

Thomas County Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
March 9, 2023

The Thomas County Planning Commission convened in open and public session at 2:00 p.m., in the Commissioners meeting room of the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford, NE. Members present were Bobbi Scott, Carolyn Warren, Miles Maseberg, and Jay Jones. Also present were Thomas County Zoning Administrator/County Clerk Lorissa Hartman, Thomas County Board representative Pam Moody and Jeffrey Skinner-representative of Verizon attending via Zoom.

Motion made by Maseberg and second by Scott to excuse the absent members, Royce Jennings, Shane Pettit and Linda Cowdin. Roll call vote: Ayes – Warren, Maseberg, Jennings, Scott. Nays – none. Absent – Jennings, Cowdin and Pettit. Motion carried.

Chairman Jones stated open meeting guidelines are posted as required by law and copies are available, if requested.

Notice of meeting was given by publication in the Thomas County Herald on February 23, 2023. And mailed to all landowners within the one mile jurisdiction.

Motion made by Scott and second by Warren to adopt the March 9, 2023 agenda. Roll call vote: Ayes – Jones, Maseberg, Warren and Scott. Nays – none. Absent – Cowdin, Pettit, and Jennings. Motion carried.

Chairman Jones recessed the regular meeting at 2:02 p.m. to open the public hearing for the special use permit for Verizon cell phone tower located in Pt. NE1/4 Section 2, Township 22 North, Range 26 West.

Mr. Jeffrey Skinner, Verizon representative, went over the application and specifications. This project originally started in 2009 with Alltel and now Verizon is ready to construct the tower. The tower will be self-supporting with no guy wires. No strobe light will be located on the tower, but a constant red light will be seen. Planning member Maseberg questioned whether there could be ice to drop off the tower during windy days. Mr. Skinner responded that the leased area is large enough that any ice droppings would fall within the leased area.

Zoning Administrator was asked if any letters or comments were received from the public. No written comments were received. A few phone calls or in person questions were received on the location of the proposed tower. One phone call received from an adjacent land owner, Brent Anderson, noting that he had no issue with the tower.

No other public comments during the hearing were received.

Chairman Jones closed the public hearing at 2:08 p.m.

Motion made by Maseberg and second by Scott to recommend approval of the Special Use Permit from Verizon on the Halsey tower. Roll call vote: Ayes – Scott, Warren, Jones, Maseberg. Nays – none. Absent – Jennings, Pettit, Cowdin. Motion carried.

Discussion on changes to Zoning Regulations. The discussion of establishing a separate zoning district for the unincorporated Village of Seneca rather than have it in the AGR district. The Zoning Administrator provided a copy from Lincoln County Zoning Regulations for a VAD, Village Area Development District. The planning board asked if the Zoning Administrator could obtain a copy of Lincoln County's Land Use table. A workshop will be scheduled at a later date to be held at 6 p.m. or later.

Board members terms for renewal were discussed. At this time Planning Board member Bobbi Scott submitted a letter of resignation to be presented to the Thomas County Board of Commissioners.

No public comment at this time.

Chairman Jones adjourned the meeting at 2:21 p.m.

Thomas County Zoning Administrator  
Lorissa Hartman

Thomas County Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
April 5, 2023

The Thomas County Planning Commission convened in open and public session at 6:01 p.m., in the Commissioners meeting room of the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford, NE. Members present were Rahn Bek, Carolyn Warren, Linda Cowdin, Miles Maseberg and Jay Jones. Motion made by Warren and second by Maseberg to excuse absent members Jennings and Pettit. Roll call vote: Ayes – Bek, Warren, Cowdin, Maseberg, and Jones. Nays – none. Absent – Pettit, Jennings. Motion carried. Also present at the meeting was Thomas County Zoning Administrator/County Clerk Lorissa Hartman and Thomas County Board representative Pam Moody.

Chairman Jones stated open meeting guidelines are posted as required by law and copies are available, if requested.

Notice of meeting was given by publication in the Thomas County Herald on March 23, 2023.

Motion made by Cowdin and second by Bek to adopt the April 5, 2023 agenda. Roll call vote: Ayes – Jones, Maseberg, Cowdin, Warren, and Bek. Nays – none. Absent – Jennings, Pettit. Motion carried.

Motion made by Warren and second by Cowdin to approve the March 9, 2023 planning board minutes as published in the Thomas County Herald on March 16, 2023. Roll call vote: Ayes – Maseberg, Warren, Bek, Cowdin, Jones. Nays – none. Absent – Pettit, Jennings. Motion carried.

Discussion was held on developing a VAD District (Village Area Development District), this would currently cover any unincorporated communities in Thomas County. The Zoning Administrator presented information from both Lincoln County and Custer County. All board members agreed that they liked the information from Custer County and preceded to review specific land uses and adjust the requirements needed for Thomas County. The Zoning Administrator will try to have a completed draft for review at the April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Once the planning board decides that it is ready, a public hearing will be held for the public to comment.

No public comment at this time.

Chairman Jones adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting will be held on Monday, April 17, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners meeting room of the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford, NE. An agenda will be kept continually current and available for public inspection in the office of the Thomas County Clerk during regular business hours. Additions to the agenda may be made up to 24 hours before the meeting.

Thomas County Zoning Administrator  
Lorissa Hartman

Thomas County Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
April 17, 2023

The Thomas County Planning Commission convened in open and public session at 9:00 a.m., in the Commissioners meeting room of the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford NE. Members present were Rahn Bek, Carolyn Warren, Miles Maseberg, and Jay Jones. Motion made by Bek and second by Warren to excuse absent board members of Jennings, Pettit and Cowdin. Roll call vote: Ayes – Jones, Maseberg, Warren and Bek. Nays – none. Absent – Jennings, Pettit and Cowdin. Motion carried. Also present were Thomas County Zoning Administrator/County Clerk Lorissa Hartman, Thomas County Board representative Pam Moody, Cay Ewoldt, Joe Buechler, Twyla Witt and Tom Witt.

Chairman Jones stated open meeting guidelines are posted as required by law and copies are available, if requested.

Notice of meeting was given by publication in the Thomas County Herald on April 6, 2023.

Motion made by Warren and second by Maseberg to adopt the April 17, 2023 agenda. Roll call vote: Ayes – Jones, Maseberg, Warren and Bek. Nays – none. Absent – Cowdin, Pettit, Jennings. Motion carried.

Motion made by Warren and second by Bek to approve the April 5, 2023 planning board minutes as published in the Thomas County Herald on April 13, 2023. Roll call vote: Ayes – Maseberg, Warren, Bek and Jones. Nays – none. Absent – Jennings, Cowdin, Pettit. Motion carried.

Motion made by Warren and second by Bek to keep the same Officers of Chairman, Vice Chair and Secretary. Previous secretary was Bobbi Scott and is no longer on the board. Motion made by Warren and second by Jones to elect Rahn Bek as the Secretary. Roll call vote: Ayes – Warren, Jones, Bek, Maseberg. Nays – none. Absent – Pettit, Cowdin, Jennings. Motion carried.

Chairman – Jay Jones

Vice Chair – Carolyn Warren

Secretary – Rahn Bek

Chairman Jones opened the public hearing at 9:03 a.m.

Board member Jennings arrived at 9:06 a.m.

Cay Ewoldt explained the proposed uses for his property. Not all projects are expected to start right away. Most projects will be in phases. The first project to begin will be the campgrounds and shower house. The proposed dog daycare and boarding will be leased out to another individual to run. The material from the pond project will be used on the campground pads.

Discussion was held on the access off of Maple Street for large campers. Cay reported that it felt the access would be adequate and noted that the previous landowner did own a large camper also.

Discussion was held on the portion of the application that pertained to the Air BnB, at this time the zoning regulations in Thomas County do not cover this type of use. The board discussed that they would need to look into adding the use into regulations at a later date. Cay reported that this phase of the application would come at a later date.

Tom & Twyla Witt wanted to express their support of the application. No other public comment was given.

Chairman Jones closed the public hearing at 9:12 a.m.

Motion made by Maseberg and second by Bek to recommend approval of the Ewoldt application for the campground, kennel and pond to the Thomas County Board of Commissioners. Roll call vote: Ayes – Bek, Jones, Jennings, Warren, Maseberg. Nays – none. Absent – Cowdin, Pettit. Motion carried.

Discussion was held on the drafted information for the VAD District. The board reviewed the draft and made a few adjustments to the document presented. A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. to receive comments on the development of the VAD District for the Thomas County Zoning Regulations. No action taken today.

No other public comment.

Chairman Jones adjourned the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

The next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., in the Commissioners meeting room of the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford, NE. An agenda will be kept continually current and available for public inspection in the office of the Thomas County Clerk during regular business hours. Additions to the agenda may be made up to 24 hours before the meeting.

Thomas County Zoning Administrator  
Lorissa Hartman

Thomas County Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
May 23, 2023

The Thomas County Planning Commission convened in open and public session at 6:00 p.m., in the Commissioners meeting room of the Thomas County Courthouse, Thedford NE. Members present were Rahn Bek, Carolyn Warren, Shane Pettit, Linda Cowdin, and Jay Jones. Absent – Jennings, Maseberg. Motion made by Bek and second by Warren to excuse the absent members. Roll call vote: Ayes – Bek, Warren, Pettit, Cowdin, Jones. Nays – none. Absent – Maseberg, Jennings. Motion carried. Planning board member Maseberg arrived at 6:26 p.m. Also present were Thomas County Zoning Administrator/County Clerk Lorissa Hartman, Thomas County Board representative Charles Daly, Royce & Pauline Brown, Xavier & Connie Garza, and present by Zoom were Rick Adams, representative for Verizon and Jessica Coyle, Cherry County Zoning Administrator.

Chairman Jones stated open meeting guidelines are posted as required by law and copies are available, if requested.

Notice of meeting was given by publication in the Thomas County Herald on May 11, 2023 and by required mailings to landowners and adjacent counties and villages.

Motion made by Cowdin and second by Warren to adopt the May 23, 2023 meeting agenda. Roll call vote: Ayes – Jones, Cowdin, Pettit, Warren, Bek. Nays – none. Absent – Maseberg, Jennings. Motion carried.

Motion made by Warren and second by Bek to approve the April 17, 2023 meeting minutes as published in the Thomas County Herald on April 27, 2023. Roll call vote: Ayes – Warren, Bek, Cowdin, Jones, Pettit. Nays – none. Absent – Jennings, Maseberg. Motion carried.

Chairman Jones recessed the regular meeting to open the Public hearing for the co-locate towers at 6:02 p.m.

Rick Adams reviewed the application for the co-locate on the Seneca site location. He also explained to the board about this application qualifying as eligible application under Federal Regulations Section 6409, which means that the county only has sixty days to approve the application and that under this rule the permit cannot be denied.

Royce Brown questioned if this co-locate would increase the coverage area for Verizon in the Middle Loup area. He stated that Burlington Northern uses Verizon and this would help increase the coverage in the area.

Rahn Bek questioned since there was already an existing generator, why would an additional generator need installed. Rick Adams stated that each carrier would prefer to have their own equipment, in this case their own generator.

Rick Adams then reviewed the application for the co-locate on the Dismal site location. No questions from the public.

Chairman Jones closed the public hearing for the co-locate on cell phone towers at 6:12 p.m.

Motion made by Bek and second by Cowdin to recommend approval to the Thomas County Board of Commissioners for Industrial Tower/Verizon Applicant #1 (Dismal) and Applicant #2 (Seneca) to co-locate on the existing cell phone towers. Roll call vote: Ayes- Jones, Cowdin, Pettit, Warren, Bek. Nays – none. Absent – Jennings, Maseberg. Motion carried.

Chairman Jones recessed the regular meeting at 6:13 p.m. to enter into the public hearing for the VAD District regulations.

Chairman Jones reviewed with the public the reason for creating the Village Area Development (VAD) District Regulations. These regulations would cover the former Village of Seneca boundary. Initially when the Village of Seneca was unincorporated this land fell into the AGR District. The County Board asked the Planning Board to create new regulations to cover the former Village. After reviewing examples from Lincoln County and Custer County the Planning Board chose the Custer County regulations and worked with those regulations and adjusted them to fit Thomas County.

The public in attendance were given a chance to review the information. Questions were asked for clarification on the allowable uses and permit process.

Chairman Jones closed the public hearing at 6:22 p.m.

Motion made by Cowdin and second by Bek to recommend approval of the VAD District regulations to the Thomas County Board of Commissioners. Roll call vote: Ayes – Pettit, Bek, Jones, Warren, Cowdin. Nays – none. Absent – Maseberg, Jennings. Motion carried.

Discussion was held on the electric charging stations. Currently the zoning regulations do not include this type of use. Zoning Administrator Lorissa Hartman reached out to Lincoln County to see how they handle this type of usage. Lincoln County does not require a permit for this type of use, unless the plans when filed, shows that this installation took away the required parking stalls based on regulations. The Planning Board agreed that if anyone would like to install the electric charging stations in Thomas County, they would need to file the plans for the site with the Zoning Administrator, Planning Board Chairman and County Attorney. The three individuals will review the plans to determine whether a permit is required.

Discussion was held on the permit process for co-locate on cell phone towers. Based on the information provided earlier on the rules of Section 6409 of the federal Spectrum Act and Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The board decided that the site plan needs filed with the Zoning Administrator and with review by the Planning Board Chairman and County Attorney to determine whether it meets the eligibility requirements of Section 6409 or if a special use permit is required. Once again Lincoln County Zoning Administrator Judy Clark advised this is how Lincoln County handles a co-locate permit.

No additional public comment was heard at this time.

Chairman Jones adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Thomas County Zoning Administrator  
Lorissa Hartman