

BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Bridgewater Township Government Center
Thursday, January 31, 2019
Official Minutes

- ❖ John Klockeman called the meeting to order at 7:00
- ❖ Members present were John Klockeman, Bruce Morlan, Ray Larson, Larry Alderks, Jeff Johnson, Kurt Schrader, Frances Boehning, and Jim Braun. Supervisors present were Gary Ebling, and John Holden.
- ❖ Ray Larson made a motion to approve the agenda, Larry Alderks seconded, all approved.
- ❖ Jeff Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of January 31, 2018, Bruce Morlan seconded, all approved.

- ❖ Open Forum:
 - Even Carlson from IPS Solar submitted a new application for a solar project next to the current project on the Prawer land.
 - Mr. Carlson addressed the question of what taxes does a solar farm pay? There are two taxes; production tax (of which 20% should come to the township) and property tax. The state statute regarding this is 272.0295.
 - Taxes from the Prawer solar farm should start to come in 2019.
 - Open Forum closed at 7:08 pm.

- ❖ Public Hearings: Conditional Use Permit Request – Hydra Community Solar
 - Hearing opened at 7:08 pm.
 - Jim Braun reviewed the public notice.
 - The Geronimo representative reviewed that layout of the site.
 - Lower growing prairie grasses will be planted under the panels while taller pollinator type plants will be further out.
 - Current wet areas will be planted with water plants.
 - Geronimo will own and operate the project. Hydra Community Solar is owned by Geronimo.
 - Bruce Morlan asked what the efficiency of the panels was. Geronimo was not able to provide an answer at this time.
 - This project includes a 25 year lease of the land.
 - This site was chosen as there is a service line along County Road 8.

- John Klockeman asked where the drainage basin drains to? Per Geronimo, it drains to the east. In the event that there is too much water prior to the plantings being established, they will dewater the site.
- Bruce Morlan asked if the re-established wetland would be a problem for land owners in the future. Per Geronimo, any future developments would need to delineate the wetland again.
- Jim Braun requested changing the decommissioning from 90 days to 365 days.
- Debbie Foley, and Emily Folten-Foley neighbor to the north, had the following concerns:
 - Concern regarding why is this considered the best location. Geronimo replied the service line was close that they could hook up to.
 - Concern regarding what the township gets out of a deal like this and the reduction in scenic value. Geronimo replied that plants could be added to help in hiding the panels.
 - Debbie Foley is not in favor of having the project in this location.
- The public hearing was closed at 7:38 pm.
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- Bruce Morlan made a motion to use prairie and pollinator grass mix under the solar panels.
- Jim Braun addressed the fact that this mix was not successful in the Praver site. That site will be transitioned to clover and alfalfa next year.
- John Klockeman addressed the neighbors concern regarding the location of the project and the need for it to be screened.
 - Geronimo noted that they can place larger bushes and trees along the north to screen the site.
- A short discussion was held regarding the need for 365 days for decommissioning.
- John Klockeman stated that the township is focused on agriculture but that we do acknowledge the need for clean energy. He then proposed using bushes and trees for screening on both 118th and Dundas Blvd.
- Larry Alderks made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit for Hydra Community Solar with the conditions listed in the staff report and the following:
 - Move to 180 days for decommissioning
 - Screening along 118th Street and Dundas Blvd with a mix of trees (evergreen and deciduous) and bushes. In the event of die off, the plantings will be replaced. Per Geronimo, the plantings for trees will be 4 feet while bushes will be shorter. A landscape architect will determine the best plants.
 - Jeff Johnson seconded the motion.
 - All approved the motion. It will not go before the Bridgewater Board of Supervisors on February 13.

❖ Old Business: None

❖ New Business:

- Discussion on recommending a moratorium for future solar
 - Jim Braun reviewed the other applications that have come in for solar community gardens.
 - A discussion was held regarding the possibility of a moratorium.
 - Jim Braun mentioned bring in the county assessor to see if they can explain the taxes for a solar garden and determine what the production tax is.
 - This will be reviewed during the next meeting and additional information provided.

- ❖ Miscellaneous:
 - Compliance Issues.
 - The current compliance issues have been turned over to legal.

- ❖ Adjourn - Jeff Johnson made a motion to adjourn, Bruce Moraln seconded, all approved.