

## ESCANABA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES MAY 2, 2022 7:30 PM

Escanaba Township Hall 4618 County 416 20<sup>th</sup> Rd Gladstone MI 49837

Meeting called to order at 7:30 pm by Chairperson Dean VanLoon followed by the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Members present are Chairperson Dean VanLoon, Theresa Chenier, Greg Faust, Nathan Neumeier. Larry Klope arrived at 7:36 pm. 5 members are present to fulfill quorum.

**Motion to accept April 4, 2022 meeting minutes with the addition of stating Nathan Neumeier term of 3 years expiring December 2023 was made by Chenier. Second by Neumeier. All in favor. Motion passed.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

**Motion to approve the agenda with addition of REZONE REQUEST- Debra Haley, made by G. Faust. Second N. Neumeier. All in favor. Motion passed.**

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: Al Gareau stated he turned in 5 permits for review consisting of 1 new home along with garages and additions to existing structure.

BOARD LIASION REPORT given by Theresa Chenier. Fire Dept. had 6 call outs. Matt Rian is the new Fire Chief. Bids received for pest and rodent control for the 3 township buildings. Road repairs approved for D12 and D52. Board is also considering repairs to D7. Zoning complaints need to be addressed. There is a water issue in the Town Hall that needs repairs. <sup>Highline</sup> Highland Internet gave an informational presentation about their installation and internet services currently being installed in the area. Colleen Maki gave Assessor report. Cemetery fence is in need of repairs. There needs to be a township policy approved. ARPA funds are being received. Tree removal estimates are being received. Concerns about Verso Grow exposure were voiced by area residents. The annual landfill passes are available at the Town Hall office. Delta County Commissioner Barron gave a report saying the county is considering zoning changes with townships and they are continuing with a solar ordinance for the county. He also announced that DTE is pursuing lands for solar development in Escanaba and Cornell townships. Theresa Nelson made announcement she plans to run for Commissioner for our area at the next election.

NEW BUSINESS: Debra & Chris Haley would like to proceed with the process required for consideration of a zoning change. Chairperson VanLoon informed there needs to be a written request along with a drawn to scale site plan. Forms can be picked up from the office on Wednesdays 9am-5pm.

OLD BUSINESS: The Commission presumed discussion and review of proposed draft ordinance for solar power within our township including the solar overlay district. Chairperson VanLoon said information put out by MSU (Michigan State University) shows concerns on how much farmland is going to solar or other alternative energy. <sup>add as Ag land</sup> 1% of all the lands in Michigan are expected to be used as alternative energy sources. 1% of the township would be approximately 403 acres. In selecting the solar overlay, areas of concern are safe water, agriculture land preservation, still allowing some areas of growth in population and prevent ground water contamination. A large map of the township was projected. Soil depths, preserving public health, not interfering with the bedrock, proximity to the ATC lines and what is best for our citizens, were the main items taken into consideration during the discussion process. Approximately 325 acres in the North East area of township were found to fulfill the following objectives:

- 1) Preserve agricultural land
- 2) Human <sup>health</sup> <sup>sp</sup> health by preserving ground water
- 3) Close proximity to <sup>distribution</sup> <sup>electrical transmission line</sup> distribution line

- 4) Sufficient large tract of land
- 5) Soil depth more than 80 inches
- 6) Protection <sup>of</sup> bedrock disruption *to prevent ground water contamination*
- 7) ~~Lower~~ population <sup>Density of</sup>
- 8) Low visual impact with good natural screening

Chairperson VanLoon said he will talk with Rachel Winkler at MTU to put soil layers on the map for additional review before presenting recommendation to the Township Board. Attorney opinion will be sought for the solar overlay map.

No ZBA meeting were held this past month.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Fred Minor

**Motion to adjourn was made at 9:27pm by Greg Faust. Second by Larry Klope. All in favor. Motion passed.**

Next scheduled meeting of the Escanaba Township Planning Commission is June 6, 2022 7:30 pm at the Escanaba Township Hall 4618 County 416 20<sup>th</sup> Rd Gladstone, MI 49837

Please contact Cathy at 906-280-6182 [cathyculliton@gmail.com](mailto:cathyculliton@gmail.com) if you need assistance to attend a meeting.

Minutes prepared by Cathy Culliton, Recording Secretary

*approved w/ corrections July 5, 2022*  
*Cathy Culliton*