

*Bridgewater Township Planning Commission  
County of Rice, State of Minnesota  
June 22, 2023  
Official Minutes*

- 1) Call to order
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance
- 3) Roll Call: John Klockeman, Bruce Morlan, Ray Larson, Larry Alderks, Kurt Schrader, Jeff Johnson, Ex-Officio Mike Little, Staff: Cindy Nash and Lori Noreen. Guests: Dan Peterson, Kevin Larson, Jim Purfeerst, Brendan Dillen, Amy Woldt, Gary Johnson, Mark Butler, Tyler Dahm, Jerry Rypkema, Kathee Hanson, Dan Swenson, Glen Castore
- 4) Approval of Agenda
  - a) John Klockeman requested to add "Landfill Update" to the Agenda under Updates and Miscellaneous – so added.
- 5) Approval of Minutes: May 25, 2023
  - a) Bruce Morlan made a motion to approve the Minutes of May 25, 2023, Jeff Johnson seconded, all approved.
- 6) Open Forum:
  - a) Open Forum was closed at 7:06pm
- 7) Public Hearing:
  - a) St Olaf Solar Facility: Public Hearing was opened at 7:13pm and closed at 7:17pm
    - i) There was a question addressed regarding the location of the proposed solar facility on the site. It was noted that the panels would be located in the currently farmed area on the parcel and that all of the wooded area would remain.
    - ii) Cindy Nash invited the applicant to provide a brief description of the proposal for a solar facility located on a parcel owned by St. Olaf College. It was noted that the energy produced would be for the College's use and would be connected to their grid to be able to sell energy back to Xcel.
    - iii) Cindy Nash recommended to the Commission approval of the Variance and IUP application provided by St. Olaf College for a Solar Facility with the request to change Condition 31 to 35 years from operational being 2024 – December 31, 2059.
    - iv) Larry Alderks questioned how the replacement of failed panels process works, with explanation that they are unbolted, unwired and replaced.
    - v) Jeff Johnson questioned the disposal process of said panels upon replacement with an explanation that the panels would be recycled.
    - vi) Kurt Schrader questioned what, if anything, could not be recycled with the answer that the majority of all parts can be either recycled or salvaged for reuse.
    - vii) John Klockeman questioned what the turnaround of the panels in the 35 years would be with the answer that all would be replaced at some point in that timeframe.
    - viii) Larry Alderks asked if there was a provision that the project would be bonded or a cash escrow be in place which was answered that, yes there would be.

- ix) Brendan Dillen of Nokomis Energy provided a brief background of the company that would be installing the panels per John Klockeman's request.
  - x) Larry Alderks questioned what type of plantings would be placed around the facility with the answer that it would be pollinator plantings.
  - xi) Bruce Morlan questioned the type of trees in the area with the answer that they are well established trees.
  - xii) Bruce Morlan made a motion to approve the Variance for the proposed St Olaf Solar Facility, Ray Larson seconded, all approved.
  - xiii) Larry Alderks made a motion to approve the IUP with notation to make the change to Condition 31, Jeff Johnson seconded, all approved.
  - xiv) Cindy Nash will update the changes and bring the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors at their July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting.
- b) Castle Rock/SMC Mining: Public Hearing was opened at 7:45pm and closed at 8:12pm
- i) Text Amendment to Zoning Ordinance re: TEPP
  - ii) Interim Use Permit for Mining
    - (1) Tyler Dahm provided a brief description as to reasoning of the permit renewal.
    - (2) There was discussion regarding that the original IUP was dated in 2018 which has expired; therefore, the efforts are to get one in place to be compliant.
    - (3) It was asked as to why the name on the sign at the site had changed with the answer that the name change is due to the purchase of the company and the name went with the sale.
    - (4) Cindy Nash stated that she will reach out to those involved to update the applications with the correct name changes
    - (5) Cindy Nash provided a memorandum stating her comments and recommendations. One being to change the Township's ordinance text to align with Rice County's ordinance.
    - (6) There was discussion regarding site safety and security with notation that there is a plan to enhance the fencing that runs along the Township Road.
    - (7) There was discussion regarding restoration with notation that the current lessee has been making solid efforts on restoration.
    - (8) It was noted that there could be a change made to the verbiage in the IUP so that both the land owner and the tenant will be liable for restoration of the land.
    - (9) There was a request for a date to be set for a tour to see the property.
    - (10) Cindy Nash requested that the Commission table the Castle Rock/SMC Mining: Text Amendment to Zoning Ordinance re:TEPP and Interim Use Permit for Mining to the next meeting as further information is needed.
      - (a) Bruce Morlan made a motion to Table the Castle Rock/SMC Mining: Text Amendment to Zoning Ordinance re:TEPP and Interim Use Permit for Mining to the next meeting, Jeff Johnson seconded, all approved.
- 8) Old Business
- a) There was no Old Business discussed.
- 9) New Business
- a) There was no New Business discussed.
- 10) Updates and Miscellaneous
- a) Milestones/Updates on RLS
    - i) Glen Castore provided an update on the RLS Project to the Commission explaining the need for the EAW to be complete before anything else can proceed.

- ii) Larry Alderks asked if there could be a timeline of milestones for the projects be provided. Glen Castore optimistically provided such timeline as follows:
    - (1) Mid-July – EAW will be release for comment for a 30-day review.
    - (2) Mid-August – Town Board to hold a special meeting to respond to said comments. Agenda item for the P&Z Committee.
    - (3) Early September – Town Board will decide if the EAW is sufficient or if an Environmental Impact Statement will be required as well as act on the Height Variance and CUP for RLS.
    - (4) Mid-September – Grading Agreement on land to start work as well as a Development Agreement between RLS & the Township to be in place.
    - (5) October - ? – Building Permit for RLS
    - (6) End Point – December 2024 RLS expects to be in operation.
  - iii) Glen Castore also provided certain possibilities for utilities for the Comus Industrial Park.
  - iv) It was mentioned that 140<sup>th</sup> St Road work would be done in Summer/Late Summer of 2024. The Township is working with Rice County to apply for a possible grant and/or for the County to possibly take the road over.
  - v) It was noted that the timeline provided is tentative and can change on a daily basis.
- b) Enforcement focuses by the Board
    - i) Larry Alderks requested an enforcement list of where the Board’s focuses are at the moment. It was stated that the Board is working on an updated list to have for the July meeting for review with the main enforcement efforts on the Hollinger property clean up.
  - c) Hollinger Outcome – cleanup
    - i) The Township is working on quotes for removal, then a formal letter will be provided. Once the letter has been received cleanup will occur. The cost will be added as an assessment onto the property owner’s property taxes.
  - d) Jesse’s vehicles – CUP
    - i) It was questioned what the next steps for the Jacobson Vehicle CUP are. It will be added to the Compliance List mentioned above.
  - e) Richardson property lines
    - i) Cindy Nash stated that she will review how the property lines were determined in the lot split and bring back with an update to the Commission.
  - f) Comus Junction update
    - i) It was stated that there is a Solar Garden Proposal located near the Rural Industrial Area. The Garden could be 20+ acres and has the potential to be a \$5-6M project. There is a meeting with Ed Koltavy and Steele Waseca planned to obtain a better understanding of how the Solar Garden would work.
    - ii) It was noted that there is discussion still being held as regards to the Utility Provider for the area.

#### Adjourn

- Larry Alderks made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:54pm, Bruce Morlan seconded, all approved.