

Keene Township Planning Commission

Minutes from Special Meeting - Thursday, April 18, 2024

Denny Briggs called the meeting to order at 7:00 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: No one

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

Changes to the agenda:

Christine wanted to discuss the ITC project mentioned at the last Township Board Meeting. Denny agreed to allow 5-10 minutes during new business. Corey Wojcik motioned to move New Business before Old Business. Matt Stahlin seconded. Motion passed.

Approval of last meeting minutes:

Nancy Solomon noted that her last name is spelled Solomon and not Soloman. Corey Wojcik motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Ray Krieger seconded. Going forward, we will use last names only. Motion passed.

Report from Township Rep:

Wojcik mentioned that our Township cleanup day is Saturday.

Report from Zoning Administrator:

Jeanne gave her report.

Public Comments - Topics not on the Agenda:

Tommy Hardy requested that Bob explain what ITC said at the last meeting.

New Business:

Bob gave his overview of the ITC project. If the proposed wind/solar generation in Campbell Township, Boston Township and Chicory Solar project come to fruition, there will be tall six wire transmission towers (ten per mile) going through Keene Township that could handle 380 MW. The path would be 160' wide by 6 miles in our Township alone. Total length would be 17 miles which would connect the proposed Hawley Substation in Keene Township and the Proposed Peddler Substation in Campbell Township. ITC will need approval from landowners. Imminent domain was mentioned. Kyle Mazurek is heading the project which was originally listed at 200 MW. This is an error as it should be 100 MW. Bob contacted Mr. Mazurek who then provided a letter stating 100 MW.

ITC Project Notes:

- Substation would require a 5-7 acre rectangle.
- NE corner of township would get a new substation. 138 Kw / 380 Mw capable (current line will overload at 98 Mw).
- 160' wide easement across 6 miles in Keene Township.
- 315 acres total between the three townships which equals 17 miles total.
- An easement with the landowners would be needed so they are going to start going door to door. Imminent domain if necessary.
- The new transmission line will only be needed if both projects proceed (Campbell wind farm and Keene solar farm). The Campbell Township Supervisor thinks that their wind farm won't go through because he thinks they are in the path of the Kent County International Airport.

Old Business:**Solar/Wind**

The topic of noise levels is being researched by Wilber and will be discussed at a future meeting.

Setbacks were discussed.

A PC member mentioned that all parties need to be protected and that these setbacks are too great.

Stahlin stated why would anyone want to comply with this ordinance if setbacks are so great. They would just go through MPSC. It was mentioned that we all agreed to do a non-compliant ordinance.

Using Holli Melton's maps, Hendrick suggested breaking down the setbacks as follows:

- From lines with no dwelling - 350 feet
- From road right of way - 500 feet
- From lines with dwelling - 700 feet
- From lines with dwelling surrounded on 2 or more sides - 1000 feet

Briggs mentioned that he liked Hendrick's suggestion and offered the following:

- Radius around all dwellings - 700 feet (keyhole like)

Holli offered to create a new drawing showing the new setbacks.

It was also mentioned to have solar in a condensed area and not scattered throughout the Township. The Solar field across from Murray Lake was mentioned. Decreased property values were mentioned. Briggs indicated that he spoke with a realtor associated with GRAR who stated that resale prices were not reduced because of solar fields. It was also mentioned by someone in the group that GRAR is in the Greater Grand Rapids area and not out in the country.

Christine mentioned that some townships have an overlay district. We should look into doing that for our township. Jeanne says she doesn't think that would work here.

After much discussion, it was agreed to have:

- 200' setbacks from lines with no dwelling
- 200' from road right of way

The ordinance states that "As a condition of approval, the Township may also require increased or decreased setbacks than the foregoing requirements if it is determined that greater or lesser setbacks would better protect public health safety and welfare, including adjacent residents and landowners as part of the Special Use Application."

Someone mentioned that some parts of the survey are good and will provide beneficial information but other parts that will be of little use.

Public Comment:

None.

Adjournment:

Wilber motioned to adjourn at 9:05. Wojcik seconded. Motion Passed.

Future Regular Meetings:

Wednesday, May 8,

Wednesday, August 7

Tuesday, October 1

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Minutes recorded by Nancy Solomon