

# ESCANABA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MAY 20, 2021 MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE

20 Participants

A LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY HAS BEEN DECLARED BY TOWNSHIP SUPERVIR, TOM RYMKOS, UNTIL MAY 31, 2021 AT 11:59 PM DUE TO THE CONTINUED COVID-19 CASES IN THE OF DELTA COUNTY. COINCIDING WITH GOVERNOR WHITMER'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 2020-115 RESTRICTINS ON GATHERINGS.

Chairman Van Loon made an announcement to reiterate the email message he sent to Members that the Township Board requested the Planning Commission to schedule 2 meetings a month to address outstanding issues. Planning Commission will meet regular scheduled Mondays and then the Thursday after the Township Board meets. This is a tentative schedule.

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Dean VanLoon at 7:37pm. Mr. VanLoon lead the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Verbal Roll call: Theresa Chenier, Escanaba Township-Delta Co. Renee Richer, Escanaba Township-Delta Co. Greg Faust, Escanaba Township-Delta Co. Theresa Norton, Escanaba Township-Delta Co. Norman Fleury, Escanaba Township-Delta Co. DeanVanLoon, Escanaba Township-Delta Co. Absent Excused: Ray Hughes. 6 member board present.

May 3, 2021 meeting minutes modifications made: 1) Meeting called to order at 7:41 pm 2) MTE reference s/b MZEA Michigan Zoning Board of Appeals 3) Paragraph 7, sentence s/b "Cemetery Drive around road was discussed to be paved."

Motion made to accept May 3, 2021 minutes with corrections was made by Renee R. Second Greg Faust. Verbal vote: Renee R YES Theresa C YES Greg F YES Theresa N YES Norman F YES Dean V YES. Motion passed.

Public participation announced. Richelle Winkler, Professor of Sociology and Demography Environment and Energy Policy Program Dept. of Social Services, Michigan Tech University, announced she is in attendance. EMAIL: [rwinkler@mtu.edu](mailto:rwinkler@mtu.edu)

**Motion to approve the Agenda as-is made by Theresa C. Second Renee R. Verbal Roll call vote: TheresaC Yes Renee Yes Greg Yes Theresa N Yes Norm F Yes Dean V Yes. Motion passed**

**Zoning Administrator's report: NONE**

**Public Hearings: NONE**

**Old Business:** Made corrections to Mission Statement. Mission Statement was shared on screen and reads as follows:

IT IS THE MISSION OF THE ESCANABA PLANNING COMMISSION TO ACHIEVE A TOWNSHIP OF EXCELLENCE FOR IT'S RESIDENTS WHILE PROTECTING LANDS WITHIN IT'S BORDERS.'

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

SAFETY OF RESIDENTS

CONSISTENCY

USING EVIEDENCE BASED KNOWLEDGE

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**Roll Call vote to Approve Mission Statement: Motion by Greg F Theresa C Second. Theresa N YES Theresa C YES Greg Yes Renee R YES Norm YES Dean V YES. Motion passed and will be posted on the website.**

Dean informed there should be a copy of Future Land Use Map along with the Master Plan.

Norm said the Township does not have any industrial land set aside. TheresaC. has been conferring CUPPAD, Dottie LaJolie, the MTA, and Laura Genovich, Atty. No ~~draft in Master plan~~ from 2008 was confirmed. MPEA was formed at that time. It appears the omission was not picked up at time the 2019 Master Plan was approved. The MTA stresses you do need a Future Land Use map to make any zoning decisions. Dottie LaJolie with CUPPAD will provide a soil map and attend the June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting. Renee added if there would happen to be a legal dispute, without a Future Land Use Map, the township could be vulnerable. Dean said we need to work on this with CUPPAD to accomplish making of this map. He asked if there should be a committee. TheresaN. read aloud the definition of a Future Land Use Map as; geographically depicts the vision identified and refined with the community's participation. It projects desired land uses 20 years in the future while working within the Master Plan. Dean suggested this be tabled now and put thoughts into how to accomplish this in a timely matter for next meeting with more detail.

cmc  
No Future Land use Map

**New Business: Consideration of Important issues when drafting a solar ordinance.** Dean said to review the highlights and history of township. Topics of discussion of resident's concerns. The Ad Hoc discussion finding. Anything else that needed to be addressed to put a solar Ordinance together. Greg F asked if there are any consultant firms we could discuss these matters with. Theresa N: The Township attorney is who has been providing experienced consultation. Dean suggested contacting other townships looking to see what they are looking at. Renee mentioned Sara Mills, University of Michigan, regarding renewable energy development and ordinance for wind and solar. Richelle Winkler from MTU also involved. There are people working in the field that can answer any questions. Sara Mills does webinar on wind and solar and there are always changes to consider. Richelle Winkler, Guest Participant, added a website for the Sara Mills webinars on Planning and Zoning, solar, and wind. Dean requested contact information from Richelle. [rwinkler@mtu.edu](mailto:rwinkler@mtu.edu) Amount of available land in the township is not spelled out for industrial activity. The things seen in the Master Plan as important features of our township is to preserve agriculture and residential development. TheresaC read from the Master Plan Chapter 11 pg 3 Strategies. Issues are: instead of de-commission they could now be kept forever and they just replace the panels. Restoring the ground back to agriculture. If large parts of prime area are used there is not going to have more growth in the area. Solar is growing in Michigan. It would eliminate other growth, such as residential and off shoot of jobs that produce income for schools and local areas. Richelle Winkler spoke on things to consider long term. A lot has to do with the rules put in place by the solar ordinance. Berms could cause topsoil to be depleted and change the landscape and may not be good for agriculture. Drain tile needs to be maintained. Drainage situation will change the land.

TheresaC and Theresa N collaborated on that the Lake Bluff area is currently zoned RP and industrial. They voiced concern for the golf course areas if they are within industrial zoning. If those land owners wanted to they could be open to solar development. Developers are using Golf Courses in all areas of the country. Brownfield areas can be more suitable for solar development. Dean would like to keep into consideration to water table and water contamination the Carroll's Corner area is susceptible to contaminated ground water which is documented by the Health Dept. Renee would like to see a soil depth map included with the Master Plan. Soil depth is critical issue.

Richelle Winkler is working on a finding a better source of data for soil map.

TheresaC Master Plan 5-2 map notices wet land increased through the years. Also, FEMA has maps at hand that are detailed with culverts, streams, potential flood areas, lakes changing shoreline. Map 4-9 Township appears to have a lot of wetland. Norm questioned if the water contamination in the Carol's Corner areas had to do with the large power line poles. Dean suspected some of those poles could be down 75 feet. NormF would like input from area residents.

Richelle Winkler did an informative detailed presentation of map website she personally works with. She provided a link to website [micares.net](http://micares.net). The site proclamation reads; Partnering with communities to facilitate energy discussions and transitions. ReneeR inquired how the wetlands on the map are classified. Are they federally protected? The Master Plan states that 37% of our township is covered by wetlands, which is significant. Soil depths, prime agricultural land and zoning districts are being worked on so they can be added to the map. The Members discussed the likes and dislikes of the map as presented. GregF questioned the accuracy of mapping. Richelle explained the mapping tool is considered thorough but incomplete.

The Members discussed the basics of the Draft Solar Ordinance provided by Atty Genovich. There will be future discussions pertaining to the particulars. Future Land Use Map should be completed before starting work on the Solar Ordinance. Renee felt the outlines are good. GregF agreed it is a good starting point to build off. TheresaN site map needs to be developed first. Dean announced the discussion is TABLED for the next meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Larry Klope suggested to proceed with caution involving mapping. The wetlands determination needs to be a site evaluation. Watch sources of data.

**MEMBER COMMENTS:** TheresaC read Board Liaison Report.

NormF asked if the township can designate certain areas for solar. TheresaC responded there will be future discussion on the issue. Dean reminded that this is for the protection of the land. The zoning stays with the land.

**Motion to adjourn made by Norm F. TheresaC second. Verbal vote: ReneeR YES TheresaC YES TheresaN YES GregF YES NormF YES DeanV YES. Meeting adjourned at 9:26pm.**

**NOTE: THE LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION HAS BEEN EXTENDED THROUGH AUGUST 9, 2021 IN THE CASE ELECTRONIC MEETINGS ARE NEEDED. COINCIDING WITH GOVERNOR WHITMER'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 2020-115 RESTRICTINS ON GATHERINGS.**

Next meeting of the Escanaba Township Planning Commission is scheduled for June 7, 2021 at 7:30 pm via Zoom Conference. Please check our website [escanabatownship.org](http://escanabatownship.org) for Zoom meeting information. Contact Cathy Culliton at 906-280-6182 or [cathyculliton@gmail.com](mailto:cathyculliton@gmail.com) if you require any assistance to join meetings.

Approved June 7, 2021 with correction to 1st paragraph page 2. Should read: No future land use map was confirmed,

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Cathy Culliton, Recording Secretary

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Dean VanLoon, Chairperson