

Exeter Township Planning Commission Minutes June 7, 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, William Gay, Anne Kleinow, Robert Post, and David Schafer

Excused:

Absent: Ameer Runyan, Kyle Preston

Guests: Lucie Fortin, planner Mannik & Smith Group, Phillip Bruck, Exeter Township Manager

Note: Anne Kleinow was introduced as the new member of the Exeter Township Planning Commission and the Exeter Township Board representative replacing Phillip Bruck who was installed as the Exeter Township Manager.

Correction / Approval of Agenda:

The Planning Commission members were provide a meeting agenda. There were no corrections or additions.

❖ **Motion: William Gay, 2nd Robert Post:** 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. The planning commission secretary referenced the areas within the current Solar Energy Systems ordinance that were discussed at the May meeting.

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

❖ **Motion: William Gay, 2nd Robert Post:** The ^{May 3}~~April 5~~, 2022 Planning Commission minutes were approved as presented **Motion Carried.**

First Public Comment:

The Township board is seeking candidates to fill the open positions on the Zoning Board of Appeals and other positions within the township.

Old Business:

1). Lucie Fortin gave a presentation on with suggestions to revise the current Exeter Township Zoning Ordinance Section 5.15 "Solar Energy Systems". She commented that this review was timely as both the demand and solar energy industry has changed and our ordinance should reflect those changes. She cited the industry change to taller and larger wind turbines systems that are currently being erected.

Some of the suggestion offered to amend the current ordinance introduce the condition of intend use of any solar energy system along with the systems energy production rating. The "intended use" would thus dictate the procedure required to site and erect any solar energy system. The intended use consideration would be "personal" and "commercial" use with commercial being intended solely to produce energy for sale.

Specific suggestion included:

- A). introduce the term "Utility Scale" in both the definition section and the proposed ordinance changes.
- B). where possible to combine the current "Small Solar Energy Systems" and "Medium Solar Energy Systems" as an accessory use.
- C). set a limit of on "personal use" Solar Energy Systems to between 3 and 100 kilowatts of potential energy output.
- D). introduce a maximum size that a "personal use" Solar Energy System may occupy to 1 acre with proper setbacks and compliance with current accessory structure restrictions (Note: Solar Energy Systems that could produce the proposed 100 kilowatt maximum for "personal use" currently need less than 1 acre of land to be established) .
- E). clarify on what land (property) classification Solar Energy System may be established.

Some discussion were offered as to increasing the required setback on large scale Solar Energy Systems (Utility Scale) with any setback measured from the utility "right of-way" (33 feet from the center of the road) up to the fencing required for such larger (commercial) sized systems. The current maximum height of any Solar Energy panels of 20 feet was determined to be proper.

A revise section concerning "development standards" should be incorporated to cover the

requirements of ground cover establishment and a maintenance plan for the cover crop including control of varmints and noxious weeds. Expected maintenance/cleaning of solar panels should also be part of a maintenance plan. Any development standards should disclose if any portion of the ground cover (any area under the solar panel structures) is to be established for livestock grazing, intended for pollinators (and/or bee keeping) or other environmental conservation uses. If needed, condition(s) specific to the site including erosion control, traffic studies, and environmental impact may be requested by the planning commission. Any site plan should take into consideration the impact neighboring/surrounding impacts upon both surface and subsurface drainage systems.

An "End of Life" plan should set the standards to which the land is to be restored to including any subsurface drainage systems that were impacted (damaged or destroyed) and the incorporation of "holding sufficient funds" to remove established Solar Energy Systems and restore the land to set township standards. The establishment and requirement of establishing an "escrow account" as part of final approval for such "utility scale" system was discussed. This would be available for required/requested studies and plans that are not carried out by the developer.

The township planner will provide clarification on how an "escrow account", "performance bonds" and any other "insurance bonding" to insure proper installation and end of life (or abandonment) funds can be required for commercial size ("utility scale") Solar Energy Systems. The township planner will provide a draft amended Solar Energy System ordinance which incorporates the changes that have been discussed.

New Business:

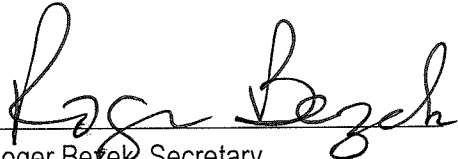
None

Second Public Comment:

1). The next scheduled meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission would normally be held on the day after the Fourth of July holiday. It was decided to move the July planning commission meeting to MONDAY JULY 11 at 7:00 pm in the Exeter Township Hall.

❖ **Motion: Ameer Runyan, 2nd Robert Post:** To adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried.**
The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Bezek, Secretary
Exeter Township Planning Commission