

Palmyra Township
Planning Commission Meeting
August 14, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson, Ryan Mapstone.

Present: Ryan Mapstone, Carmen Loar, Vivian Pell, Mark Crane, Rich Beauleaux, John Turpening

Absent: None

Audience in attendance: 16

Motion by Ryan Mapstone to approve agenda as presented, carried by Carmen Loar. Motion carried.

Motion by Mark Crane to approve July 2, 2024 Special Meeting minutes as written, carried John Turpening. Motion Carried.

Written Comments

- Letter from Attorney David Lacasse regarding proposed CREO and guidance on amendments to the current zoning ordinance. Lacasse did not recommend passing the proposed CREO as he believes changes to the current zoning ordinance would make current ordinance compliant with PA 233. Area to change included eliminating the 30% lot coverage and updating noise and setback requirements to be compliant with PA 233.

Public Comments

- Jeff Ehlert requesting information regarding township lawyer
- David Lacasse explained PA 233 takes effect in November 2024. PA 223 “preempts local control of the siting of large solar energy facilities that can generate at least 50 megawatts of electricity or large wind energy facilities that can generate at least 100 megawatts.” Lacasse explained current information is vague and future guidance for townships is expected in September. All solar energy facilities must be approved by the township currently. After November 2024, facilities that can generate 50 megawatts or above now must be allowed. Solar energy companies can work through a township if there is a workable ordinance or CREO, or they can go through MPSC for approval. Lacasse explained having a working ordinance or CREO in

place costs the developers less time and money. Anything smaller than 50 megawatts still has to go through a township for approval.

- Matt Drennan from ESA solar states ESA would like to work with the Township for a future project. Would like to include Townships input with future site plans. Financial benefit for the township includes \$2,000-5000 per megawatt installed in Township. States there are other financial benefits to the township.

Old Business

- None

New Business

Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance

- A proposed CREO was presented to the Commission. Document created by Foster Swift provides an updated document that complies with future PA 233. This document creates an overlay district that provides an area within the township to allow for solar energy development. A map was provided to members to show the proposed area within the township.
- Guidance from Lacasse on creating an overlay district and the purpose.
- Planning commissioner member John Turpening explained Palmyra voters have already spoken on the issue and stated they did not want solar within the township. Explained he was interested in maintaining the integrating of that vote.
- Matt Drennan from ESA solar advised Planning Commission of a future project in progress at this time. States he is willing to meet with individual members of the Planning Commission to show boundaries and discuss extent of project. States current project has been created within the township. 1920 acres have already been reserved for project within the agriculture district. States he is unable to publicly disclose boundaries of project at this time.
- Any proposed project over 50 megawatts must start with Township approval. If not approved, companies are allowed to go to the State and seek approval without Township input. Lacasse states that per PA 233, denial of 50 megawatt or larger projects can only occur if there is an incomplete application from solar energy companies.
- Kevin Cole RWE states he is currently working with ESA solar on a project. States project will take place with or without Township approval. States his company would prefer to work with the township for approval.

- Multiple farmers spoke regarding the financial benefits of allowing solar in the agricultural district
- Multiple members expressed concern regarding projects and discussed concerns of Township being required to allow multiple projects 50 megawatts or greater. Multiple members concerned with maintaining interest of voters.
- Vivian Pell clarified land conditions following battery storage facilities. Matt from ESA stated there was not a clear answer if the land could be farmed again following removal of a battery storage facility. States there should not be contamination of the land from facility, but states there could be difficulty removing concrete that is required to be placed.
- Discussion regarding further input from Foster Swift on adoption of CREO document. Future meeting to be scheduled with attorney to obtain guidance on his recommendations. Discussion to include the benefits of adopting a CREO vs. updating current zoning ordinance. Discussion of overlay district and recommended areas within the township that would allow for solar development.
- CREO to be discussed further with guidance from State and Michigan Township Association in September

Amendment to Article II- Definitions and Article IV- Zoning District Regulations, Section 4.2.3, part B.: Addition of Venue/Rental Hall Facilities

- Brian Wilcox came to the Planning Commission and states he is interested in purchasing a church within the Township and creating a Banquet/Rental Hall. Current ordinance does not have definitions of this. Wilcox addressed his plans to create a rental hall and addressed concerns for parking. All alcohol sales to meet state requirements.

Motion to add Rental Hall to Article II definitions and Amend Article IV Zoning District Regulation Section 4.2.3, Part B to include Banquet/Rental Hall by John Turpening. Support By Rich Beauleaux. Motion Carried @ 8:54 pm

Next meeting: September 5th, 2024.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:57 by Carmen Loar. Supported by John Turpening. Motion carried.

These minutes were recorded by Carmen Loar.