

Exeter Township Planning Commission Minutes July 11, 2022

Exeter Township Planning Commission chairperson, David Schafer, called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present: Roger Bezek, Phillip Bruck, William Gay, Robert Post, Kyle Preston and David Schafer
Excused: Anne Kleinow, Ameer Runyan
Absent:
Guests: Lucie Fortin, planner Mannik & Smith Group,

Note: the Exeter Township board was waiting on clarification if Phillip Bruck could serve as a planning commission member (and township board liaison) and as Exeter Township Manager at the same time. For tonight's meeting, Mr. Bruck sat in as a planning commission member.

Correction / Approval of Agenda:

The Planning Commission members reviewed the printed meeting agenda. There were no corrections or additions.

- ❖ **Motion: William Gay, 2nd Kyle Preston:** To accept meeting agenda as presented.
Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

The May 3, 2022 Planning Commission meeting minutes were E-mailed to all Planning Commission members. There was one correction (incorrect date on "Approval of Minutes") announce by the planning commission secretary.

Note: The tabled reading and approval of the April 5, 2022 Planning Commission minutes tabled from the May meeting were NOT presented.

- ❖ **Motion: David Schafer, 2nd Phillip Bruck:** The June 7, 2022 Planning Commission minutes were approved as corrected
Motion Carried.

First Public Comment:

None

Old Business:

1). Planning Commission members reviewed with Lucie Fortin, (Exeter Township planner) the DRAFT amendments / changes to the current Exeter Township Solar Energy ordinance. All proposed changes were reviewed and discussed. Additional changes and/or changes to the DRAFT amendments were also suggested by members.

Commission members asked for clarification on how escrow and performance bond(ing) would be applied to "Commercial Scale" solar installations. Escrow accounts would be used to cover any required engineering / environmental studies or expenses that the township would be liable for if the applicant did not complete them to the satisfaction of the township (planning commission and/or township board). Unused escrow funds would be returned to the applicant once all aspects and site plan requirements are completed (or determined by the township). Performance Bonding would be held (or proof of required funds by a licensed bonding entity) for the life of the project and these funds would be used for any decommissioning and site renovation not completed by the installation's owner/operator per the townships ordinance and satisfaction.

Specific suggestion offered during this review of the DRAFT changes included:

- A). If required set-back(s) for "Small Scale" solar installation match the 25 feet required for any other accessory building rather than the proposed 50 foot set-back.
- B). Replace proposed screening planning requirements in General Provision par. 1K with similar language found in General Provisions par. 3F par. 1. The replacement language is less specific concerning required number, spacing and plant species for any screening planting.
- C). Discussed expanding the proposed language in General Provisions par. 3B par. 4. Changes would allow planning commission to consider impact on "loss of (prime) farmland" when Commercial Scale installations are proposed. By what standard(s) would such consideration be valid / used in making any "impact on farmland" determination?
- D). Review set-back requirement of Commercial Scale Solar energy installations. Would set-back start at property edge or begin at the interior edge of any required screening

(plantings and/or berms)? Include additional language setting a minimum set-back distance or...“as determined during a site plan review by the planning commission” ?

E). Changes (additional language) to proposed amendments General Provisions par 3 (Ground Cover) to permit “pollinator-friendly” planting(s), limited “livestock grazing” with-in the installation. Maintenance Plan would also need to address control of (USDA ?) listed “noxious weeds” and damaging wildlife (varmint).

These suggestions will be incorporated into a revised DRAFT proposed amendments and be discussed at the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting.

2). Discussion of proposed Solar Energy Systems amendment requiring escrow and performance bonding should trigger review of current Wind Energy Systems ordinance to incorporate construction and decommissioning expense liability to the township.

New Business:

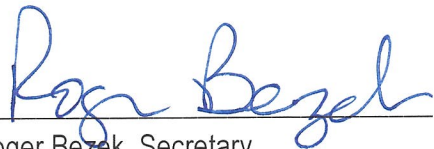
None

Second Public Comment:

1). A township resident spoke about his concerns of the township allowing large scale (Commercial Scale) wind turbines to be erected. His comments were based on his troubled experience with multiple wind turbine / tower installation put into service in Michigan’s thumb where his family formally lived (moved to be away from such large wind towers / turbines). He cited (his own) issues with health, noise, nuisance and electro-magnetic interference.

2). The next scheduled meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission conflicts with the August 2 primary election and thus the township hall would be unavailable. It was decided to move the regularly scheduled August planning commission meeting to Tuesday August 9, 2022 at 7:00 pm in the Exeter Township Hall.

❖ **Motion: William Gay, 2nd Robert Post:** To adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried.**
The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted, 
Roger Bezek, Secretary
Exeter Township Planning Commission