

Final

Douglass Township Planning Commission

3521 W. McBrides Rd

Stanton, MI 48888

989-762-8014

Special Meeting Minutes

June 14, 2023

Call to order

- Meeting called to order by Rick Baldwin at 7:00 pm

Pledge Of Allegiance

Roll Call

- Present: Rick Baldwin, Mike Swan, Kathy Craig, Eric Tester, Melissa Bannen, Matt Moorman
- Absent: Jon Bailey

Approval of agenda items

- Eric Tester made a motion to approve agenda items as written, seconded by Kathy Craig. Voice vote: ayes 6 nays 0 Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from April 26, 2023 regular meeting and public hearing

- Eric Tester made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2023 Public Hearing minutes as written, seconded by Melissa Bannen. Voice vote: ayes 6 nays 0 Motion carried.
- Eric Tester made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2023 Regular minutes as written, seconded by Melissa Bannen. Voice vote: ayes 6 nays 0 Motion carried.

Public Comments on agenda items

- Rick Baldwin opened public comments at 7:05 pm and closed at 7:05 pm as there were no comments offered.

New Business

Solar Ordinance

- Planning commission members weighed the pros and cons of the current wording of greenbelt screening for level 1 SES systems. Concerns about prohibitive costs, citizen input from the last meeting, and adequate protections for neighbors were discussed. The PC reached consensus to add a waiver option in this section.
- The PC went through each of the recommended changes and considerations from the attorney, discussed past citizen input, and used other Montcalm county townships' solar ordinances for comparison. The following changes were discussed and agreed upon by the PC:
 - ❖ Use attorney provided wording for definition of SES
 - ❖ Use attorney recommended formatting/arrangement for wording in several sections
 - ❖ Add "applies only to ISES" to section 2.1.h regarding lands enrolled in PA 116 and other programs

- ❖ Keep Level 1 systems' height at 8 feet, but add a waiver for neighbors on the height for up to 12 feet.
- ❖ Keep Level 2 systems' height at 10 feet, but add a waiver for neighbors on the height for up to 12 feet.
- ❖ Keep Level 3 systems' height at 12 feet with no waiver.
- ❖ Change wording in Section 5. g. 1 regarding escrow of ISES application to reflect setting the amount to be deposited by resolution of township board, and to double check how to word it correctly.
- ❖ Amend Sections 5.03 and 10.03 of the zoning book to allow for SES in AG/RE and Industrial zones.

Zoning Board of Appeals- variance issues

- Rick reported that there have been 11 variances granted in the last four years for garages/pole barns to be built on land unoccupied by a home.
- Reviewed other approvals/denials.
- PC now has representation on the ZBA (Rick Baldwin) so PC will get reports going forward.

Change next regular meeting date

- Rick requested that the July 26, 2023 regular meeting of the PC be changed to July 12, 2023, as he will be out of town on the 26th.
- Eric Tester made a motion to change the July 26, 2023 meeting to July 12, 2023, seconded by Mike Swan. Voice vote: ayes 6 nays 0 Motion carried.

Zoning change request Scott Carr

- The township has received a zoning request to change the zoning on a piece of property at 585 Hillman Rd from residential to commercial. Neighborhood Business or General Business are the commercial options in the township.
- It appears that variances would need to be granted in addition to rezoning.
- PC will get clarification on whether rezoning or variance would take place first, and put it on the July 12 agenda for further discussion.

Committee Reports

Eric Tester- Board Liaison

- The board passed the WECS ordinance at the last meeting with simple changes.
- Community input was all favorable for the WECS, and after publication in the newspaper, should be on the books June 23rd.

Dave Kelsey- Zoning Administrator

- Dave was not present and no report was given.

Old Business

- There was no old business to discuss

Public Comments

Rick Baldwin opened public comments at 8:59 pm.

Resident	Comments
Linda Reynolds	Asked about liability for zoning issues. (Erie will look into it).

Tom Koepke	In response to Linda's question, thinks that as public servants, "Qualified Immunity" applies.
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Public comments ended at 9:03 pm.

Further commission discussion/action

- Eric brought up the blight issue and reported that the county has come up with a template and is looking for input. He has concerns about giving up local control, and how to enforce blight problems.
- Melissa Bannen made a motion to set a Public Hearing for the Solar ordinance on July 12, at 7 pm, before regular meeting, seconded by Matt Moorman. Discussion: PC decided we should vote on the proposed changes from the attorney before setting up Public Hearing. Melissa Bannen rescinded her motion with support from Matt Moorman.
- Melissa Bannen made a motion to accept the changes to the ordinance as discussed, including the wording regarding changing the escrow amount from a set amount to "by a resolution" in Section 2, seconded by Matt Moorman. Voice vote: ayes 6 nays 0 Motion carried.
- Melissa Bannen made a motion to set a Public Hearing on the Solar ordinance for July 12 at 7 pm before the regular meeting, seconded by Eric Tester. Voice vote: ayes 6 nays 0 Motion carried.
- Rick will get clarification on how to proceed on the request from Scott Carr.

Adjourn

- Eric Tester made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike Swan. Voice vote: ayes 6 nays 0 Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Craig
Douglass Township Planning Commission Secretary