

BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Online

Thursday, November 18, 2020

Official Minutes

- ❖ John Klockeman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm online via GoToMeeting app.
- ❖ Members present were Larry Alderks, Frances Boehning, Ray Larson, Jeff Johnson, Kurt Schrader, Bruce Morlan and John Klockeman. Supervisor present were Kathleen Kopseng. Staff present was Cindy Nash.
- ❖ Guests: None.

- ❖ Jeff Johnson made a motion to approve the agenda, Ray Larson seconded, motion approved. Roll call: Larry Alderks - yes, Frances Boehning- yes, Ray Larson- yes, Jeff Johnson- yes, Kurt Schrader- yes, Bruce Morlan- yes and John Klockeman- yes.

- ❖ Larry Alderks made a motion to approve the minutes of October 29, 2020, Jeff Johnson seconded, motion approved. Roll call: Larry Alderks - yes, Frances Boehning- yes, Ray Larson- yes, Jeff Johnson- yes, Kurt Schrader- yes, Bruce Morlan- yes and John Klockeman- yes.

- ❖ The Open Forum was opened and closed at 7:05 pm. No comments.

- ❖ Old Business – Solar Moratorium:
 - Cindy Nash reviewed the staff report with suggested amendments to the current solar ordinance.
 - John Klockeman requested that the final draft of the ordinance be provided to the Planning Commission prior to submission to the Board of Supervisors.
 - A request was made to move solar gardens from conditional to interim use permits. Cindy Nash reviewed that an IUP can be for a longer specific timeframe or specified owner. A typical lease for a solar garden is 25 years and the IUP could match that. A discussion was held regarding the merits of CUP vs IUP with the IUP being preferred by the Planning Commission.
 - Residential solar
 - Residential solar was reviewed and it was noted that these must meeting zoning and building codes.
 - A question was asked regarding the possibility of a safety hazard by the solar batteries in the event of a fire. Cindy Nash mentioned that all solar must meeting current building and electrical codes which should take into account safety in the event of fire. John Klockeman asked if the fire department should be notified regarding the presence of a larger solar battery.
 - A discussion was held regarding the minimum acreage needed for a residential ground mounted solar array. The Commissioners determined that the ordinance would proceed with a minimum of 5 acres with current setbacks in place.
 - In section 4-3b, a request was made to add in an illustration for a flush mounted system.

- A short discussion was held regarding glare from solar panels. As new panels are engineered to capture as much sun as possible, it was noted that this should not be an issue. The ordinance will continue to include language requiring analysis and/or documentation from the manufacturer be available regarding reflectivity.
- Commercial Solar
 - A discussion was held regarding where commercial solar would be allowed.
 - The requirement of a 600-foot setback from wildlife management area was removed.
 - A discussion was held regarding the merits of CER versus CPI. A map of where the phase three power centers are located will be provided at the next meeting. The Commissioners will review CER in conjunction with the location of major solar power hookups at the next meeting to determine the best locations for large solar gardens.
 - Decommissioning of commercial solar was reviewed. It was requested that a review every certain number of years be added to the conditions of the IUP. This will allow a regular review to determine that sufficient funds are in escrow to decommission the site.
 - Setbacks and glare were reviewed.
- Main topics for review at the next meeting include:
 - Do the public utilities allow solar gardens in excess of one megawatt?
 - Where are the phase three stations and how do they overlap with the CER/CPI?
 - Can property owners install a 5-megawatt solar system?
- ❖ Misc.:
 - The Commissioners requested to be informed of any upcoming variance/CUP/IUP applications coming. A request was also made to provide a listing of current permits to date.
- ❖ The next Bridgewater Township Planning Commission will be held on Wednesday, January 6th, 7:00 pm online via GoToMeeting.
- ❖ Bruce Morlan made a motion to adjourn at 9:24 pm, Jeff Johnson seconded, motion approved. Roll call: Larry Alderks - yes, Frances Boehning- yes, Ray Larson- yes, Jeff Johnson- yes, Kurt Schrader- yes, Bruce Morlan- yes and John Klockeman- yes.