

**Palmyra Township
Special Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2021**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Dave Pixley.

Members present: Dave Pixley, Matt Koester, Mark Crane, Steve Papenhagen, and Chris Whited

Members absent: None

Audience Attendance: 32

Motion Whited, support Koester to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion carried**
*Add Public hearing for delinquent Sewer & Water; Federal Procurement Conflict of Interest Policy;
August bill payment*

Communications:

- Supervisor Pixley clarified that ITC will be adding transfer lines and a substation in Palmyra Township for the solar project in Raisin Township.
- Supervisor Pixley reported that Electrical Inspector Louis Duby will be retiring on September 15, 2021, and the Township will be searching for a new Electrical Inspector.

Public Comment:

- Ron Zimmerman, 2849 Ogden Hwy, stated that his neighbors field backs up to his backyard and feels threatened by the possibility of solar being placed so close to his property. He also stated that he believes that solar developments will cause property values to drop. He asked the Board what benefits the Township would receive.
- Jeff Halberstadt, 3325 Manor Dr., presented a report of the amount of coal plants that are in existence around the world in comparison to solar developments. He also reported that that what the United States produces using its Green Energy plan will not make a dent in the carbon monoxide levels unless the rest of the world gets on board as well.
- John Turpening, 3700 E. US 223, stated that he agreed with Jeff Halberstadt's comments. He asked how much revenue would benefit the Township. The Supervisor said that he couldn't answer that without knowing the scope of the projects. John responded by saying that it is a big issue not to be informed about how much revenue the Township would receive. He asked the Board if the solar ordinance was brought before the Board and voted down in 2017. Supervisor Pixley stated that the Zoning Ordinance was on the ballot in 2017, but that the solar issue had to be revisited because the Township must have a place for everything with the exception of marijuana facilities.
- Chad Zimmerman, 2849 Ogden Hwy, asked why the Township doesn't utilize the landfill property for solar development. He stated that solar takes away the crops, and that there are alternatives for placing SES developments, such as desolate and unproductive ground. He stated that we need to work together.
- Rodney Skow, 2578 Ogden Hwy, presented the Board with a petition that contains 22 signatures of individuals who support Palmyra Township Ag land preservation. He stated

that he does not support solar development on high quality farmland. He also stated that the months of January, February, November, and December are primarily cloudy, providing a low percentage of energy. He asked the Board what legacy will be left for our children when fertile land is being used for SES development. He urged the Board to act responsibly when it comes to conserving agricultural land.

- Laurie Isley, Planning Commission member, 3683 Grosvenor Hwy, stated that there is no proposed solar project in Palmyra Township. She also said that there were very few people who attended the Planning Commission meeting when the SES Ordinance was drafted.
- Deborah Comstock, Planning Commission member, 2525 Ogden Hwy, stated that all Board and Planning Commission members took an oath to serve the Township and need to do their due diligence to seek additional sources of revenue. She also asked what kind of legacy are we leaving our children when the world is burning up. She said that the United States does not need all the farm land, and that it produces more than enough food to feed our nation.
- Rich Beaulaux, 3710 E. US 223, asked what farmer is going to lease property for \$1,000 an acre if it is worth \$5,000 per acre. He stated that the only ones who care about the community are the residents, not the Federal Government. He said that he does not want to see solar in the community.
- Greg Sauter, 5555 Carleton Rd, commented that he is against solar development in the community because the Township has prime farmland, and he believes that solar development will cause the property value to decrease. He also said that wild life will be lost and solar panels will be an eyesore.
- Tom Crique, 9555 Sylvania Ave, Sylvania, OH, stated that he is a member of the Sylvania Township Zoning Board and understands the criticism Board members receive. He believes that Palmyra has a diverse Planning Commission. He is in support of a good SES Ordinance, and that there are options that will make an SES development more appealing.
- Henry Smith, 7150 Silberhorn Hwy, asked how non-farmers know whether or not farmland is good land. He supports SES development.
- Jeff Ehlert, 4333 Ricker Hwy, stated that he wants to address the issue of information of SES development that may be true or false. He said that we truly don't know where SES projects are going to be placed in Palmyra Township. He urged the Board to make a decision that would be beneficial to the entire community.
- Alan Gust, 3240 Humphrey Hwy, stated that he would like to farm, but it is too expensive. He said that the elected Officials are representing the Township and its residents.
- Tom Keller, 9325 Sylvania Ave, stated that the argument is to preserve farmland. He asked what percentage of the property is owned by the homeowners. He concluded by saying that there is a small percentage wanting to control the land/property.
- Paul Vergote, 3947 Bleasner Hwy, stated that he has attended many meetings concerning SES development and has heard everything. He asked what people will do when their power goes out because there is not enough energy to go around. He said that we must agree on something.
- John Turpening, 3700 E. US 223, wanted to know where the revenue figures are coming from. Treasurer Koester stated that he did the math and that a \$30,000,000 SES development will net the Township approximately \$15,000 a year.

- Ron Zimmerman, 2849 Ogden Hwy, stated that people can get affordable solar on homes and sell it to the power company.
- Jeff Halberstdt, 3325 Manor Dr, disagrees with the fact that people who live in a different state can dictate what we can do in Palmyra Township. He stated that solar panels become bulky waste, and currently there is no plan to dispose of it properly. He said that he wants the Board to think carefully about our decision concerning SES Developments.
- Javier Gorbe, ESA Solar, stated that the Board has a very difficult job, especially when everyone knows each other, due to Palmyra being a small community. He stated that ESA Solar can provide information to those who have questions and concerns.
- Laurie Isley, 3683 Grosvenor Hwy, stated that she is a Palmyra Township property owner, and her husband is a fifth-generation farmer. She wanted to address the the issue of conflict of interest by saying that conflict of interest can go both sides. She wanted to make it clear that She and Jim have not been offered a solar lease. She concluded by saying that a relatively small portion of land would be allowed for SES development.
- Rod Skow, 2578 Ogden Hwy, stated that he believes that there is more money being offered per acre that what the public is told.
- Rich Beaulaux, 3710 E. US 223, asked if it true that \$30,000,000 really generates \$15,000. Treasurer Koester answered yes, and the schools would benefit greatly.
- Chad Zimmerman, 2849 Ogden Hwy, stated that he believes the landfill should be utilized for solar.
- Deborah Comstock, 2525 Ogden Hwy, stated that the Planning Commission had requested a financial analysis from an independent company in Virginia that shows the benefits of solar development in Palmyra Township. She said that if solar is not allowed, then the land will be used for other uses, i.e., a subdivision. She said that the Township only needs a few farmers to sacrifice their land for solar, and the planning Commission put provisions in the SES Ordinance to limit SES development.
- Nancy Seeburger, 5256 Grosvenor Hwy, asked what happens I 10 to 15 years when solar panels are obsolete. She stated that she is opposed to solar development in Palmyra Township.
- Javier, ESA Solar, explained that ESA Solar will contract a professional company to do a financial analysis if asked to do so. He said that solar is going up all over the world, and that it is a very reliable energy source, and if it is exposed to radiation, it will produce, even in full cloud cover. He added that solar on a landfill will only work when the landfill is not active, meaning that the landfill must rest for 25 to 35 years.

Business:

Public hearing for delinquent Sewer & Water: Motion Koester, support Papenhagen to schedule a delinquent sewer and water Public Hearing during the September 14, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Motion carried

Palmyra Township Federal Procurement Conflict of Interest Policy: Motion Whited, support Koester to set the nominal value of part B. Gifts at less than \$1.00, and adopt the *Palmyra Township Federal Procurement Conflict of Interest Policy*. **Roll call vote:** Papenhagen – yes; Whited – yes; Koester – yes; Crane yes; Pixley – yes **Motion carried**

August bill payment: Motion Pixley, support Crane to allow the Clerk to pay the August bills.
Motion carried.

SES Ordinance: Motion Crane to allow the Clerk to call Attorney Mike Homier to inquire about an Executive Session. **Motion failed due to lack of support.**

The Board discussed accepting some of the Lenawee County Planning Commission's recommended text amendments of the *Palmyra Township SES Ordinance*, such as the grammar errors; changing the word *drawing* to *plan*; changing *right of ways* to *rights-of-way*; omitting *irrevocable letter of credit* and omitting or changing *The Palmyra Township Board shall determine which type "surety" is necessary*.

The Board also discussed the following questions:

- What happens if the ownership and/or the operation is sold?
- What happens in the event of the death of the property owner?

Changing the setback requirements was discussed, as well as the possibility of allowing solar development only in the General Industrial District.

Motion Pixley, support Koester to table the SES Ordinance discussion until the September 14, 2021 Regular Meeting. **Motion Carried**

Adjournment

Motion Koester, support Crane to adjourn at 11:48 p.m. **Motion carried**