

Mackinaw City Planning Commission Discusses Wind Turbines

By Jonathan Eppley

The Village of Mackinaw City Planning Commission began reviewing a stand-alone ordinance regulating wind turbines for residential and business use at its Thursday, July 23, meeting. The purpose of the ordinance is to allow construction of smaller turbines in the village while providing reasonable restrictions concerning public safety.

Village Manager Jeff Lawson said if the ordinance goes forward as a stand-alone, and not as an article in the village zoning ordinance, it would be applied to all zoning districts in the village. This means every zoned parcel could erect a turbine, providing it met all provisions of the ordinance, including noise, vibration, setback, ground clearance, communication signal interference, shadow flicker, avian risk, environmental impact, and safety provisions.

"The general use would be permitted in all districts, but there

would be regulations on setbacks and other things that would restrict it from use on certain parcels within a district," he said. "As a stand-alone [ordinance], it has to apply to all districts. You can regulate the activity itself through different standards like decibels or setbacks or other provisions."

Commissioners present at the meeting all supported the idea of allowing the installation of wind turbines for private use, but want to make sure regulations are precise enough to ensure that turbines are not popping up on every street corner.

"I'm very sensitive to cities that thought an idea was good and got it going, when all of a sudden they've done it and turn around and go, 'Oh man, if we had only done this that way,'" Commission Chair Rob Most said.

He wants to make sure the commission spends enough time review-

ing the ordinance so that every regulation is adequate to limit where and how turbines can be erected.

Provisions discussed in the first draft of the ordinance would require turbines to be set back at least 1.25 times its total height from the nearest structure, not exceed 55 decibels audibly, and all electrical lines connected to the turbine must be buried underground. Larger turbines' blades would also require at least 50 feet of ground clearance, and 20 feet of clearance would be required for smaller turbines' blades.

Commissioner John Reimer said the village is lagging behind and should already have a private wind turbine ordinance in place.

"The horses are out of the barn already, because Mackinaw City kind of represents wind power, between the state dock and the [municipal] turbines," he said. "If you look at the maps that indicate the prime locations to harness wind

power, we're on a prime spot."

The discussion of enacting private wind turbine regulations came about over the past several months because several residents and small business owners have expressed interest in erecting turbines to reduce their electric bills. The village has regulations for large commercial turbines that were drafted in 2001 to regulate the two large turbines on the village's south side.

Wind turbine technology is a popular topic and industry, but don't expect to see turbines popping up all over Mackinaw City, Mr. Lawson said.

"It's probably going to take another meeting to hash that out, but I think there's a balance [in the draft ordinance] right now, that if it's permitted in all districts, there's enough standards that they're not going to show up on every parcel because it's not going to be practical based on the ordinance," he said.

MICHIGAN POLITICS

Political Newcomer Shows Moxie on Northern Tour

By George Weeks



Rick who? It's Rick Snyder, a successful Ann Arbor businessman but relatively obscure candidate whose two-peninsula, 26-city announcement tour last week underscored that he has the moxie, money, and campaign operation to be taken seriously as a contender in what shapes up as Michigan's most competitive Republican gubernatorial primary in many decades.

In the 2010 GOP mix for term-limited Jennifer Granholm's seat:

Aggressive Attorney General Mike Cox, who has cracked down on many evil-doers and has a PR machine second to none in Lansing; U.S. Representative Pete Hoekstra of Holland, whose high visibility on Capitol Hill is trickling onto the campaign trail, where he has some innovative gigs; Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard, an ex-state senator who lost by a 57-41 percentage in his 2006 challenge of Senator Debbie Stabenow but has a vote-rich primary base; Senator Tom George of Kalamazoo, a thoughtful long shot whose challenge is to let voters know of his considerable credentials.

In my Friday chat with venture capitalist Snyder after his Traverse City stop as he headed with his family and political aides to Charlevoix, Cheboygan, and the Upper Peninsula in a huge motor home with a "Rick for Governor" sign, the former president and chief operating officer of Gateway computers said his cam-

paign is focused on correcting lack of leadership by both parties "in the broken world" of Lansing.

"We are projected to lose 1 million jobs this decade, our unemployment rate is 15.2 percent, and a family moves out of Michigan every 12 minutes," Snyder said in spouting a line he used throughout his down-state tour to trumpet his theme that politicians have brought on "an economic disaster."

Political neophyte Snyder insists he is the one to deliver disaster relief.

Among his Traverse City events, Snyder had his second meeting this year with ex-Governor Bill Milliken, who said, "I have a positive impression of the campaign he is running" but he will "keep watching" primary campaigns before making any possible endorsement.

While a professed non-politician, Snyder showed a deft political touch as he introduced two of his children to a Cheboygan audience Friday: "This is all for them. I want [them] to be able to stay in Michigan. I want them to feel like they have a bright future here. That's why I couldn't take it any more and that's why I'm running for governor."

Democrats appear to be taking Snyder seriously. Their state chairman, Mark Brewer, calls him "Dick DeVos, Jr." in a reference to the 2006 GOP gubernatorial nominee and former Amway top executive who "shipped jobs to China."

Snyder says he's a job creator, and said he won't personally finance his campaign to the extent DeVos did.

At the recent Mackinac Island annual conference of the Detroit Regional Chamber, Snyder was escorted around the Grand Hotel by Bill Ford, Jr., executive chairman of the Ford Motor Company. Although he has not officially endorsed, he wore a "Rick for Michigan" button and has been praising his credentials to be an innovative governor.

Snyder has good ties with new Republican State Chairman Ron Weiser (not Weisner as I misspelled it last week), a fellow Ann Arbor businessman. He said, "It is good that Ron is bringing the whole party" together.

In other campaign developments: • Hoekstra's primary job is on Capitol Hill but he is taking on 100 temporary ones in pursuit of what he hopes will be Job One after the 2010 election -- governor.

When he announced for governor, he vowed that during his campaign he would perform 100 different jobs in diverse industries "to stress the importance of economic development and job creation."

For his first jobs gig, Hoekstra planned Monday to work about two hours with an Inland Pipe Rehabilitation crew on a repair project in Detroit to enable water and sewage to better flow.

• While the early primary action has been among Republicans and Lieutenant Governor John Chery has backing of party powers for the Democratic nomination, ex-Representative John Freeman of Madison Heights said this is why he has filed to run for governor:

"Every day, it becomes more clear: the ideas coming out of Lansing just aren't moving us forward anymore. The solutions in our state capitol are stale and out-of-touch. It's time for change."

Friendly Rivals

As Democrats seek to end, or at least erode, Republican rule of the

state Senate, they will target, among other seats, that of term-limited 37th district Senator Jason Allen (R-Traverse City). He represents Chippewa and Mackinac counties above the bridge and these below: Emmet, Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Charlevoix, Antrim, and Grand Traverse.

A strong Republican contender is ex-Representative Howard Walker of Traverse City, who represented Grand Traverse and Kalkaska counties and has a swarm of endorsements from high-profile Republicans, including U.S. Representative Dave Camp (R-Midland).

Term-limited House Minority Leader Kevin Elsenheimer (R-Kewadin) revealed Saturday that he decided not to run for the Senate but will wait to run for a local judgeship when such a seat opens. He said his three children "need their dad" more than Lansing does.

A strong Democratic contender is term-limited Representative Gary McDowell of Rudyard. Although not announced, he told me Friday, "I plan on running" for Allen's seat. He now represents Chippewa, Mackinac, and Emmet counties, and part of Cheboygan County.

What strikes me at this early stage is that Walker and McDowell, in contrast to the partisan snarling in Lansing and Washington these and earlier days, say nice things about each other.

Walker, who called to tout his GOP endorsements, responded when I asked about McDowell: "He's a hard worker and represents his district well. Gary is a good gentleman. I expect a good race."

When I asked McDowell about Walker, he said, "I have a high opinion% of him...a solid guy."

A rare moment in Michigan politics.

George Weeks retired in 2006 after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.

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The quotation under the flag of *The St. Ignace News* on Page 1 is from the 10 triads written by Dr. Fred Newton Scott, creator and teacher of the first continuous course in journalism in the United States at the University of Michigan in 1890. The 10 triads are chiseled on the parapet of the Detroit News Building at 615 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit. They were headed "Ideals of the Press" or "The Newspaper in a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Concerns Surround Bridge Authority Meeting

To the Editor:

I attended the Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA) meeting concerning the commuter rate. As someone who has frequented public meetings, hearings, etc., I was a little disappointed in the environment surrounding the meeting. The issue of the commuter rate is something that obviously affects everyone in this community. That being said, my objections and concerns lie not only with the outcome, but with the way in which a few of the MBA members seem to act during such an important meeting.

The manner and tone in which Chairman William Gnodtke began the meeting, in stating that the MBA would not field any questions but only take comments, sent the wrong signal to those present who took the time out of their work day to attend the meeting. With an issue so dear to the heart of the community, you would think that the MBA would be in a position to respond to the serious concerns residents had. From the lack of detailed policy explanations to the fiddling with cell phones, I truly believe that there are some on the MBA who seek to only posture themselves as public servants. I speak not of the majority of the board, but of the few whose lack of legitimate concern for the community is obvious and was on clear display at this meeting. We should expect more.

Years ago, standing next to my father, I was fortunate enough to see the ribbon cutting for the bridge. At that time, Governor Williams hailed the project as a major benefit and victory for the communities surrounding the Straits of Mackinac. My concern today is that the same spirit responsible for constructing such a grandiose landmark may have been lost. I hope in the future the MBA will prove me wrong and hold these meetings to the stature that is deserved.

Walter "Jerry" Murray, Jr.
St. Ignace

Remembering St. Ignace Bakery

To the Editor:

Your article (or at least the title) in the July 16 edition suggests the bakery has been on that site since it was founded. My personal memory is that it was originally located further to the north when Carl Neelis owned it before his son, Paul, took the business over. I believe the site was next to the old Cheeseman Insurance Agency (which later, itself, moved to its current location), which was next to the city hall. After the bakery moved, it became Lanno's beauty shop and then became the office for the local branch of the Secretary of State. Carl and Paul both did a great job with it before Paul moved on to the Northern Lights restaurant. It's a shame the successor couldn't keep it going. Bakeries, like butcher shops, are a dying breed.

Mike McNamara
Petoskey

Niagara Escarpment

To the Editor:

Under your feet, wherever you are standing in this part of the world, you are on rare ground. Some of it is about to get torn up.

The south portion of the Eastern Upper Peninsula is a bit of rock the United Nations terms "rare," called the Niagara Escarpment. My mother used to describe it as "the edge of a plate." It is a special geological phenomenon that runs from near Niagara Falls in New York around the northern rim of the Great Lakes into Wisconsin.

It is the unique geology of Cedarville and Drummond Island and Manitoulin Island. It is the Garden peninsula, the Bruce peninsula and the Door peninsula. It has "karsts" on it, which are special features formed by the dissolution of underlying rock, creating caves, springs and sinkholes. The Trout Lake area has a number of karst sites.

In the next few weeks, the U.S. Forest Service wants to know what you think of a proposal they have to develop and change about 64,000 acres of the Niagara Escarpment. They will be harvesting about 6,000 acres of timber, building some new roads and closing off some others. They will be, by their own definition "managing" the area.

This proposal began back in the late 1990s and was called the "Niagara Escarpment Project." Back then, it generated a lot of interest and a lot of worry. A public meeting brought out unusual crowds. People wanted to know more. That project died in 1997.

It's back on the table, only this time it is called the Niagara Project. The 400 million-year-old "escarpment" has disappeared. It is about 1,000 acres bigger now and, interestingly, it avoids trying to be sensitive.

In 1997, the project described the escarpment area as "a globally rare geologic feature," and, further, that within the project area "some finer-scaled features... can also be considered rare," and "a community (of features) given a global ranking of G2 (globally imperiled)."

None of that language which is in the preamble of the 1997 project can be found in the 2009 project.

This is a timber sale. It is also, by USFS description, a money-losing idea, despite the timber sales. The U.S. Forest Service is, for a variety of reasons, proposing a favored option which is twice the timber cut of another option. Its preferred option recognizes that it has a "high probability" of promoting non-native invasive species into the area. Its other option, which it does not recommend, would allow a "moderate" opportunity for non-native species.

That's ironic. The Forest Service is trying to fight non-native species in a whole different program, spending thousands and thousands of dollars, yet it is creating a management recommendation for its most sensitive area that it knows will bring in non-native species.

The forest service has been working with a group to protect the karst areas, but they have not mapped out all the karsts in the project, and yet they state clearly, "The karst action in the proposed area may not be adequate to protect this resource." This is a globally imperiled resource, by their own description.

The proposed new project runs from Highway 123 to I-75, with East Lake at its center.

The Forest Service is taking public comments until August 10. If you want to know more, contact Martha Sjogren at (906) 643-7900, extension 117, or send comments to: Comments-eastern-hiawatha-stignace@fs.fed.us. To date, no public meetings have been planned.

Pat Egan
Brimley

Cedar Cove To Host Craig Party

Delight Craig, who will turn 100 years old Saturday, August 1, will have a birthday party at Cedar Cove Assisted Living in Cedarville that day from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and the party is open to the community.

Enlarged photographs from her childhood will be displayed at the party, said Kim Gay, Cedar Cove activities director, adding that Ms. Craig was a talented high school and college basketball player.

Originally from Indiana, Ms.

Craig moved to the area about a year ago to be near her son, David Craig of Brevort Township. She will be the facility's first resident to turn 100, Ms. Gay said.

The birthday party is planned in lieu of the assisted living community's annual open house and family and friends picnic. A chicken lunch will be served, and entertainment will be provided by guitarist Kim Dunn, accordionist Imogene Schrader, and Sunflower the Clown.

The facility is on Mary L Street.