

**Charter Township of Van Buren
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING
Wednesday, March 16, 2011**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brownlee at 7:00 p.m. Present: Debuck, Gibson, Tomaino, Wilson and Board Representative Jahr. Absent Excused: Merritt, Staff present: Director Carroll and Secretary Grishaber. Audience: Fifty Two (52) members.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion Jahr Seconded Debuck to approve the Agenda with modifications to add the petition on Web-Site updates and keep it on the agenda until a disposition can be made.

MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion Gibson Seconded Debuck to approve the Minutes from October 20, 2010 as presented.

MOTION APPROVED.

Correspondence: None

Old Business:

Item #1: Review of Ordinances on Wood Burning from Cities of Brighton, Dearborn, Jackson Livonia and Novi:

Interim Director Carroll informed the Commissioners since taking over as Director and reading past Meeting Minutes the Commissioners wanted more information on Wood Burning or Smoke Ordinances from other communities. The department searched data bases, into which do not have wood burning ordinances though some have smoke ordinances. The department looked at fourteen (14) cities and provided you five (5) different ordinances in the Commissioners packet. The one item that is regulated by municipalities' is smoke. The research we found does not prohibit wood burning.

Chairman Brownlee addressed the audience stating this issue was formally brought to the Commissioners attention by Mr. John Burke a resident of Van Buren Township approximately one (1) year ago. Unfortunately the last couple of months the township has been under new personal Directors and the Environmental Commission have not had a chance to meet. Tonight's meeting is to receive input from the audience and the effects it would have on the community. The Environmental Commissions purpose would be only to recommend to the Board of Trustees for their review on the proposed ordinance and then they would decide on any decision made.

Mr. John Burke whom lives on Ormond Drive addressed the Commissioners stating that wood smoke is very hazardous to people especially the old and young children and particularly those who suffer from pulmonary disease. In a book he presented to the Commissioners a couple of meetings back there were

at least five (5) papers they came from the American Lung Association, Environmental Protection Agency and American Pulmonary physicians stating that smoke is nasty stuff. Some communities consider this a nuisance ordinance. This is a big health hazard and needs to be considered as a general public health and safety issue.

The majority of the audience is opposed to the proposed ordinance given by resident Mr. John Burke. Some of the information and concerns from the audience were a lot of residence burn out of necessity to heat their homes to off set the rising cost of gas bills, and are against having a ordinance telling them they may or may not be able to burn wood in their own homes to heat them and having camp fires, barbequing which is a American past time since the beginning of time. One gentleman asked the Commissioners if there has been an air quality study done to know if the air in the township is bad.

Chairman Brownlee responded by saying there has been no such study done in Van Buren Township.

Another resident informed the Commissioners that he burns 24/7 and got a rebate from the government for renewable energy and stated the State of Michigan should already have a law in place for this issue. One resident is tired of being taxed to death also has a problem with local government telling him that he may not burn wood in his own home. One resident has concerns if Van Buren Township has a pulmonary epidemic then she might understand, doesn't think the proposed ordinance by resident John Burke is a fair assessment for the community without having facts. Bob McKenna a resident asked how many complaints has the township had over Smoke. Director Carroll commented only one complaint back in 2008 from John Burke. Another resident heats his home primarily with wood as a necessity otherwise he would lose his home. Very against the proposed ordinance to ban all wood burning and would even move out of the township should this ordinance be approved. Another resident spoke to Senator Patterson and he stated to her it will be passed through legislation they will be deregulating gas prices over the next five years so everyone will be paying whatever price it is at the time. She plans on getting a wood burning stove in her near future to help subsidize the cost of her heating bills and is also very against the proposed ordinance for the township. One resident whom lives down the street from Mr. Burke stated John didn't even know he has burned wood for 30 years and feels this is a isolated incident between two neighbors and feels not everyone else should be penalized because the their personal issue and does not want his god given right to burn wood in his own home taken away. Another resident owns a wood boiler and states it does not emit smoke, and also saves \$2000.00 dollars a year on his heating bills. A realtor and resident has concerns about property values in the in the township should this proposed ordinance go through the economy is bad enough and this would hurt the township even more. Another resident wants to know where there is a representative from the County or State someone who would regulate air quality in Van Buren Township. The majority of the residents has many questions and concerns about the proposed ordinance by John Burke and is all very much against it.

Chairman Brownlee thanked everyone in the audience for the participation on the subject and the Commissioners will take a serious look at this issue.

Director Carroll informed the audience that there is no ordinance, no proposed ordinance going to any Board next week.

Director Carroll, and Jeff Jahr's recommendation for the April 20, 2011 Meeting be a Work Study on Wood Burning as the subject in the Denton Room.

Item #2: Willow Run Airport Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study

Director Carroll informed the Commissioners that the Wayne County Airport Authority that runs Willow Run Airport has been doing what's called Part 150 Compatibility Study since 2007. I went to the meeting with the Township supervisor Paul White, we spoke to Anthony Gibson whom was there and knows more information on the subject so he will be apprising the group of what's going on because he is well informed. Mr. Gibson's main concern is of the noise from airplanes doing run ups at night at the Willow Run Airport which are very loud. He contacted the Airport and they were able to move the airplanes to another part of the airport that greatly decreases the sound for local residents. Van Buren Township is affected in the N.E. corner which is effective more in Ypsilanti Township. The reason why Willow Run Airport did the Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study was that they thought they were going to expand but due to the bad economy they decided not to expand the airport at this time. There were two (2) recommendations from the study: (1) Have planes take off in a different direction and (2) Build a run off building for the airplanes to cut down noise, though the cost would be approximately a 1,500,000.00 one and a half million dollars to build. A public hearing meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Express off of the North I-94 Service Drive on Tuesday March 29, 2011 from 5:30pm to 7:30pm for a presentation and have questions answered at that time.

Motion Jahr Seconded Debuck in appointing Anthony Gibson as a representative of the Environmental Commission for all airport related studies.

Motion Carried.

Item #3: Van Buren Township Environmental Commission Web-Site Updated.

Anthony Gibson stated the Environmental Commission Web-Site has not been updated since 2007 and a lot of the information is out of date. He would like to see updating on the site.

Director Carroll stated he realizes the Web-Site is out of date, but does not have the manpower able to do the updating at this time. He would be able to have old information deleted from the site but has no idea how long it will take to get the newer fact base information updated on the Web-Site at this time.

Chairman Brownlee would like updating of the Web-Site on the agenda until a resolution can be made.

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**Motion Tomaino, Seconded Debuck to adjourn at 9:40pm.
Motion Carried.**

Next Meeting Date: April 20, 2011 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Grishaber
Recording Secretary