

**Exeter Township  
Planning Commission Minutes  
And Public Hearing Minutes  
November 1, 2022**

Exeter Township Planning Commission chairperson, David Schafer, called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm at the Exeter Township Volunteer Fire Hall. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** Present: Roger Bezek, Phillip Bruck, William Gay, Robert Post  
Amea Runyan, and David Schafer  
Excused: Kyle Preston  
Guests: Lucie Fortin, Exeter Township planner with Mannik Smith Group

**Correction / Approval of Agenda:**

Exeter Township Planning Commission members reviewed the meeting agenda. There were no corrections or additions.

❖ **Motion: William Gay, 2<sup>nd</sup> Robert Post;** To accept meeting agenda as presented.  
**Motion carried**

**Recess Regular Meeting / Call Public Hearing to Order:**

- 1). The rules for anyone to address the planning commission were announced. Some residents were opposed to providing their name or address before speaking and are thereby identified in the meeting minutes as "Resident". Anyone who wanted to address the planning commission were asked to form a line. There were approximately 65 persons in attendance.
- 2). Resident's Public Comments.

Julie Murphy:

- ✓ Read from the Exeter Township Master Plan and cited the plans goals to "maintain a rural character". A copy of her printed questions is attached.
- ✓ Provided written question to the planning commission and those in attendance (copy attached). She then began to read from the prepared questions to the planning commission members. Planning commission members answered her questions as there were asked.
- ✓ Mrs. Murphy spoke for approximately 20 minutes

Kim Monske

- ✓ Suggested a 500 foot set back between any residential property line and the beginning of any required screening (planting buffer).

"Resident"

- ✓ Suggested mandating all evergreen planting (screening buffer) be a minimum of 10 feet tall when established and/or replaced.
- ✓ Questioned the wisdom of the provision which allows "livestock" to graze within fenced part of any large scale solar installation.

"Resident"

- ✓ Commented that proposed ordinances should not be approved without including suggested changes from citizens.

Mr. Jay Murphy

- ✓ Was disappointed that cellular communication installations (towers) were not prohibited within large scale solar installation. Suggested this prohibition be incorporated into this proposed ordinance.

Charles

Jerel Bruck

- ✓ Commented that any person who has contracted with any firm looking to build solar or wind energy installations should not be on this board.

✓ support 500 ft set back from residents

Mr. & Mrs. Chad Ragsdale (Finzel Rd)

- ✓ Will sue the township if their kids get cancer in the next 30 years if large scale energy systems are allowed to be built (in the township). Stated "we don't know all the effects of high voltage lines and radiation".

Lefebere

- ✗ Questioned the nutrient value of soil after installations are removed.
- ✓ Questioned the "toxic compounds" from solar panels seeping into groundwater and soil.
- ✓ Questioned what protection would be in place to any waterway
- ✓ Suggested 500 foot setback from any existing waterway

Mrs. Chad Ragsdale

- ✓ Commented that any energy installation will impact the health of future generations.

"Resident"

- ✓ Shouldn't energy installation be prohibited wherever there are any waterways?

Planning Commission member William Gay

- ✓ Stated that the goal of these proposed additions to the solar energy ordinance was to include "as much as possible" to address any environmental concerns including requiring environmental impact studies and any impact to the local environment.

Steve Hartley  
✓ spoke in support of 500 ft set back  
"why not give the residents what they want"

into the environment.

Julie Murphy (second time addressing the planning commission)

- ✓ Upset about the lack of publication and notification of ~~this meeting~~ and planning commission ~~meeting~~. *discussion*
  - Planning Commission secretary Roger Bezek responded that monthly meeting of all Exeter Township committees are set in advance for the year and meeting notifications are posted at the township hall and local newspaper. The Monroe News is our "Public record" and the notice for this meeting was timely published in print and on the papers electronic version.
- ✓ Ordinance should allow large scale energy systems to be allowed in parcels zoned Industrial use only.
- ✓ Ordinance should allow only a set percentage (10 % suggested) to be occupied by solar panels.

Beth Turner

- ✓ Understands the draw of (financial gain for landowner) leasing or selling *Charles* farmland for solar energy installations.

*Jeret* Bruck

- ✓ Wanted to know if any planning commission member has been solicited for a solar energy installations.
  - Planning Commission secretary Roger Bezek said most landowners had received "contact us if you are interested in" leasing land for commercial solar energy installations, especial owners of larger tracts of land. He said he had received unsolicited inquiries about leasing his property for solar energy. He did not respond to any solicitation..

Lafebere

- ✓ Asked if there was a minimum amount of acreage required in the ordinance for any large scale energy system.
- ✓ Suggested that Exeter Township require a minimum of 100 acres for a commercial solar energy installation.

"Resident"

- ✓ Inquired who would be liable for property damage from the failure of any wind energy (conversion system) turbine
  - Comments from planning commission; damage done to your property by the actions (or inaction) of another property owners equipment would be covered under insurance or though court (lawsuit) action.

✓  
Lefebere

- ✓ Suggested that any large scale installation be required to use components made 100 % in the USA

"Resident" *made*

- ✓ Inquired if neighbors would be informed of and allowed to speak against any proposed large scale solar energy installation.
  - Township planner Lucie Fortin explained the notification for any public hearing (to review a Special Land Use request) to be held and any residents opportunity to ~~be~~ speak to the planning commission.

Maxine Parker

- ✓ Other townships have restricted large scale solar energy installation only on parcels zoned as Industrial. Why can't Exeter Township do the same?

Comments from planning commission

- ✓ While any landowner can request their land be "re-zoned" (to industrial), if it is not within areas designated in the Master Plan as industrial would be considered "Spot Zoning" which is not encouraged by the state of Michigan.

"Resident"

- ✓ Commented that this was their first time involved with township zoning issues and the public hearing process. Inquired why there was such "push back" from the resident's suggestions and direction to the planning commission.

Planning Commission member William Gay

- ✓ Responded that the planning commission had been working on these amendments to the existing township wind and solar energy systems ordinances for at least 6 months.

"Resident"

- ✓ Questioned the impact on the property tax of the installation and valuation of surrounding properties.

Planning Commission member William Gay

- ✓ The planning commission did not research how such energy installation would be taxed or assessed. It is not the roll of the planning commission to determine how Special Land Use request (per Zoning ordinances) will impact the way the assessor office or State Law taxes any "improvements".

"Resident"

- ✓ Was concerned about a number of "toxic compounds" which are part of the solar panels and the possibility of these compounds being released

"Resident"

- ✓ When will the Planning Commission make their final draft of these ordinances available
  - Comments from the planning commission (Roger Bezek).explained the process from the public hearing to review all comments received and to make changes per the suggestion offered at the public hearing. The planning Commission then recommends adopting these proposed to the Exeter Township board. The Exeter Township board can vote to adopt the ordinances as presented by the planning commission, adopt part, make change or chose not adopt any of the recommended changes. The Exeter Township board does not need to send their changes back to the planning commission. The township board is the final step in adopting any ordinance.
  - Once the planning commission completes their review of comments from the public hearing, a properly formatted copy will be sent to the Exeter Township board.

"Resident"

- ✓ The township should make it so (commercial) solar energy installations be allowed only on industrial land. This will act as a deterrent for any solar energy installation being put in Exeter Township.
  - Comments from Planning Commission; this kind of restriction would open the township to a lawsuit.

Member Exeter Township Fire Department

- ✓ Stated that "someone" had put a political flyer on everyone car windshield and had better start removing them as the fire department was not going "to be picking them up when then blew off the cars".

"Resident"

- ✓ Can land be rezoned (conditionally) as industrial for the life of a commercial energy installation?
  - Comments for planning commission. Once a parcel is rezoned industrial, if the solar installation does not move forward or when it is decommissioned, any type of large operation such as a quarry, factory, warehouse or other allowed industrial operation could be sited on the same land.

"Resident"

- ✓ Can the township limit the number of commercial energy installations allowed in the township?

3). A written letter was received from Exeter Township supervisor Robert Queen was read out loud at the public hearing A copy is attached.

❖ **Motion: William Gay, 2<sup>nd</sup> Robert Post:** To adjourn Public Hearing. **Motion carried**

❖ **Motion: David Schafer 2<sup>nd</sup> Phillip Bruck;** To reconvene and resume regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting **Motion carried**

**Approval of Minutes:**

Planning commission meeting minutes from October 4, 2022 were read. Two names were corrected. Anee Runyan (from Runyon) and Jere Bruck (from Gerald Bruck).

❖ **Motion: David Schafer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Phillip Bruck:** To approve the October 4, 2022 Exeter Township Planning Commission meeting minutes as corrected. **Motion carried**

**Old Business**

❖ **Motion: Roger Bezek, 2<sup>nd</sup> William Gay:** To table further consideration of proposed amendments to Exeter Township Zoning ordinances concerning wind energy conversion systems and solar energy systems including any recommendations until the December Exeter Township planning commission meeting. **Motion carried**

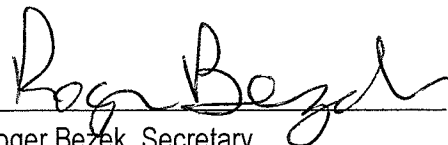
**New Business**

None

**Second Public Comment**

1). The next scheduled meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission will be held on Tuesday December 6, 2022 beginning at 7:00 PM at the Exeter Township Hall.

❖ **Motion: William Gay, 2<sup>nd</sup> Roger Bezek;** to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried**  
The meeting concluded at 9:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,   
Roger Bezek, Secretary  
Exeter Township Planning Commission

November 1,2022

A letter to;

Planning Commision Chairman, Members and Residents of Exeter Township,

Due to the unprecedented action of the Township Board that took away my First Amendment Right to Freedom of Assembly, I will not be joining you today. Therefore, I will address my concerns in the form of a letter.

As a voting Board member and someone who will vote on this upcoming ordinance it should be prudent, I hear your concerns. From someone who knows firsthand about living on or next to a business or operation such as a quarry or salvage yard I can relate to your concerns. So please feel free to contact me with any questions, suggestions or concerns.

I understand we are a farming and bedroom community, and any commercial venture will not bring tax dollars into the Township on a scale that would make any difference. My first word of caution is that if an ordinance is too restrictive or completely prohibits an operation a judge or jury may overrule all or part of the said ordinance. If I had a business wishing to locate next to me, I would not want my quality of life to be interfered with. This is what I am asking of the residents. If large corporations with their lawyers start looking at Exeter Township for a solar operation, what ordinance would you adopt? What ordinance would maintain our quality of life and not be overturned?

I agree with setbacks not only from property lines but from houses, buildings, schools and playgrounds. I believe there should be training and access for emergency crews along with yearly inspections. In closing, let's work together to create a workable ordinance and remember the loudest voice is not always the one that is heard. What I like to see is well written ordinance with smart solutions, this is what I am hoping for. I believe the Planning Commission along with the input from residents will deliver such an ordinance.

Exter Twp. Supervisor



Bob Queen

