

**Palmyra Township
Special Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2021**

Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Supervisor Dave Pixley.

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

Members absent: None

Audience Attendance: 25

Motion Koester, support Whited to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion carried**
Add Rules for Meeting; Fletcher Mangum from Mangum Economics; Board Questions

Communications:

- Supervisor Pixley read a letter from Planning Commission Chair Laurie Isley. Her desire is for the Board to approve the SES Ordinance as is and move on.
- Fletcher Mangum from Mangum Economics reviewed the report his firm created. The Palmyra Solar Project Fiscal Contribution to the Palmyra Township and Lenawee County report assesses the fiscal contribution that a hypothetical solar project ranging between 50 MW and 300 MW of generating capacity would make to Palmyra Township. Fletcher stated that the report was commissioned by ESA Solar and produced by his firm, Mangum Economics. Copies of the report can be obtained from the Clerk's office.

Public Comment Rules: Motion Crane, support Koester to adopt the Public Comment Rules. **Motion carried**

Public Comment

- Eileen Crique, Sylvania, OH, stated that she understands the apprehensions of the Board concerning the possibility of the State Legislature implementing a solar energy property tax alternative that would allow local solar developers to apply for an exemption from personal property taxes and instead make a fixed annual PILT based on the size of their facility. She also stated that despite the Boards concerns, SES is a good investment.
- Jeff Ehlert, 4333 Ricker Hwy., Blissfield, stated that Treasurer Matt Koester, in a previous meeting, stated that the estimated tax revenue would be \$15,000 a year. Matt replied that the \$15,000 revenue estimate is based on the \$30,000,000 Nexus pipeline, using the current Township millage rates. Matt also stated that the millage could be removed by the Palmyra Township electors, resulting in a loss of the revenue.
- Matt Drennan, ESA Solar, stated that the taxation of the solar project is a personal property tax, taxing only the structures and the equipment. He also stated that the Fiscal Contribution Report does not cover economic impacts, but only the fiscal impacts to the Township. He stated that the State of Michigan Legislature proposed tax alternative (which was vetoed by Governor Whitmer) known as PILT (payment in lieu of taxes), would require a payment of \$4,000 (this amount is currently being debated by Legislature) per megawatt.

- Jim Isley, Palmyra Township, requested information from Fletcher Mangum of Mangum Economics. Jim asked how much tax revenue would be generated from a 200 MW project. Fletcher stated that the projected amount is \$242.5 million over a 35-year period.
- Tom Crique, Sylvania, OH, agreed with Laurie Isley letter to the Board. He reiterated that the planning Commission spent a lot of time on the SES Ordinance. He graciously offered to answer any questions the Board members may have about the solar contracts that have been offered to him.
- Rod Skow, 2578 Ogden Hwy., thanked the Board for their efforts. He commented that it makes no sense to take good farm land out of production. He stated that drought conditions in the west grow worse every year, resulting in diminishing yields or crop failure. Rod requested that the Board develop reasonable regulations that would protect the land and neighbors.
- Rich Beauleaux, 3710 E. US 223, Palmyra, asked how much the estimated amount of tax revenue the Township would receive from a SES project. He also wanted to know who was making the decisions about SES projects. He believes that the Township will not get enough money from the SES projects.
- Dan Sauter, 6403 Deerfield Rd., Palmyra, asked how much property value would decrease due to the solar projects. He stated his concern that the valuation of the properties will decrease.
- Jim Isley, Palmyra, asked Supervisor Pixley the amount of estimated tax revenue generated per mill on a solar facility. Supervisor Pixley said that according to the Fiscal Contribution Report, the Township would gain approximately \$30,048 per year during a 35-year period. Jim stated that the revenue generated from solar facility could help cover the future expenses of the Township, taking some of the burden off tax payers.
- Mark Knoblauch, 2191 Bleasner Hwy, Blissfield, wanted to know what other states have implemented PILT. Matt Drennan stated that most states do not have PILT. However, Ohio, Indiana, and New York do have PILT.
- Deb Comstock, Deb Comstock, 2525 Ogden Hwy., stated that she has done extensive research on soil health after a solar facility sits on the land for an extended period of time. She stated that after the solar facility is removed, the soil returns to a healthy state. She also stated the land will still be AG because farmers are raising sheep and farming on land that is currently occupied by solar facilities. She stated that we can find a middle ground so that farmers can use their land. She listed three important points: 1. Farmers should be given consideration; 2. Soil is healthy after a solar facility is decommissioned; 3. AG can continue on the property
- Jeff Ehlert, 4333 Ricker Hwy., Blissfield, stated that a solar farm can generate revenue that would allow the Township to plan for future projects.
- Jim Isley, 2683 S Grosvenor Hwy., stated that a solar facility would not require any service, E.g. it does not require sewer service.

Old Business:

- **Region 2 Planning Commission membership:** Motion Koester, support Whited to rescind the November 9, 2021, motion to renew Region 2 PC annual membership, which failed.

Motion carried

Motion Koester, support Whited to renew the Region 2 Planning Commission membership at a cost of \$560.52. **Motion carried**

New Business:

- **SES Ordinance:** Motion Pixley, support Crane to approve the following amendments of the SES and Zoning Ordinance and for the Clerk to prepare the SES Ordinance for the December 14, 2021, Regular Meeting. **Roll call vote:** Papenhagen – Yes; Pixley – Yes; Crane – Yes; Koester – Yes; Whited – Yes **Motion carried**

Amendments to the SES Ordinance, Section 8.13 – Solar Energy Systems (SES)

- In the first sentence of the purpose statement, strike “to” and add “and” between “source” and “provide.”
- In Section 8.13, C – 4, strike “drawing” and add “plan.”
- In Section 8.13, D – 4, change the footnote reference from “See footnotes 3-6” to “See footnotes 3-7”
- In Section 8.13, D – 8, add “Lenawee County” after “State of Michigan
- In Section 8.13, D – 11, c., strike “renditions” and add “renderings”
- In Section 8.13, E – 2, k, strike “The site will require a Knox box to be located at the main entrance and auxiliary entrances to the site.”
- In Section 4.8.1 – AREA; HEIGHT, BULK, AND PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS, under “Lot Requirements”, change “Minimum Lot Coverage” to “Maximum Lot Coverage.”
- In Section 4.8.1 – AREA; HEIGHT, BULK, AND PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS, Footnote 3, strike “fifty (50)” and add “three hundred (300)”
- In Section 4.8.1 – AREA; HEIGHT, BULK, AND PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS, Footnote 4, strike “fifty (50)” and add “three hundred (300)”
- In Section 4.8.1 – AREA; HEIGHT, BULK, AND PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS, Footnotes 3, 4, and 5, change “AG Residential District” to “AG and AG Residential Districts”
- In Section 4.8.1 – AREA; HEIGHT, BULK, AND PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS, add “Footnote 7. Nonparticipating property owners shall have the ability to waive the above setbacks only through written acceptance and approval by the Township Board during the special use application process. However, no such waiver shall allow any solar farm within fifty (50) feet from a nonparticipating parcel.”

Adjournment

Motion Papenhagen, support Koester to adjourn at 10:58 p.m. **Motion carried**