

MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Manchester Township Hall, 275 S. Macomb, Manchester, Michigan 48158
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 6th, 2023 7:30 PM

A. CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIR

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Walter at 7:31 PM. Members Present: Mike Walter, George Daubner, Dave Thompson, Doug Brooks, Mike Fusilier, Ashley Buniack, Sybil Kolon. Other Present: Recording Secretary Brenda Bancroft, Manchester Township Supervisor Ron Milkey, Clerk Danell Proctor, Treasurer Kim Thompson, Trustee Krista Jarvis, Trustee Lisa Moutinho; Manchester Township Planning Consultant John Enos; Manchester Township Attorneys Chris Patterson & Associate; AES Attorney Stephen Estey, AES Representatives Sarah Lindemann, Frank Krawczel, Jeff Cole, Anthony Stevens; Carl Werner, Laura Gervick, & Bill Gervick.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Amend agenda to add under New Business: II. Forming a Land Preservation Sub-Committee; Add to Unfinished Business: II. Camping Ordinance.

A motion was made by Kolon, second by Daubner, to approve the agenda as amended. Ayes: all. **Motion carried.**

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the June 1st. 2023 Manchester Township Planning Commission Meeting were presented.

Remove in the motion for the Public Hearing “Agritourism” and change it to list “two ordinance language updates”; correct typo in IV. Report of Planning Consultant from “to asked” to “asked”; Correct typo in iii. Joint Planning Commission to “members” instead of “member”; correct typo in I: Brainstorm: What Manchester Is To Us from “how create” to “how to create”.

A motion was made by Brooks, second by Kolon, to approve the minutes of the June 1st, 2023 Manchester Township Planning Commission meeting as amended. Ayes: all. **Motion carried.**

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

E. NEW BUSINESS

- I. Thorn Lake Solar Site Plan Review

Manchester Township Planning Consultant John Enos spoke to the Planning Commission and to the public regarding the site plan and updates within the last few months. He had reviewed the final site plan and that it met the requirements. He is asking that there are no lights at the location, including motion lights. He has also strongly recommended that the trees to be protected, including providing snow fences, to preserve them.

Manchester Township Attorney Chris Patterson provided an update to the Planning Commission and to the public regarding the legal developments with this project. He also addressed why this project is back before the Planning Commission as well – that the site plan is under the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission for final site plan approval.

Frank Krawcel from AES presented that he has presented the final site plan, emergency action plan, operations maintenance plan, decommission plan, complaint resolution plan, and any other plans as needed by the consent judgement. He is willing to accede to the lighting requests at the gate, and also at the substation as long as it complies with electrical code. Sarah Lindemann also mentioned that that lights at the substation would be pointing downward and motion sensing. There would also be cameras at the substation.

Kolon inquired with John Enos regarding lot coverage regarding the site plan. AES informed the Planning Commission that they calculated the amount of impacted ground this would cause and it was 2.95 acres. Kolon also questioned the final measurements for the spacing between trees on the Planning Consultants report – 3 feet instead of 30 feet was listed. Kolon wanted to ensure the final spacing of these trees are correct for correct coverage.

Township Supervisor Ron Milkey wanted to check with AES that the update to the landscape plan for updated screening for the Bancroft-Hernandez household was included in the final site plan. Frank Krawcel affirmed that had been updated and included in the final site plan. Also inquired regarding the notification process for communication within 300 feet of the project during construction. Milkey also inquired about the complaint resolution plan and the steps that would be taken with AES.

Daubner inquired if AES has followed up with the DEQ/EGLE approval regarding this site. Sarah Lindemann informed the Planning Commission that the DEQ has already had a site visit and has provided the documentation. There is a small area of wetland that will be fenced off from the site.

Kolon inquired about the wetland area that would be fenced off and the maintenance with that area of the property, especially with concerns with invasive species. She inquired if, while they check on the other landscaping, that they also check the wetland area as well.

Anthony Stevens, compliance manager for the project, mentioned that they are heavily involved in vegetation management. If they see something invasive they will remove it and will monitor this location during and after construction.

Fusilier inquired about what will be used for agricultural purposes. Frank Krawczel mentioned he would prefer to have sheep grazing at the site but is open to ideas about how to include agricultural involvement.

Jeff Cole, Senior Project Manager for the Thorn Lake Solar Project, is hoping to start construction in September/October 2023 (or if they can't meet that deadline, starting in April 2024) for an overall 6-month construction plan. Offered his personal cell phone number for those to contact him with construction concerns at (317) 697-7834 while this project is under construction.

The Planning Commission inquired if the construction of the solar farm project in Grass Lake was run AES. It was confirmed that it was, and that the project has been delayed due to contractor issues, so it has taken longer than anticipated.

Walter inquired about how those that have neighbors that are directly next to the site will be informed regarding the construction. Discussed with the Township Attorney about having an approval condition regarding notification of neighbors included.

Thompson commented that he disagreed at having the public comment section before the discussion regarding the Thorn Lake Solar.

In addition to the recommendations suggested by the Planning Consultant, the Planning Commission requested the Township Attorney to include Approval Condition 6: At a minimum 24 hours advance notice to the property owners that are within 300 feet of the project boundary and applicant and applicant's crew is working at the project during construction.

Motion Fusilier, Second Brooks to approve the Resolution Conditionally Approving Thorn Lake Solar Project Final Site Plan for a Utility-Scale Solar Energy System with discussed amendments.

Ayes: Daubner, Brooks, Fusilier, Buniack, Kolon, Walter. Abstain: Thompson. **Motion Passed.**

II. Forming a Land Preservation Sub-Committee

Kolon volunteered to be on this sub-committee and is requesting another person from the Planning Commission, 2 members of the Township Board, and a member of the public to also be included. Brooks and Fusilier offered to serve on the committee as well. Kolon informed the Planning Commission that a Land Preservation tab has been added to the Township's website with posted information for the public.

F. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

- I. Report of Chairperson – Chairman Walter informed the Planning Commission the Hidden Lakes RV campground is open and provided an aerial photo that had been taken by Pat Valliencourt. The campground would like to proceed to Phase 2 and Phase 3 – the Planning Commission will need to ensure review of those phases within the next few months for the final site plans. Phase 2 is an expansion of the

park and Phase 3 is for cabins and if they'll continue with on-site sewage treatment or if they'll connect to the village. Additionally, there is a small section of road that the Golf Carts are not allowed to drive down if they want to drive into town as they are Township roads – the Board will have to pass an ordinance to allow it to do so.

Walter also commented that activity for construction has increased within the Township and anticipates it to continue to remain busy in the next few years, especially as high speed internet is being rolled out in the area.

II. Report of Township Board Representative – Fusilier provided reports regarding the Township ARPA meeting, Regular Township Meeting, and Budget Workshop and Meeting for June 2023.

III. Report of Zoning Board of Appeals – 1 applicant for variance of a setback for an attempt to build a garage on the property near their house. Approved the request to build the garage in the front of the house instead of behind due to the unique topography of the property and a steep hill behind the home. It was a minimum of 14 feet variance from the 30-foot set back requirement and advised if they can move it closer to the house and reduce the variance amount, the ZBA advised the homeowner to do so. There were no neighbors or members of the public that attended the meeting or any correspondence from the neighbors as well.

IV. Report of Planning Consultant – No report.

V. Reports of Committees

i. SWWCOG – Meeting was held on June 14, 2023 – Sybil Kolon, Ron Milkey, Lisa Moutinho, & Kim Thompson attended. Sharon Planning commission recommended denying Stone Co's application. Legislature at the state level is on hold regarding gravel pits and governance regarding local municipalities. Kolon spoke about Land Preservation and Milkey and Moutinho spoke regarding county disaster relief. Next meeting is September 13, 2023 in Bridgewater Township.

ii. GIHRIC (Greater Irish Hills Regional Intermunicipality Committee) – No meeting.

iii. Joint Planning Commission – Met this evening and is looking at having Planning Consultant John Enos present a comprehensive joint master plan in September and have a 2-hour working session in an attempt to make the majority of the headway on this project.

VI. Correspondence – No correspondence.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

I. Brainstorm: What Manchester Is To Us

Keeping this on the agenda as this will drive the conversation at the Master Plan level and will flow down to the ordinances and implementation. Will continue to discuss this at future Planning Commission meetings and keep this at the forefront of decisions moving forward.

II. Camping Ordinance

One item that was brought up from the public hearing regarded vacant waterfront camping. Another was about if emergency services could be able to access the camping areas. The Planning Commission needs additional time and discussing with the Planning Consultant regarding revising this ordinance.

H. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS –

Brooks commented that there needs to be something figured out with the Planning Consultant situation.

Thompson commented that he wished that the Thorn Lake Solar site plan had been up on the TV monitor in the hall room during the discussion and that this should be utilized more, especially by the Planning Consultant. Also commented that one of the issues regarding the Planning Consultant is that the perhaps the Township places too much on the Planning Consultant and should do independent research to help direct the Planning Consultant as the Planning Consultant is not a Township resident or tax-payer.

Walter encouraged the Planning Commission members to do their homework regarding topics on agendas ahead of meetings and during future discussions. He believes that this is something that would benefit the community as a whole for everyone to become more informed when making decisions.

Buniack inquired about if there is a plan to create a parking area for the trail, as there's no good place to park currently.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

Carl Werner commented that he thought it was very important that the Township made a huge difference with upgrading the gravel roads to limestone. He also agreed with doing additional research and homework. Also wanted to warn the Board regarding encroachment as a city and cited Chelsea as an example.

K. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Brooks, second by Kolon, to adjourn the meeting. Ayes: all. **Motion carried.**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:10 PM

Approved, as presented.

8/3/23

Benda Bancroft

