



**RAISINVILLE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
March 20, 2017 7:00 pm**

Meeting called to order by Chairman John Delmotte and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Craig Assenmacher, Tom Woelmer, Mike Jaworski, Ann Nickel-Swinkey, John Delmotte were present. Adam McLaughlin and Gary Nowitzke were excused.

APPROVAL of MINUTES: Motion by Mike Jaworski to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2017 meeting and place on file. **Supported** by Craig Assenmacher. **Motion carried.**

NEW BUSINESS:

Solar Farm Discussion: led by Township Planner, Lucie Fortin. Michigan has a Model Ordinance to which she referred to in drafting a proposed ordinance. Solar Farms are looked at as a large-scale operation, a primary use as opposed to accessory use.

- a.) Recommends Special Use Approval so each application can be looked at regarding how it will affect adjacent properties
- b.) Site Plan Approval will be required
- c.) Recommends a surety bond or other performance security (this will cover the cost to remove equipment, structures, foundations, etc. if abandoned)
- d.) Strongly recommends screening requirements
- e.) Utility- NO Overhead Lines! We don't want to see a lot of overhead wires with the development
- f.) 20kW should be our biggest (smaller) solar farm
- g.) Discussion on a need for a mid-size category between <5 acres and large scale 10 acres+
- h.) DTE/ (power company) limits the 20kW.

Board Members comments:

John is not in agreement with this ordinance. He knows of an abandoned solar farm (near Upper Sandusky) and is concerned with the after effects of the soil and what happens if they abandon it and leave the panels? Perhaps this is more of a Commercial Use? If they are decommissioned then buildings could be re-established instead of trying to bring Ag land back to good soil. And is also concerned about negative impacts these may bring.

Mike agrees with Johns concerns and thinks we should state Utility Company instead of specifying DTE as stated in the proposed ordinance.

Craig is concerned these will be considered as Accessory buildings and will limit allowed structures.

Tom states the Township has been getting inquiries regarding the Solar Farms. Concerned about protecting the residents and that without an ordinance we have nothing to regulate. Thinks we need an ordinance. Concerned about trees; growing tall and casting shadows on system

- a.) Concerns regarding the abandonment of such large permanent structures- performance bonds discussed
- b.) Companies are being upfront that the normal leases are 20 years (with option to renew) and the board needs to think about the future.

Lucie indicated the Township could limit where solar farms can be located. And she'll look into the 1.) impact on soil and 2.) location of the units to be placed. She recommends looking at Future Land Use Plan Map and see where these should be allowed. She also recommends to the PC to have a conversation with the Township Board.

OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: Lucie discussed how she reorganized the goals of Long Range Plan.

- a.) Goal 1: Encourages the Purchasing and Developing of AG land for preservation...
 - a. Encourages the use of GAAMP (bullet #2) instead of "best management practices"
 - b. Include MAEAP verification under bullet #3
- b.) Goal 2: Encourages the preservation, repair of older homes..... (Residential)
 - a. What tools do we have in place to accomplish? i.e. Lot splits- farm buildings become accessory buildings is a concern
- c.) Goal 3- Commercial/Industrial Use
 - a. Discussed lack of desire of strip-malls
- d.) Goal 4: Community Facilities & Infrastructure
 - a. No changes required. Mike would like to see the Township be more aggressive obtaining grants for water infrastructure
- e.) Goal 5: Transportation
 - a. John D- number of roads are not being properly taken care of in a timely fashion (MDOT)- wants word Maintenance added regarding cooperation
 - b. Discussed bike paths being added to Goal 5
- f.) Goal 6: Environment & Natural Resources
 - a. First sentence shortened and combined with the 2nd sentence

Next Step- Review Map to coordinate with Zoning Map

Miscellaneous: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: Tom Johnson of 1821 N Raisinville Rd Monroe, Mi 48162, doesn't believe in 20kW limit. He also questioned what he needs to do to put in a pond. He indicated he would need a setback variance and a variance to the fence requirement. Chairman Delmotte explained he would need to talk to the Building Official, Charles LaPointe, to start the process and to get the requirements as in the Zoning Ordinance.

NEXT MEETING: April 17, 2017

ADJOURN: Motion to adjourn by Ann Nickel-Swinkey. **Supported** by Mike Jaworski. **Motion carried.** Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Minutes are preliminary until approved. Ann Nickel-Swinkey, Planning Commission Secretary