

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES – 11/1/23**

CALL TO ORDER

The Williamstown Township Planning Commission convened at 7:00pm at the Township Hall, 4990 Zimmer Road, Williamston, MI. Chair Eidt called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

PRESENT: Chair Eidt, Vice-Chair Stanford, Secretary Giese, Commissioners Poth, Brinker, Tocarchick, Weston, Flore and Trustee Creagh.

ABSENT: None. Quorum established.

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Consultant Chris Doozan of McKenna and Jim Howard, Planning Assistant.

Chair Eidt led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Brinker, second by Flore to approve the agenda.

Motion approved 9-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Creagh, second by Weston to approve the minutes of 9/27/23.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Roz Peacock asked about the status of wind and solar legislation at the state. Was informed that HBs 5120 – 5123 have been voted out of committee, will probably be voted on this week.

PUBLIC HEARING – Wind and Solar Energy Systems

Motion by Brinker, second by Tocarchick to open the public hearing.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

Chris D reviewed the current draft of the wind section starting with reading the Purpose, then on-site systems which are allowed in all districts (with some restrictions), mentioning the height and setbacks. He then discussed Utility Scale Systems which have extensive requirements and

would be allowed in the AG-C/Commercial AG District and the Green Zone. The changes needed in all of the affected districts was then reviewed.

Chris then reviewed the draft of the solar section beginning with small scale systems, both roof- and ground-mounted, and then large scale systems.

He then discussed briefly the four pending house bills and their status. He has briefly reviewed the comments from Sarah Mills/Madeleine Krol.

The reflectivity of the towers and grid connectivity were mentioned.

Roz Peacock had concerns about the clearing of woods/woodlots and the quality of the resulting view, wildlife impacts, disagrees with the Findings and Purpose including wording, concerned about the damage to roads from moving in large system components, also questioned AG-C zoning, finding info on the website, doesn't like the 7 foot fence height, favors Norway Spruce, has concerns about battery disposal and remaining wetlands.

Terry Lutz, 6055 Lounsbury did not speak from lectern (to include audience), has installed solar, talked about the Wheatfield Township meeting and shared a spreadsheet they provided showing a comparison of regulations from nearby twps., feels the twp should have sent out a questionnaire, concerned about the potential of energy exported out of Williamstown Twp, feels the height should be reduced to 400 feet and setbacks increased, noise levels should be reduced to 40 dbs, limits should be set for liability insurance, concerns about the resale value of homes, the affects on human health and the impacts on farm animals.

Chris D commented on the pending state legislation being less restrictive with a 55 dbs level and no limit on height if out of the airport flight path.

Commissioners had further discussion about the pending state legislation.

John Wahl, 1350 Germany had a couple of questions about the state legislation.

Tim Hoshal, 1354 Germany expressed concerns about migratory wildlife, whether there was an overlay map for wind systems, and the potential loss of rural character.

A reminder was offered that it is a relatively low voltage line that runs through the township, that projects can't locate in wetlands and don't want to.

Question was raised whether there is a conflict between green roofs and the height restriction.

Motion by Tocarchick, second by Weston to close the public hearing.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Slate of Officers*

Discussion ensued.

Motion by Creagh, second by Poth to elect Eidt as chair, Stanford as vice-chair and Brinker as secretary.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- *Wind and Solar Energy Systems*

Discussion.

The public comments were discussed as well as the pending state legislation.

The comments from Sarah Mills / Madeleine Krol from the Graham Institute were fairly extensive and were also discussed.

Consensus was to defer the issue to the January meeting and provide the public comments, the comments from Mills / Krol and the draft minutes to Chris D for his further review.

- *Response letter to Meridian Township – master plan*

Brief discussion.

Motion by Stanford, second by Poth to forward the letter from the review committee to Meridian Township.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- *Capital Improvements Plan - resolution*

Much discussion ensued. Questions about some of the worksheet items/projects, scoring criteria, the process and PC involvement, PA 33 (2008), the timeframe for next year, public involvement, the contents of the resolution to be approved.

It was reiterated that this is a planning and budgeting tool, and a voluntary effort - not mandated.

Motion by Stanford, second by Weston to approve and transmit the resolution to forward the 2024-2029 Capital Improvements Plan to the Williamstown Township Board.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Green zone revisions*

Chris D reviewed his memo. The intent is to better accommodate sfr developments.

There was much discussion, particularly about the 350 foot setback from Grand River Road, also sidewalks, incorporating design standards, whether cluster zoning can be utilized in the Green Zone.

Motion by Weston, second by Tocarchick to set a public hearing for the January 24, 2024 meeting.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

- *Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)*

Due to the lateness of the hour there was concurrence to defer this item to the January 24, 2024 meeting.

- *Master Plan update*

Chris D discussed his letter and the process.

Motion by Stanford, second by Giese to send a letter to the surrounding communities and other appropriate agencies to initiate the master plan process.

Motion approved 9 – 0.

PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTS AND REVIEW

Township Board Report: Trustee Creagh reported the board met the new police chief Rick Grillo; approved a new cemetery fee schedule; approved an update for the master plan and a revised police assessment roll; approved an extension of the deadline for potential road projects in Pine Knoll and Oakleaf Hills subdivisions; and sent a resolution on wind and solar to the twp.'s Rep Tsernoglou and Senator Sing.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

CITIZEN COMMENT

None

REVIEW

Chair Eidt reviewed the PC's actions from the meeting:

- Approved the minutes of September 27, 2023;
- Held a public hearing for the draft wind and solar amendments;

- Approved a slate of candidates for officers with Eidt as chair, Stanford as vice-chair and Brinker as secretary;
- Deferred any action on the wind and solar amendments to the January 24, 2024 meeting;
- Approved a motion to send a response letter to Meridian township on their master plan;
- Approved a resolution for the CIP;
- Set a public hearing on the Green Zone revisions for the January 24, 2024 meeting;
- Deferred discussion on ADUs to the January meeting;
- Approved initiation of the master plan update.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Tocarchick, second by Commissioner Flore to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 pm.

Jim Howard
Recording Secretary

Secretary Giese