

MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Manchester Township Hall, 275 S. Macomb, Manchester, Michigan 48158

Regular Meeting Minutes – March 3, 2022

8:00 p.m.

A. CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIR

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Walter at 8:00 PM. Members Present: Mike Walter, George Daubner, Dave Thompson, Doug Brooks, Ashley Buniack and Sybil Kolon. Members Absent: John Seefeld. Others Present: John Enos, Ron Milkey, Mark Bustamante, Joseph Bustamante, Wayne Appleyard, Christina Martens and two other people who did not sign in.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Thompon, second by Kolon to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Thompson with a second by Brooks to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2022 regular meeting as presented. Motion carried.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

Township supervisor Ron Milkey asked if the commission would consider starting the meetings at 7:00 PM, in line with the township board meetings. It was agreed to begin the meetings at 7:30 PM.

E. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

I. Report of Chairperson – No report.

II. Report of Township Board Representative – No report

III. Report of Zoning Board of Appeals - There have been no requests for meetings.

IV. Report of Planning Consultant – No report

V. Reports of Committees

i. SWWCOG – Kolon reported on the meeting held on February 23, 2022. Major topics included discussion of the broadband project that is expected to begin in the southern part of the township in about one year. It was also noted that many of the limitations on the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds by the township have been removed, and funds can now be spent on roads.

ii. Joint Planning Commission – Walter reported the JPC will likely have more frequent meetings this year to update the Joint Master Plan and Joint Recreation Plan.

VI. Correspondence – Two letters of support have been received for the Thorn Lake Solar Farm project.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

I. Thorn Lake Solar Update – John Enos of Carlisle-Wortman summarized the Site Plan Review dated 3/9/2022, indicating it generally complies with the township ordinance. Christina Martens, on behalf of Thorn Lake Solar, provided an update on the project. Each commission member received a binder titled “Utility-Scale Solar Energy System Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Application, dated February 2022. The 159-acre project will include over 48,000 solar panels. The maximum height will be 16 feet. Because the panels follow the sun, this height will occur in the morning and evening. Martens clarified that the energy produced will connect to the adjacent Consumers Energy sub-station for transmission to the power grid. Construction will start this fall or in the spring of 2023. Thorn Lake Solar has already notified property owners within 300 feet of the project. A public hearing is expected to be set for April.

II. Short Term Rentals – There has been no action on a related bill in the state legislature. This will be kept on the agenda and acted on as needed.

G. NEW BUSINESS

I. Bustamante Cluster Housing Development – Carlisle-Wortman provided a review of the project in a memo titled: Pre-Application Conference for Manchester Township, dated February 11, 2022. Mark Bustamante stated that the bulk of the 107-acre property would be maintained as a natural area, with four houses and a common area with a barn and other amenities, intended to be a family compound. They have initiated efforts to restore native habitats in the wetlands and uplands, where pollinator habitat will be established. They plan to start on the first house this summer. A public hearing will be required and may be set for May 2022.

II. Manchester Regulator Station – Consumers Energy is planning to reconstruct their existing station on North M-52, just north of Manchester. Enos indicated that site plan approval is required; a public hearing is not required. They will need to request a setback variance.

H. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Thompson believes the township should notify the adjacent subdivisions about the Thorn Lake Solar public hearing. Milkey indicated the clerk is preparing to notify residents within 1000 feet of the project, which exceeds the required 300 feet notification requirement.

In response to a question from Daubner about the Sow Good Farm project, Milkey indicated the property has been sold.

Kolon provided additional information from the SWWCOG meeting about the River Raisin Watershed Council.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

NEXT MEETING:

Regular Meeting – April 7, 2022 NOTE TIME CHANGE: 7:30 p.m.

J. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Thompson with a second by Daubner to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried. Adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Minutes Approved:

Lyle Kolon
Secretary

4/7/2022
Date

DRAFT