

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES – 9/27/23**

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, Commissioners Giese, Poth, Brinker, Tocarchick, Weston and Trustee Creagh.

ABSENT: Commissioner Flore. 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 Poth to approve the agenda.

Motion approved 8-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Tocarchick, second by Creagh to approve the minutes of 7/26/23.

Motion approved 6 – 0. (Eidt and Weston not present.)

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PUBLIC HEARING

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Wind and Solar Energy Systems*

Since there had been no change to the wind section, Chris D. reviewed the solar maps. Map #9 has been revised with the Wellhead Protection Area taken out and maps #10 and #11 added. He discussed Kurt Guter's comments, in particular the depth of wind electrical transmission

lines which could be raised from five feet to three feet, but the consensus was to stay at five feet for farming activity.

Also discussed:

- Setbacks for solar systems
- Landscaping, with perhaps a reference to Article 5
- Approval for connection to the grid prior to site plan review
- Setback requirements per parcel on combined parcels
- Removal of the word “nonpolluting” in Findings and Purpose
- Solar system fires - very rare, not much to burn, is further training required, NIESA’s purview
- Would additional training cost be covered by developer
- Copy of purchase agreement, salvage value
- Using an A+ bond rated company
- 3 year review or 5 year review of bond amount
- Use of Norway Spruce as preferred tree species
- Doing a summary of PC activity on this issue
- How to do more public notification

Motion by Tocarchick, second by Brinker to set a public hearing on the wind and solar proposed draft amendments, with revisions, for the November 1, 2023 meeting.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Election of officers*

Brief discussion.

Motion by Creagh, second by Weston to have Commissioner Giese bring forward a slate of officers.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

- *Renewal of expiring terms*

Chair noted that Commissioners Eidt, Weston and Flore had been reappointed to three year terms. Chair eidt also mentioned the positive comments from the Twp Board minutes commending the Planning Commission on their hard work.

- *Green Zone revisions*

Chris D provided the background on the development of the Green Zone and briefly reviewed his correspondence. Revisions are needed to clarify how residential developments/subdivisions

can be accommodated. Discussion ensued about the boundaries and the 20 acre minimum size. Commissioners felt it was important not to lose the intent of the Green Zone.

Motion by Weston, second by Giese to have Chris Doozan provide revised language for residential development in the Green Zone.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

- *Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)*

Commissioners had received another copy of a publication authored by AARP and the American Planning Association. Chris D explained some of the options communities could look at to allow ADUs. Much discussion ensued. The standards utilized by Fannie Mae were cited.

Motion by Giese, second by Brinker to have Chris D develop some initial draft language regarding ADUs in the Township.

Motion approved 8 – 0.

PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTS AND REVIEW

Township Board Report: Trustee Creagh reported the board approved the Special Use Permit and Site Plan for NCIA; Pebblebrook is moving forward in the process to repave the subdivision roads, as are Oak Leaf Hills and Pine Knoll; the Safe Routes to School project is moving forward on a grant application; the joint Meeting with the City of Williamston is set for 10/18; and Red Cedar River Day is 9/30.

Commissioner Stanford discussed the CIP, that the forms have been revised/simplified and that the project is moving along.

CORRESPONDENCE

The letter from Meridian Township on their draft Master Plan was discussed and a committee of Commissioners Giese and Tocarchick was formed.

CITIZEN COMMENT

None

REVIEW

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

- Approved the minutes of July 26, 2023;
- Set a public hearing for the draft wind and solar amendments on November 1, 2023;

- Approved a motion to have Commissioner Giese bring forward a slate of candidates for officers;
- Approved a motion to have Chris D work on revised language for the Green Zone;
- Approved a motion to have Chris D develop draft language for ADUs;
- Formed a committee of Commissioners Giese and Tocarchick to review the Meridian Township draft master plan.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Weston, second by Commissioner Poth to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm.

Jim Howard
Recording Secretary

Secretary Giese