

Keene Township Planning Commission Special Meeting

Minutes from meeting dated 2-26-2025

Denny Briggs called the meeting to order at 7:05pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call:

Present: Denny Briggs, Ray Krieger, Cori Wilber, Matt Stahlin, Nate Wolff

Absent: Nancy Solomon

Note: 1 current vacancy

There were approximately 5 members of the community present along with Zoning Administrator Jeanne Vandersloot.

Changes to the agenda:

Wilber made a motion to accept the agenda as provided. Stahlin seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

Approval of last meeting minutes:

Stahlin made a motion to accept the minutes from the 2-4-2025 meeting as provided. Wolff seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

Report from Township Board Rep:

Wolff stated the Board would like the wind energy ordinance to be sent to public hearing as soon as possible so they can have it on their agenda to review at an upcoming meeting. Wolff also relayed that the township paid the municipal attorneys approximately \$4k to prepare the draft ordinances, and that concerns have been raised by Board members about deviating from those ordinances. Wolff said he informed the Board that the PC will need another meeting(s) to review and/or work on the battery storage ordinance.

Report from Zoning Administrator:

Report was given at another PC meeting earlier this month.

Public Comment – Topics not on the agenda:

Polly Wolff voiced concerns about the number of PC meetings being held to draft the renewable energy ordinances and why they are necessary, considering the Board can change ordinances independently of

the PC. She expressed frustration about the amount of money that it's costing the township to hold all the meetings.

Denny Briggs (PC Chair) stated resident Steve Roth informed him that Keene township does not have appropriate zoning in place in regard to farmland preservation. Briggs asked Vandersloot to please add that to the PC's to-do list, to be looked into at a later date.

A discussion was initiated by Briggs regarding Polly Wolff's public comment. Briggs inquired of N. Wolff (PC & Board Rep) and Sandy Smiley (Township Trustee in audience) about whether the Board believes the PC should simply be "doing what the board wants." Neither N. Wolff nor Smiley were comfortable speaking on behalf of the entire board. Smiley did share that she believes both the PC and Board should be following the wishes of the majority of residents. Wolff stated he agrees with the way the PC is approaching the tasks on their plate and believes they are making good progress on the ordinances.

New Business:

- Resumed working on the wind energy ordinance.
- Wolff had researched the "thud" noise that was discussed at previous meetings. It's caused by the air pressure difference when a turbine blade passes the post. The PC agreed that the "thud" sound would still need to stay below the 40 dBA Lmax at property lines limit.
- PC discussed whether or not to add a height limit to the ordinance. Consensus was to keep that out of the ordinance for now and to review turbine height during the Special Permit Application process. This would allow the PC to look at a specific location's topography and distance to adjacent structures, etc.
- For setbacks, the majority of the PC agreed with 2x the height of the blade tip, measured at the property line, and "a reasonable setback from transmission and distribution lines," since the applicant would already need to abide by Michigan electrical regulations.
- Reviewed decommissioning and discussed the concrete foundations that are required for turbines. This section will mimic the solar ordinance's section.
- Talked about the complaint resolution process. Will mirror the solar ordinance's section.
- Talked about access roads and decided to add a line to the effect of "Access roads must be maintained and kept clear at all times for emergency vehicles."
- Much discussion about the overlay district and how to refer to it currently. Will use the verbiage and map (Exhibit A) from the solar ordinance to define it.
- Stahlin made a motion to send the wind ordinance draft to a public hearing. Wolff seconded. Roll call vote ensued. All members present approved.
- The PC meeting scheduled for March 24th will be changed to March 25th to allow for increased attendance by PC members, and it will be the public hearing for wind energy.

Old Business:

- None

Public Comment – Any Topic:

- Sandy Smiley asked if the PC would like to have an email address or addresses posted on the township website, so residents can contact the PC directly. Residents should continue to reach out to the generic township email address, keenetwp@gmail.com, and it will be routed appropriately.

Adjournment:

- Stahlin made a motion to adjourn. Wolff seconded. All approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Minutes recorded by Cori Wilber.