

# ESCANABA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

## FEBRUARY 1, 2021 HELD VIA ZOOM CONFERENCING

Meeting Called to order by Chairman, Dean Van Loon at 7:32 pm.

Recital of the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

Verbal acknowledgement of commission member attendance taken stating name and county joining zoom meeting from: Theresa Chenier, Delta County. Ray Hughes, Delta County, Norman Fleury, Delta County. Renee Richer, Delta County. Dean VanLoon, Delta County

**Motion to approve January 4, 2021 meeting minutes** made by Theresa C with changes made to: Article 6 to under Bylaws Article F to add: Change voting reference to within the bylaws and spelling correction: Abstained.(misspelled as obstained) Motion second by Norm F. **Theresa YES Ray YES Norman YES Renee YES Dean YES. Motion passed.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: NONE (Clear verbal instructions given on procedures to unmute or contact Secretary for assistance)

Motion to approve agenda as presented made by Renee R. Second by Theresa C. Verbal Vote: **Theresa YES Norman YES Ray YES Renee YES Dean YES. Motion passed.**

Al Gareau, Zoning Administrator stated there are no new business items. He will be meeting with Supervisor, Rymkos to decide on a local attorney to represent the township on the LaBumbard case.

No Public Hearings scheduled or heard.

Old Business of nomination of Vice Chair and Secretary for the Planning Commission are tabled until after attorney reviews the composed bylaws and commission approves them.

Dean asked if members had an opportunity to review the revised version of the bylaws as presented and to voice any changes or corrections they feel are needed. The full document was reviewed jointly and displayed on screen via zoom. Members checked for spelling corrections and proper verbiage. Changes were noted and will be drafted as discussed.

Motion to approve draft copy of February 2021, bylaws as amended, made by Renee R. Second by Norman F. Verbal vote: **Theresa YES Ray YES Norman YES Renee YES Dean YES. Motion passed.**

Chairman VanLoon thanked the Members stating that a lot of hard work was performed to complete the bylaws. Special thank you to Theresa Chenier for publishing the changes as needed.

Discussion was held on Ad Hoc Committee Report of Recommendations Regarding Solar Power on Section 8, Impact on Wildlife page 38. Dean stated since publication of report, information could change. There are pros and Cons listed regarding wildlife and vegetation. It will take more research as where it will apply to the township. Renee Richer mentioned there are recommendations where they recommend corridors for animals and vegetation plants to provide cover for animals. Best management practices need to be adopted for this project. Most background info in Exhibit Q The Appendix approximately 20 pages of background info. These large solar arrays are relatively new so more information is needed. The appendix supplied has a general summary of impacts. 1/3 of impacts are negative mostly during the commissioning and decommissioning of the project. Theresa C: the report wasn't able to compare our large scale project to any others in our area. Dean: These are important issues. More information is going to need to be gathered to make a well informed decision. Renee: Regarding issue of fencing there are standards that need to be followed to not effect smaller animals when implementing fence for deer.

Dean: We will have to review these issues when it comes to looking what we attempt to do. It is going to be a very important aspect.

ANNOUNCEMENTS made by Chairman VanLoon: At the last meeting of the Board they implemented a moratorium on solar energy zoning. We are going to take this time to study if in fact solar will fit in our township and the best site for it. We need to do a good thorough job to see what can be done here for the township. Norm questioned what if Orion was no longer interested in the development. Theresa responded that MTA strongly suggested that you have solar ordinance in your township. For all 4 types of solar. Theresa C, liaison between the Board and PC, gave report from Jan 11, 2021 Board Meeting: Appointment of Deputy Treasurer and FOIA Administrator, Cathy Culliton and Deputy Clerk, Linda Trombley-Robitaille. Municipal Attorney was hired Laura Genovich of Foster & Swift of Grand Rapids, Mi. .

Dean referenced per our bylaws to remember, that continued training is important for members. Norm suggested that compensation for members be looked into. Theresa said the Board understands the time the planning commission is spending and it is a matter they will discuss. Dean will also be discussing that with Supervisor, Tom Rymkos.

Public Comments: Warren Bovin voiced his concern of the impact of dead birds and damaged solar panels. Birds will fly into to panels confusing them with bodies of water.

**Motion to approve bylaws as discussed. Norm F made motion. Renee R second. Theresa YES Norm YES Ray YES Renee YES Dean YES, Motion carried.** Changes will be incorporated and Dean will get with the board to see if we can get them to Foster Swift Attorney for review.

Motion to Adjourn made by Norm. Ray second motion. **Theresa YES Norm YES Ray YES Renee Yes. Dean Yes...** Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.