

Bengal Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes April 24, 2024

Meeting Called to order by Chairperson Brandy Solomon at 7:01 PM

Pledge of Allegiance led by Brandy Solomon

Members Present: Eric Boak, Kurt Koenigsknecht, Brandy Solomon and Brenda Zlotek

Members Absent: Sam Nielsen

Public Present: Kathy George, Essex Twp. Treasurer; Eric Verlinde, Essex Twp. Supervisor; Nick McDonald, Bengal Twp. Supervisor; Forrest Thurston, Bengal Township Inspector/Enforcement Officer and Ethan Walthorn, Assistant Planner for McKenna.

Additions to Agenda: None

Motion to approve Minutes from February 28, 2024, BTPC Meeting, as amended, made by Eric Boak, seconded by Kurt Koenigsknecht, motion carried.

Public Comment on Agenda Items: Kathy George, Essex Township Treasurer, introduced Eric Verlinde the Essex Township Supervisor, to the Bengal Township Planning Commission for discussion on Proposed Joint Planning Commission with Essex Township. Essex Township is still weighing their options and awaiting final ordinances from Clinton County on Wind and Solar farms. However, they expressed the gratitude of the Essex Township Board to the Bengal Township Board for considering a joint township Planning Commission and reiterated their intent for a Joint Planning Commission to not result in added expenditure on the part of Bengal Township.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda items: Nick McDonald, Bengal Township Supervisor, suggested the Planning Commission revisit the part of the Ordinance concerning lot coverage maximum percentage for buildings. He has been approached by residents that feel it is too restrictive. Ethan Walthorn, Assistant Planner from McKenna, said he would investigate that current Ordinance language and possible changes for the Planning Commission to review at a future meeting. Nick also said he received a complaint from a resident related to junk and vermin. Ethan said he will discuss this with Forrest Thurston, and get a letter drafted and sent to the property owner.

Reports:

Township Inspector /Enforcement Officer update. Forrest Thurston reports he needs an updated Google spreadsheet, Brandy said she will work with him on that. He said there are no new projects requiring inspection.

Zoning Board of Appeals Update. Kurt Koenigsknecht reports no appeals have been filed.

Ethan Walthorn shared that McKenna was contacted by a resident related to a nonconforming lot with an earlier variance. The homeowner needed more information on the earlier variance and McKenna will be providing that information to the resident.

Township Board Liaison Report. Eric Boak reported that the Township Board is still working on issuing dedicated email accounts to Township employees. The Township is still waiting for bids to come in on the Dexter Trail Bridge.

Unfinished Business: Proposal for Joint Planning Commission with Essex Township. The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed a possible Resolution to present to the Bengal Township Board. The PC discussed how many members would be needed from each township and the potential savings to Bengal Township if less members are needed for the Planning Commission and ZBA with a Joint Planning Commission. The PC discussed further savings of splitting the cost of a new Master Plan when that is due for revision soon. Essex Township is still waiting on final Ordinances from Clinton County before proceeding. Nick McDonald also wants to discuss the pros and cons of a Joint Planning Commission with the Township Legal Counsel and Michigan Township Association for guidance before proceeding.

New Business: Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Zoning Amendment. Ethan Walthorn from McKenna presented a memorandum with many suggestions. The Commission discussed the presented memorandum. Ethan will review the suggestions and questions, and this will be further discussed at the May Planning Commission Meeting.

Planning Commission Comments: Eric Boak said that the Lansing Board of Water and Light (BLW) is building a BESS in Delta Township. He will look into what the BWL is doing with area residents for safety concerns.

Motion of Excused Absence for Sam Nielsen made by Brenda Zlotek, seconded by Kurt Koenigsknecht, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned by Chairperson Brandy Solomon at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted pending approval
Brenda Zlotek
Bengal Township Planning Commission Secretary

Approved
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