

Montrose Township

Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2022

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morrie Fikes at 6:00 PM.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Present: Morrie Fikes, Don Pollard, Tom Tithof, Harry Powell, Bill Stroup and Jim Ingram

Absent: Dave Badgley

Staff Present: Bill McIlmurray - Building Official and Mark Emmendorfer-Supervisor

Meeting Minutes – A **Motion** was made by Don Pollard, to accept the meeting minutes from 6/2/22 and 6/9/22 as submitted. Support for the motion was given by H. Powell. Motion carried 6-0 votes.

Approval of Meeting Agenda – A motion was made by Don Pollard to approve the meeting's agenda as presented. Support for the motion was given by Tom Tithof. Motion carries a 6-0 vote.

Public Comments on Agenda Items Only: - none

New Business- Public Hearing –Genesee County Water and Waste Services is requesting the rezoning of parcel B from RF-Residential Farm to I-2 Heavy Industrial. The parcel identified as B has not been assigned a property identification number, the applicant has applied for a split/combination from the existing parent parcel, 13-15-200-001, commonly known as 12448 McKinley Road, Montrose, MI 48457. The proposed zoning change would allow the property owner to construct a new sewage digestion facility.

Jeff Wright, Genesee County Drain Commissioner, and his Deputy Kevin Sylvester were present at the meeting to share why the GCWWS needs to rezone the parcel. Jeff shared that this treatment facility is regulated by the EPA and back in the 1970s the clean water act was started to collect the drainage from septic systems into ditches and streams. There are constant changes within the EPA guidelines and that is why this digester is being considered. The biggest reason things are being changed is the PFAS that is getting released into the system is coming from our homes into the treatment facility. The sludge from the plant was used on farmer's fields in the past, because of PFAS, that is no longer allowed. It needs to be incinerated or taken to a landfill. They are in negotiations with local landfills but the bottom line is the digestion reduces the amount of the sludge by 13/1 so there would be a lot less to dispose of in a landfill. Jeff Wright did state that due to the changing of the regulations by the EPA and E.G.L.E he is asking the Planning Commission to pass the rezoning request. Because the Federal and State government feel this is necessary

and it is an essential service, they are not required to get permission, but they always do go to the Board and explain why they need the rezoning before moving forward so the public knows why they are making changes and can ask questions.

Glen Powell 12128 Glenmark Trail. – Asked if the testing of PFAS will add cost to consumers. Jeff Wright said sewer rates were just raised about 6 months ago and that will cover the cost of the digester and de-watering. So, there will not be any additional costs for the digester or the de-watering facility. We do not treat water from the City of Flint, they have their own facility on Beecher Road and they are under the same rules and they are already digesting. There were questions if the other treatment plant in Linden/Fenton area will be adding a digester. Jeff Wright said they already have the digester. There will be no additional noise from the digester because there are no moving parts. Jeff also stated that de-watering and digesting create much less odor than the land application process that we currently have. They would like to sell off the methane gas and do not expect to have an “external flame”. Jeff Wright said that the best solution would be for us to stop using PFAS in our products and the products we import. This is something not caused by us but we are being forced to clean it up.

Chris Monk 12514 Marshall Road – Asked why they are putting this across the street and if this is the only parcel, they want to be rezoned. The old incinerating building will be used for the de-watering plant and the reason the digester will be across the street is simply engineering and the way the wastewater flows and will be treated, that is the best place for it. She feels that this will cause issues to the animals in the area Mr. Wright said it will not affect the animals there will be no runoff. She also complained about the ongoing smell, J. Wright said he cannot control the smell but the digester will actually make it better. The land application is what causes the smell. All the air quality standards have been met. Mr. Wright said the reason the treatment plant was placed here is that it was the lowest elevation in the county before the plant was here and the waste came down the Flint River untreated, it always came here the difference now is it’s treated at the plant.

Brad Thorsby 12278 Marshall Road – He asked why are they asking for such a small area to be rezoned now. Mr. Wright said it should have never been requested that way, to begin with, they only needed that small area, not the whole parcel.

Jim Monk 12514 Marshall Road – He said that he feels the digester should be on the other side of the road not across the street. J. Wright said again, that due to engineering the location they are requesting is the best place to put the digester.

Donna Mermik 12171 Marshall Road – Wants to know why they even come to the meeting if there is nothing they can do. J. Wright said because he wants to hear their opinion. She asked would it affect property values? Jeff Wright said that if anything it will make things better, and the smell will be reduced.

Morrie Fikes read a letter from Jack and Sharon Lambert 10485 Seymour Road – They ask that the Planning Commission vote No to expanding the Waste Water Treatment Center and also on the 80-acre landfill. M. Fikes said they are misunderstanding the purpose of

the Planning Commission is only to recommend to the Township Board whether or not to rezone the parcel.

John Harrow – 11378 Glenmark Trail – He was asking if there will be any demolition of the existing buildings. J. Wright said they are actually using the old building for the de-watering plant.

Ernest Root – 12403 Marshall Road – He asked if the rest of the property was going to be rezoned and J. Wright said they have no intentions at this time to rezone it.

Larry Ward – 12498 Marshall Road – His questions were about where the gas will go and who will buy it. J. Wright does not know how that will be done. Mr. Ward says there is a lot of noise now and there will be more if they convert the gas to electricity. J. Wright says at this time their plan is to sell the gas since there is a natural gas line that runs through the property and they have no plans to convert it to electricity.

George Tarrant – 14353 Nichols Road – He was asking questions about why the wastewater treatment plant is in Montrose. M. Fikes told him this is only in regard to the rezoning of the parcel and the plant is already here.

Tara Whitmire – 12171 Marshall Road – She had questions about the gas coming off the digester, J. Wright wants to sell off the gas so he plans on not having a flame. If there is extra gas then they may have to burn some off but that is not their plan. The norm statewide is to burn off the gas with an “eternal flame” we want to be the opposite and sell that gas and not burn it off.

Glen Powell – 12128 Glenmark Trail – He asked if there will be a profit from selling the gas. J. Wright said if there was a profit that would go to pay for the cost of disposing of the sludge at the landfill and also to keep the sewer bills low.

M. Fikes opened board comments and discussion in regard to rezoning Parcel B from R-F to I-2

Board members asked about what is happening in other communities. This is happening all over the state, some sludge is already being refused due to the PFAS. When we treat the water there is zero PFAS and when it comes back it has PFAS we have to treat it somehow and we need a place to put it. H. Powell said that the board was under the impression that it was more economical to use generators rather than convert to usable gas. J. Wright said it is their intention to sell the gas. T. Tithof asked if the digester would increase the capacity of the plant, it would not.

A **Motion** was made by D. Pollard to recommend to the Board to approve the rezoning of Parcel B from R-F to I-2. Support for the motion was given by B. Stroup. Motion carries. 6-0 vote. Roll call – B. Stroup (yes), M. Fikes (yes), D. Pollard (yes), T. Tithof (yes), H. Powell (yes), J. Ingram (yes)

A **Motion** was made by B. Stroup to recommend to the Board to approve the rezoning of Parcel A from R-F to I-2. Support for the motion was given by D. Pollard. Motion carries. 4-2 vote. Roll call – T. Tithof (yes), D. Powell (yes), B. Stroup (yes), M. Fikes (no), J. Ingram (yes), H. Powell (no)

Site Plan Review approval – GCWWS is requesting site plan approval for the construction of a wastewater facility on the southeast corner of McKinley and Farrand Road. The parcel identified as B has not been assigned a Property Identification Number, the applicant has applied for a split/combination from the existing parent parcel, 13-15-200-001, commonly known as 12448 McKinley Road, Montrose, MI 48457.

A **Motion** was made by M. Fikes to table the site plan review until 8/4/22. Support for the motion was given by D. Powell. Motion carries 6-0. Roll Call J. Ingram (yes), D. Pollard (yes), M. Fikes (yes), H. Powell (yes), B. Stroup (yes), T. Tithof (yes).

Old Business- None

Other Business- None

Public Comments- None

Adjournment

A **Motion** was made by B. Stroup to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 pm, support given by T. Tithof. Motion carries. 6-0 vote

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday, August 4, 2022.

Respectfully,

P.Coomer
Recording Secretary

