

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
Environmental Commission
Wednesday, August 17, 2022
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at **7:00 p.m.** in the Denton Room by Chairman **DeBuck**

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman DeBuck, Commissioner Ross, Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Merritt, Commissioner Creal, Trustee Boynton

Absent/Excused: None.

Staff: Director Lockett, Director Power, Secretary Zantop

Audience: Two (2)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion Commissioner **Creal** Second Commissioner **Gibson** to approve the agenda of August 17, 2022 as presented.

(4) AYES – DeBuck, Ross, Gibson, Merritt, Creal, Boynton

(0) NAYS

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion Commissioner **Ross**, Second Commissioner **Gibson** to approve the minutes of September 15, 2021 as presented.

(4) AYES – DeBuck, Ross, Gibson, Merritt, Creal, Boynton

(0) NAYS

Motion Carried.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Gibson announced that he still receives postcards from EGLE about the modifications at the Wayne Disposal Landfill.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Introductions

Members of the commission and staff introduced themselves and described their experience and history with the Environmental Commission.

2. Election of officers

Chairman DeBuck stated that he will not be in town for part of the year but would still be happy to serve as Chairman.

Chairman DeBuck opened up the nominations for (2) Officers positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson

Motion: **Gibson** support by **Merritt** to nominate **DeBuck** for Chairperson

Roll Call Vote: (4) AYES – DeBuck, Ross, Gibson, Merritt, Creal, Boynton
(0) NAYS

Motion Carried.

Motion: **Creal** support by **Merritt** to nominate **Ross** for Vice Chairperson

Roll Call Vote: (4) AYES – DeBuck, Ross, Gibson, Merritt, Creal, Boynton
(0) NAYS

Motion Carried.

3. Wayne Disposal, Inc. Landfill Liner Modification Request

Director Power gave an update based on a letter from Alex Hurley of US Ecology. Wayne Disposal Inc (WDI) is the landfill for hazardous material off of the N I-94 Service Drive. The liner modification request for a geosynthetic clay liner (GCL) was submitted to State of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) in January 2021. This mirrored a request that was approved by EGLE in 2018 for several phases of liner that have since been constructed. There was a public information session in June 2021 and a public comment period from November 2021 to December 2021. The request was approved by EGLE and United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) April of 2022 and GCL continues to be incorporated into new liner systems as construction occurs. Director Power stated EGLE's website has a portal for information on the Wayne Disposal Landfill.

Director Lockett stated he plans to take a tour of the landfill and that since he started, there have not been any complaints. Commissioner Gibson asked if there is information of any work being done at the asphalt plant off the N I-94 Service Drive. Commissioner Gibson stated he saw covered dumpsters, heavy equipment, and other materials when he drove by the site in April or May. Director Power stated he would ask and get more information.

4. Open Discussion and Updates

Director Power stated Van Buren Township has a host community agreement with Woodlands Meadows Landfill. The Landfill expansion is in progress. The plans have been in place since the early 1990's to have to landfill expand to the south onto the golf course site. Trees were cleared

pursuant to a tree removal permit and a Temporary Land Use for a batch plant to assist with the I-275 project on part of the site. Following EGLE'S approval to move forward with the expansion the Wayne County Conservation District appealed the expansion due to rare wetlands in the northwest corner of the site. Expansion is being done around the wetland area. Commissioner Creal asked to clarify what a rare wetland is. A rare wetland has a certain mix of vegetation and is a consolidated contiguous wetland area. Chairman DeBuck asked if this special wetland was able to be mitigated to another area outside of the watershed. Trustee Boynton stated that is part of the ongoing discussion. Commissioner Gibson asked if Van Buren Township is in partnership with the lawsuit to get the wetlands mitigated. Trustee Boynton stated that is another part of the discussion and when information is available, he will share that with the commission.

Commissioner Gibson stated in 2025 we will lose our current waste pick up and it will affect our recycling. Gibson suggested to start educating the public on recycling and address issues before hand. Direct Lockett said this is on the Township's radar and the Host Community Agreement ends in 2024 or 2025. It will be an adjustment for Residents and there will likely be a cost associated with it.

Director Power gave a brief update on French Landing Park. Phase 2 improvements were approved for funding. This includes repaving, landscaping, parking, boat docks, and the landing/boardwalk.

Chairman DeBuck asked where the Township is at with the BYC boat docks. Director Power explained this is an open issue. They have worked toward compliance with the lake ordinance and removed some of the piers. There are applications in process for an alternate design of the docks to EGLE. There is consideration for a possible adjustment to the zoning text regarding the length of docks. The current length is 40ft. The docks are still an open issue and the BYC is working towards compliance.

Commissioner Ross asked for updates on the Iron Belle Trail. There was a ribbon cutting at Van Buren Park for the saddle. There are still easements that need to be secured along Denton. Trustee Boynton stated the easements between Edgemont and Martinsville have been secure. Rosemary commented there was an ad in the newspaper for bids for the Iron Belle Trail from McDonald's on Rawsonville down the S I-94 Service Drive to the saddle in the park.

Commissioner Ross asked if there are any updates on the Lakeview Shopping Center. Director Power stated the current leases will proceed and there have been no redevelopment plans from the owner. It is zoned in the master plan for mixed-use.

Commissioner Creal asked if there is anything the Township can do about milfoil and lily pads on the west side of the lake. Milfoil is an invasive species and the lily pads have to be harvested. Milfoil has been brought up before but there has not been a viable solution. The milfoil is concentrated where water is stagnant. The issue with using chemicals is the lake is free-flowing

water. The issue with harvesting is it breaks up and floats downstream. The commission will research solutions.

Chairman DeBuck voiced concern for new development that could affect the environment. He stated someone offered to lease/buy his property to put in a solar farm. His concern was with the material a solar panel is made up of. If there was a tornado that rips up the panels he questioned if there would be hazardous material that needs to be cleaned up. Chairman DeBuck's concern on the unknown of new ideas is how safe is it. Director Power stated utility grade solar is only permitted in industrial and airport zoning districts as a special land use.

Commissioner Ross asked if Van Buren plans to bring a lawsuit to the Wixom Plant for the release of chemicals into the Huron River. Director Power stated that has not come up the area of concern is far from the Township. Commissioner Creal stated the "do not go in the water" advisory was lifted because tests were below a certain level. Trustee Boynton said it was discovered to be contained in a certain area after doing a number of tests outside of the spill area. Director Power referred commissioners to EGLE for up-to-date information.

The commission discussed issues in regards to having a quorum for future meetings and filling the current vacancy. Trustee Boynton stated having a quorum is based on the commitment of the commission. Commissioner Merritt stated he has two people that could be interested in joining the commission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS:

A representative from the League of Women Voters commented that she was very appreciative of the thorough discussion on many topics. Rosemary made a comment that at a Sumpter Planning Commission meeting a planning consultant talked about solar farms. They have to be careful because they can use up prime agricultural land. The farms require cement, pipes, and metal that can ruin the land and some abandoned them. Director Power stated homes can have up to 10 Kilowatt solar for their own use. Utility grade solar farms is not allowed in agricultural zoning.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to Adjourn **Ross**, Second **Gibson**, Meeting adjourned at **8:12 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kendyl Zantop
Recording Secretary