

Bengal Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes June 26, 2024

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairperson Brandy Solomon

Pledge of Allegiance led by Brandy Solomon

Members Present: Sam Nielsen, Brandy Solomon, and Brenda Zlotek

Public Present: Nathan Walthorn, Assistant Planner from McKenna, Garren Griffith representative from Detroit Energy (DTE).

Additions to Agenda- None

Approval of Minutes from May 29th, 2024 was tabled due to only two Planning Commission members present tonight from that meeting.

Public Comment on Agenda Items- Mr. Garren Griffith from DTE discussed his companies desire to work with Bengal Township regarding Planning and Zoning of Utility Scale Solar, BESS, and Wind projects which DTE is hoping to develop in Bengal Township. He stated DTE has been an energy provider in Michigan for over one hundred years and utilizes many different forms of energy. DTE wants to be “a good neighbor” with the municipalities where it has energy generation and distribution plants. Given the new rules of PA 233 and the State of Michigan, DTE can use the rules and regulations set forth by the Administration and Energy Commission bypassing local ordinances, however, they prefer to work with local Planning Commissions if feasible. The members of the Planning Commission asked several questions about DTE and their plans. Mr. Griffith stated DTE has signed lease agreements in the township but not enough to proceed with a project, yet. The Planning Commission stated our Ordinance for Wind and Solar was developed with vast input and time from our residents with their approval. The Planning Commission feels our Ordinance protects the residents of Bengal Townships needs and desires, while still allowing for utility scale wind, solar and BESS projects to be built. If or when DTE has the leases signed and are ready to put forth a Special Use Permit request, then we can have a discussion with his company and planners at our open meetings.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items- none

Reports:

Township inspector/Enforcement Officer Update- Forrest Thurston- absent – no report

Zoning Board of Appeals Update- Kurt Koenigsknecht- absent, Kurt emailed the Planning Commission stating no current or pending Appeals.

Township Board Liaison- Erik Boak- absent – no report

Unfinished Business:

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Zoning Amendment. The PC reviewed and discussed the revised Battery Energy Storage System Zoning Amendment Draft presented by Ethan Walthorn, Assistant Planner from Mckenna. Discussed a couple of changes to the document for approval at the next meeting. Ethan stated he will get those changes completed for our next meeting and then we can have a public hearing on the amendment at another meeting soon.

Maximum Lot Coverage Zoning Amendment. Draft Language was presented to the PC from Ethan. The PC agreed it looks good and will put in on the agenda for a Public Hearing soon, along with the Zoning Amendment for the BESS when that Amendment is completed.

New Business

Proposed County Dog Laws transferring cost onto Townships: The PC reviewed the Proposed changes to the Clinton County Zoning Ordinance for Kennels Commercial and Private, along with the County definition of “Nuisance” and “Public Nuisance.” Ethan presented a sample of Eagle Townships Ordinance for the Keeping of Animals. The PC decided to see if the Ordinance for the County changes and discuss our own Pet Ordinance if the County proceeds with their proposed changes.

Planning Commission Comments: Brenda Zlotek reports that Nick McDonald the Township Supervisor wanted the Planning Commission informed that Lori Pung agreed to return to the Planning Commission to fill the vacancy on the PC temporarily until the Township Board can fill the vacancy on a long-term basis.

Motion of Excused absences for Kurt Koenigsknecht and Eric Boak made by Sam Nielsen, seconded by Brenda Zlotek, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned by Brandy Solomon at 8:28PM.

Respectfully submitted, pending approval.

Brenda Zlotek, Bengal Township Planning Commission Secretary

Approved

9/_25_/2024

