

Planning Commission Meeting
Approved Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2023 7:00 pm

Call to Order

Chairman Hinkle called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Chairman Jere Hinkle P

Heather McDougall A

Marc Cuddie P

Jim Warbritton P

Mark Jewell P

Thomas Brennan P

Dale Lucas P

Also Present: Doug Lammers, Zoning Administrator; Supervisor John Lesinski; Tom Loveland, Treasurer; Adam Young (Wade Trim) and Kunhal Parikh (NextEra Energy). Also attending were three citizens in person another three on Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Brennan, seconded by Jewell, to amend the agenda to add the discussion of Commission Personnel. All Ayes. McDougall absent. Motion Carried.

Approval of May 25, 2023 Meeting Minutes

A motion by Warbritton, supported by Brennan, was made, to approve minutes as presented. All Ayes. McDougall Absent. Motion Carried.

New Business

- A. Planning Consultant.
Adam Young, representing Wade Trim, the Commission's planning consultant, spoke. He presented the nature of services that would be provided supporting Planning Commission and Township Board activities.

B. Proposed Solar Farm

Kunhal Parikh, representing NextEra Energy (NEE), presented an overview of a proposed solar farm in Southwest Grass Lake Township and Southeast Leoni Township.

Kunhal Parikh summarized energy projects that NEE has constructed and operated in 38 states. Two of these are in Michigan and have been in operation for almost 10 years.

Mr. Parikh said that, assuming timely acquisition of zoning change/permitting requirements, the proposed Grass Lake – Leoni Solar Farm project would start construction in 2024 with operations commencing in 2025. The immediate next steps for project implementation are 1) the application to the Planning Commission for rezoning of proposed properties to be included in the project and 2) If rezoning is approved, a Site Plan that will culminate with the issuance of Special Use Permit for construction of the Solar Farm, will be prepared.

After Mr. Parikh's presentation there was a project question/answer period regarding the project. Participants included both the Planning Commission members and citizens both in person or via Zoom.

C. Commission Personnel

Doug Lammers (Zoning Administrator) has previously announced his resignation. Chairman Jere Hinkle announced his resignation effective June 30, 2023. Supervisor Lesinski noted that actions are underway for their replacement and things are moving in the right direction for a smooth transition.

Citizens Wishing to Address the Commission

- Joseph Kwiatek (9644 Lee Rd.) Spoke against the proposed Solar Farm. He stated that the project will be in his backyard and had concerns regarding post-operation cleanup activities.
- Bobbie Harper (3436 Betrasha Ln.) Spoke for the Solar Farm Project She stated that one company to deal with for both site construction and operation was good..
- Joanne Ackerman – Spoke for the Solar Farm Project.
- Mike Cox (126 Highland Dr.) Said that NextEra personnel have been in contact with him regarding proposed labor staffing for both construction and operation of the proposed Solar Farm Project. He indicated that he has done his homework and is In favor of the project.

Township Board Report

Township Board Member Brennan said Supervisor Lesinski has met with Jackson County Transportation Commission personnel. It was suggested skip paving be performed on poorly maintained local Grass Lake Township Roads for which Jackson County has maintenance responsibility. The Township has budgeted \$200K towards implementation of this suggestion.

Old Business

Sign Ordinance – An estimate has been received from Wade-Trim to provide services in the updating and modification of the Sign Chapter of the Township Zoning Ordinance Manual. Negotiations are underway to refine the scope and associated costs of this activity.

Proposed Business for Next Regular Meeting and Meeting Date

The next meeting date is scheduled for July 20, 2023 at 7:00 pm

General Discussion

Bohne Road Gravel Pit Review – Mr. Burrell (the Pit operator) stated that EGLE has withdrawn their violation notice for operator's creation of pond in excess of 5 acres. Copies of this action have not been provided to the Commission.

Adjournment

It was moved to adjourn by Brennan, seconded by Warbritton. All Ayes. Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Shirley Sherwood, Recording Secretary