon Neighbors, Jim Neighbors, Laura Winter, Alea Spears, Jake Hill, Brian Garrels, Tim Murphy, Kirby Sampson, Karen Thu, Darrel Reed, Alan Oppedal, Wayne Knutson, Jr., Missy Knutson, Cloe Knutson, Jim Unrau, Janice Morey, Dale Opheim.

Walter Davis-Oeth, County Engineer, was asked to speak in regards to the road agreement required for the construction of the wind turbines in our county.

Keith Wirtz stated at the hearing that the Board had received several letters signed by landowners in support of the Lost Island wind project.

Motion by Graettinger, seconded by Merrill to close the public hearing. Motion Carried.

Keith Wirtz, Chair, asked the Board to discuss the setbacks in the Wind Energy Conversion Systems Ordinance and the recommendations by the Planning & Zoning Board.

The Board considered extending the March 15, 2022, Wind Turbine Moratorium another 30 days to July 15, 2022.

Motion by Faulstick, 2nd by Graettinger to approve extending the existing March 15, 2022, Wind Turbine Moratorium another 30 days to July 15, 2022. Ayes: All. Motion Carried.

The Board considered adopting a one-mile wind turbine setback from the shores of Silver Lake, Rush Lake and Virgin Lake. Planning & Zoning recommended to raise the distance from residences, cemeteries, and city limits from 1500' to 2640' setback.

The Board consensus was a one-mile setback from the lakes. Virgin Lake is inside the Bird Conservation Area.

The Board discussed a ½ mile setback from cemeteries and a 1-mile setback from cities. The current ordinance is a 1500' setback.

The Board considered requiring Aircraft Detection Lighting Systems (ADLS) on all future wind turbine construction consistent with F.A.A. Rules & Regulations

All Board members were in favor of the requirement for Aircraft Detection Lighting Systems (ADLS) on all future wind turbine construction consistent with F.A.A. Rules & Regulations.

The Board considered restricting the total wind turbine and blade extension height to 600'. Planning & Zoning had recommended to raise the height from 550' to 640' for the total height.

All Board members were in favor of the 600' height of the wind turbines.

The Board considered restricting any wind turbine construction within the 57 square miles of the legally described Bird Conservation Area (BCA). Planning & Zoning Board voted to recommend to not have any towers in the BCA with a one-mile setback from any public conservation areas in the entire county.

Four board members were in favor of the BCA as the setback for the Lost Island wind project. One board member was undecided and is gathering more information.

Keith Wirtz, Chair, stated the following. Any other existing provisions of the 9-27-2016, Wind Energy Ordinance not changed will remain in effect.

Craig Merrill discussed the decommissioning agreement.

The 3rd reading of the ordinance is Wednesday, June 22, 2022, Emmetsburg VFW, at 6:30 p.m.

Motion by Solberg, 2nd by Graettinger to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. Ayes: All. Motion Carried.

Keith Wirtz, Chairman

Carmen Moser, County Auditor