

Final

Douglass Township Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
1/25/2023

Call to order

Meeting called to order by Eric Tester at 7:02 pm

Pledge Of Allegiance

Roll Call

- Mike Swan present
- Eric Tester present
- Kathy Craig present
- Rick Baldwin present
- Tammy Sweeris absent

Election of Officers

• **Chairman**

Motion by Kathy Craig to nominate Rick Baldwin as Chairman, seconded by Eric Tester.

Roll call vote:

Rick Baldwin- yes

Kathy Craig-yes

Eric Tester-yes

Mike Swan-yes

Motion passed.

• **Secretary**

Motion by Eric Tester to nominate Kathy Craig as Secretary, seconded by Mike Swan.

Roll call vote:

Mike Swan-yes

Rick Baldwin-yes

Kathy Craig-yes

Eric Tester-yes

Motion passed.

• **Vice Chairman**

Motion by Eric Tester to nominate Mike Swan as Vice Chair, seconded by Kathy Craig.

Roll call vote:

Eric Tester-yes

Kathy Craig-yes

Rick Baldwin-yes

Mike Swan-yes

Motion passed.

Approve agenda

- **Discussion:** Eric Tester asked to add discussion of new ordinance under new business. Kathy Craig asked about setting meeting dates for the rest of the year.

- Eric Tester made motion to accept the following meeting dates set as follows for 2023: last Wednesday of the month April 26, July 26, and October 25 at 7 pm at Douglass Township Hall. Seconded by Mike Swan.
Voice vote-passed unanimously.
- Eric Tester made motion to approve agenda, seconded by Kathy Craig.
Voice vote-passed unanimously.

Approve minutes of July 28, 2022 meeting

- Eric Tester read the minutes of the July 28, 2022 meeting.
Discussion: Some discussion on if Paul LeBlanc made the recommended changes to the Master Plan. No one has received any information from him regarding it. In the minutes there is a reference to attachments, but no attachments found.
- Motion made by Eric Tester to approve minutes as written, seconded by Mike Swan.
Voice vote-passed unanimously.
- Mike Swan needs a copy of Master Plan.

Reports

- Rick Baldwin requests that a section for reports be added to meetings so people can report on seminars/trainings, etc. Zoning administrator (Dave Kelsey) will be added to reports.
- Board liaison report: Eric Tester reports that the board wants us to work on wind and solar.
- Eric Tester made motion to amend the township zoning ordinance and hold a public hearing to adopt the proposed ordinance entitled “An Ordinance to impose a moratorium on the issuance of permit, licenses, or approvals for, or any construction of commercial wind and solar energy projects”. Motion seconded by Mike Swan.
Roll call vote:
Kathy Craig-yes
Eric Tester-yes
Mike Swan-yes
Rick Baldwin-yes
Motion passed.
- Eric Tester made motion to amend the township zoning ordinance and hold a public hearing to adopt the proposed ordinance entitled “An ordinance to amend the township zoning ordinance to repeal sections pertaining to wind and solar systems”. Motion seconded by Kathy Craig.
Roll call vote:
Rick Baldwin-yes
Mike Swan-yes
Eric Tester-yes
Kathy Craig-yes
Motion passed.
- Eric Tester made motion to hold Special Meeting and necessary Public Hearings at 7 pm on February 22, 2023. Seconded by Mike Swan.
Roll call vote:
Eric Tester-yes

Kathy Craig-yes
Rick Baldwin-yes
Mike Swan-yes
Motion passed.

- Dave Kelsey reported on permits issued for the township dating back to October 2022. Permits included pole barns, demolition, and lot lines. Dave reports that in 2022, there were 39 permits issued, 4 variances, and one special use permit. In 2021 there were 40, 2020 there were 22, and in 2019 there were 41.

Old Business

Master Plan Review recommendation

- Needs to be reviewed every 5 years, but we do not know where the information from Paul LeBlanc (planner) is as no one has seen it.
- Eric Tester made motion to table the Master Plan for now, seconded by Mike Swan. Discussion: Kathy Craig thinks plan is well written, just needs updates. Has questions on if the township can help maintain Comden-Towle model forest. Bathrooms are falling down. Conservation district runs it. Rick Baldwin shared that if we do pursue recreation items there are steps that need to be taken. Kathy Craig asked about copies of the Master Plan for general public. Copy is available at the town hall.

Roll call vote:

Rick Baldwin-yes
Mike Swan-yes
Kathy Craig-yes
Eric Tester-yes
Motion passed.

New Business

- Rick Baldwin acknowledges resignations of Jack Jeppesen and Becky Sowles from the planning commission. Rick Baldwin would like to thank them for their service on the planning commission.
- Rick reiterated that the election gave us a mandate and we are a recommending body.
- We need to move on the wind and solar, allowing people to take advantage of potential tax credits for residential solar.
- Wind Discussion Look at other townships, if we keep verbage for what is representative for the acceptance of the population and make adjustments, we could be ready to put it together. **Setbacks:** concern for setbacks from dwelling for lease signers to protect health and safety of lease signers. We had 1.5 tip height setback. Roads were 1.5 tip height setback. Shadow flicker on roads needs to be addressed. Flat river setback was 600 feet. We border Pine township, so should be in line with them. They have 1 mile setback from river. We share a lake with Sidney. They have 2.5 mile setback. Designated wetlands setback discussion. **Sound:** limits for participating need to be looked at. Discussion on health and safety of noise levels for all residents (lease and non lease). Spicer group original recommendations discussed. Lmax vs. leq discussed. **Height:** Looked at other townships' heights, to be more in line with neighbors. Voters rejected 500 foot turbines. **Decommissioning language:** had bonds and insurance, consumer price index, need new legal team to review. Landowner responsibility

language should be considered. Horizontal and vertical axis language should be included.

- Solar Discussion Many townships are working on solar ordinances. We currently have no sound limit for solar. We need to address decommissioning. We have a lot of work to do. Get input from community to help with decisions. We should focus on wind first and then solar.

Public comment

- Laura Engel assured Rick it would get easier. Laura invited anyone out to see the 16 solar panels (with trackers) on her property. She reports they do not make noise unless you are close when the trackers are turning.
- Ben Reynolds welcomed new commission members. Thanked Jack Jeppesen for his years on the board, as well as Becky Sowles. Requests fair and protective ordinances. Noise from solar panels comes from inverters, not panels themselves.
- Robert Scott recommends starting with attorney for template, put language in addressing adjacent properties in neighboring townships, make ADLS (Airplane Detection Lighting System) mandatory, consider minimum size of wetlands, put in landowner responsibility language.
- Leslie Rydahl reports that ADLS must be used in Pine township, and Foster Swift firm approved it.
- Linda Reynolds asked for clarification on how PC would come up with recommendations to present to public for public hearing. Was told Public Hearing was about moratorium. Requests microphone in future. Ground clearance in Douglass is 50 feet, lowest around.
- Dave Kelsey thinks solar should have three separate solar sections-residential, commercial, and industrial.
- Robin Poulson asked about wifi. Reported that a small solar farm (about 20 acres) is just outside Howard City if PC wants to go see it. She reports it is not quiet.

Further commission discussion

- Eric Tester made motion to have a special meeting following the Public hearing on Wednesday February 22, 2023 at 7 pm. Seconded by Kathy Craig. Discussion: add purpose to the special meeting notice, which is wind and solar ordinance. Eric Tester and Kathy Craig agreed to add purpose to the meeting notice.

Roll call vote:

Rick Baldwin-yes

Mike Swan-yes

Eric Tester-yes

Kathy Craig-yes

Motion passed.

Adjourn

- Eric Tester made motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike Swan. Voice vote-passed unanimously.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Craig
Douglass Township Planning Committee Secretary

Minutes approved at Feb. 22 2023 Planning Commission Special Meeting.