

Keene Township Planning Commission

Minutes from Special Meeting – Monday, September 9th, 2024, at Keene Township Hall

Chairman Briggs called the meeting to order at 7:01pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call:

Present: Denny Briggs, Christine Hendrick, Ray Krieger, Matt Stahlin, Corey Wojcik, Cori Wilber

Absent: Nancy Solomon

There were approximately 15 members of the community present along with Zoning Administrator Jeanne Vandersloot.

Changes to the agenda:

Hendrick requested that a discussion about a meeting with Foster Swift attorney Mike Homier be added between Public Comment and Old Business. Wojcik made a motion to approve agenda with amendments; Wilber seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of last meeting minutes:

Stahlin noted that at the top of page 3, the minutes say he agreed with 250 ft, and it should read 200 instead. Briggs would like to add to his comments about setbacks that he thought 250 ft was appropriate to be more consistent with the junk cars ordinance. Wojcik made a motion to approve meeting minutes from last meeting as revised. Stahlin seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

Report from Township Board Rep:

Per Wojcik, nothing significant to report. Quotes being obtained on raising the sinking concrete slab on the west side of the building.

Report from Zoning Administrator:

Vandersloot provided an update on zoning activities and permits issued.

Public Comment – Topics not on the agenda:

None.

Township Attorney Meeting:

Hendrick gave a brief overview of a web meeting that she participated in with attorney Mike Homier from Foster Swift. Resident Sandy Smiley arranged the meeting and participated in it as well. The township is not being billed for that meeting. Homier leads the firm's municipal group and has 20 years of experience with renewable energy ordinances. He agreed to meet with our PC and Board if desired. He also said the "template ordinance" that we received from attorney Jim Doezema is not the current draft. Briggs asked Supervisor Bob Schafer to please attempt to obtain the most recent draft. Hendrick and Smiley both highly recommend that the Board and PC meet with Homier before proceeding with the solar ordinance, citing his wealth of knowledge.

Reviewed the current PC and Board meeting schedules through the end of November. Homier is unavailable for the last 2 weeks of September but could attend the Oct 1st regular PC meeting. If the PC intends to have a draft ordinance for the Board to review at their November meeting, then the last date a public hearing can be held is October 21st.

Wilber and Hendrick preferred to postpone working on the draft until the meeting with Homier takes place. Stahlin and Briggs expressed concern about delays since PA233's effective date is rapidly approaching. Wojcik and Krieger concurred. Wojcik clarified that the PC can still consult with Homier, but he would like to continue working on the draft in the meantime. Briggs opened public comment for 5 minutes to solicit opinions on how the PC should proceed.

Old Business:

- PC resumed work on the Solar Ordinance draft.
 - Briggs stated he is not opposed to a megawatt cap instead of an acreage cap, and doing larger setbacks.
 - Hendrick asked approximately how many MW our township is using currently. Per Schafer, 10 MW.
 - Hendrick inquired about having one cap (whether it be acreage, MW, etc.) for all renewable energy in the township. Wilber started a list of questions to ask Homier and also added questions about restricting additional infrastructure and whether we can have overlay districts with a wattage cap.
 - For a MW cap, Stahlin and Krieger suggested 100, Hendrick 50. Wilber undecided initially, but after reviewing survey data again, supported a 50 MW cap.
 - Sandy Smiley asked whether a "renewable energy overlay district" should be considered. Potential to consolidate into one area of the township versus spreading out.

- Briggs said that by his calculations, most people would be satisfied with 416 ft setbacks. Stahlin in favor of 300 ft, Wojcik and Briggs 400 ft, Krieger 50 ft, Hendrick and Wilber 500 ft.
- No consensus reached. Wilber will email the list of questions for the attorney to the PC, Board, and Vandersloot and then compile any additional questions. Vandersloot will then send to Homier in advance.

New Business:

Adding a special PC meeting on October 7th at 7:00pm. Stahlin made a motion to approve, Wojcik seconded.

Public Comment – Any Topic:

- Schafer asked if lot coverage percentage still needs to be discussed regarding the solar ordinance. Briggs confirmed that it does.

Adjournment:

- Stahlin made a motion to adjourn. Hendrick seconded. All approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Minutes recorded by Cori Wilber.