

**MILAN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

for

March 24, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved April 12, 2022

Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00

Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum: All members were present.

Approval of past meeting minutes: Meeting minutes for February 15, 2022 was approved. There were no additions or corrections. Matt Walline motioned to approve the above meeting minutes. Bob Dopkowski seconded. Motion passed 5 yea, 0 nay.

Correspondence: None

Report from Township Board member: Bob Dopkowski reported that there was nothing of interest from the Board.

Announcement of the rules for public comment and new business

Public Comment (2 minutes per person which will be timed): Mr Nick Straub presented a list of issues from a citizens group that need to be addressed in the ordinance. These included setbacks, requesting a 500' setback; Screening and Security, requesting 12' screening height now not in 10 years; Noise, suggesting 65 dBA is to high, requesting 50 dBA; Lighting and glare need to be detailed; Location should not be on AG land; Distribution lines need to be underground; Drainage guidelines need to be detailed; Decommissioning issues were listed that need detailing. Cheryl Majors informed us that on a Sunday there was work being done in a neighbor's field which should not have been on a Sunday.

Business

- **Chairman Schauer introduced Sarah Mills from the University of Michigan. She is an expert in Solar and wind issues. Her background is in farm preservation.**
 - **Rebecca asked about taxation and possible community benefits. Sarah informed us that there has been inconsistent taxation within MI. Taxation guidelines are still in development. There will be tax revenue for the Twp but it is unclear as to the amount, such as \$3,000/MW. Taxed on capacity not on output.**
 - **Community benefit agreements: Sarah will get some examples for us. Key benefit is the economic benefit. Solar is a land use that pays taxes that doesn't require services.**
 - **Property values: Studies are underway. It is unclear as to the impact.**
 - **Economic impact to the community: Studies are ongoing.**
 - **PA116 land: Farmland preservation means different things to different people. Planners look at it as preventing urban sprawl, to others it is preserving the view, to farmers it is preserving farm lively hoods such as preserving the soil. Solar is an economic opportunity for farmers. The land can be returned to farming after solar is finished.**
 - **Screening: We need to be consistent. Berms remove topsoil. Don't screen entire perimeter.**
 - **Ground cover: We should work with MI Soil Conservation district. Allow conservation cover, forage for grazing, pollinators or vegetables.**
 - **Noise requirements are to vague. We need to decide if it is measured as max or average level. There is agreement that the current 65 dBA is to high.**
 - **Glare is generally not an issue with solar.**
 - **Wiring should allow for underground or alternatively aboveground but not higher than the solar panels.**

- **Bonds:** Sarah discussed the sample ordinance's Bond requirements. Need to be flexible by allowing owner to keep some items.
- **Signage** needs to be content neutral. We can regulate size and placement.
- **Master Plan updates:** Zoning is based on a plan. Next time we update it, we should add renewable energy. Within the plan, we need to articulate the amount of renewable energy we allow in the Twp. Use zoning ordinance to limit development.
- **Profitability from solar project:** Sarah will look into reports that describe profitability.
- **Drainage:** Ground cover will help with drainage. We agreed that maintenance of drainage is a necessity.

Public Comment: Numerous citizens had comments regarding the solar ordinance and project. There were questions regarding signs, connection across properties, concern for displacement of tenant farmers, concern about toxic components of the panels, concern about limiting total acreage for solar projects,

Adjournment: 9:10 pm

Next Meeting: April 12, 2022

An audio recording and a zoom link of this meeting is available on the Twp website.