

## **Keene Township**

### **Planning Commission Meeting Minutes - Monday, April 10, 2023**

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

#### Roll Call:

Present - Denny Briggs, Ray Krieger, Dan Briggs, Matt Stahlin, Corey Wojcik, Nancy Solomon

Absent - Mike Gasper

Approximately 70 members of the community were present along with Zoning Administrator Jeanne Vandersloot.

Last meeting minutes were approved with one correction to change the website to note the next meeting date was April 10th and not April 4th. Motion by Corey to approve and seconded by Matt.

#### Public comment

A resident commented in regards to the number of calves allowed on a 2 ½ acre parcel. He compared it to having a limit to the number of dogs but not cows on land zoned AR/AG. He also said a neighbor has junk vehicles. He was asked to contact Jeanne.

Mrs Timpson (and another person) requested information about high power lines that are tentatively going through Keene Township. She saw it on Google and will send the information to the Township email address.

#### Old business

Solar Energy Amendments (Commercial section) Public Hearing:

Brett Hulliberger expressed concern about setbacks for solar as he will be surrounded by panels. He asked for 700' setbacks or a minimum of 500' for parcels surrounded on three sides. He suggested 350' setbacks for parcels with no dwellings and 250' setback from the road.

Paul Geiger expressed concern about the panels being manufactured in China and would prefer if all materials were manufactured in the USA.

John Timpson stated he doesn't want prime farmland used for solar and that the township is being divided because of solar. He thanked the PC for their work on the ordinance.

Bob Schafer spoke about eminent domain, larger power lines, tax rights and right sizing the project to cover only Keene Township's power needs.

A representative from Gina Johnson's office also attended the meeting.

After much discussion approval consensus by the members was given to make the following changes to the ordinance:

#### Section 12.27 - Solar Energy Systems

##### L1a

##### 1st paragraph

Change 300 feet from neighboring dwellings to 500 feet from dwellings.

##### 2nd paragraph

2nd sentence should read: If a parcel abuts a solar project with three or four sides, then the lot line setback shall be 500'.

3rd sentence - Move wording regarding approval from the property owners farther down in the paragraph.

4th sentence should read: 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 separation would better protect public health, safety and welfare, including adjacent residents and landowners as part of the special use application.

No other changes were proposed.

Motion by Dan to recommend the ordinance to the Township Board for approval. 2nd from Matt. Dan, Denny, Ray and Matt voted yes. Corey abstained. Nancy voted no. Motion passed.

#### Public General Comments

MSDS is now SDS.

DEQ is now EGLE.

Cap on AG land? It will remain the same proposed at 500 project acres.

New solar field is being developed on 5 mile Rd near Murray Lake. This could be a private development.

Is topsoil sold? If sold, it would be considered mining and a special use permit would be needed. Per Invenergy, the topsoil is put back in place and vegetation is planted.

Question about tax claw backs. Jeanne will research this topic and also if the Planning Commission can be sued for this type of amendment work. She will ask the Township Attorney.

Corey motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm. Dan seconded. Motion passed.

The next scheduled meeting is August 1.