

Escanaba Township Planning Commission December 6, 2021 meeting minutes

Escanaba Township Hall 4618 County 416 20th Rd Gladstone MI 49837 906-786-6200

Meeting was called to order 7:36 pm by Chairperson, Dean VanLoon. Mr. VanLoon then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Verbal Roll call: Greg Faust, Theresa Chenier, Norman Fleury and Dean VanLoon. 4 commission members present fulfilling quorum requirement. Absent Larry Klope. Excused absent, Theresa Norton.

Motion made by Theresa C with second by Norm F to approve the November 1, 2021 Regular Meeting minutes with spelling corrections, the addition of: The discussion was tabled regarding secretary appointment until December 6, 2021 meeting. Verbal vote: GregF YES TheresaC YES NormF YES. DeanV YES. Motion to approve minutes passed.

Public Comments pertaining to agenda: Fred Minor

Motion to approve agenda with addition of voting on 2022 meeting dates, made by Greg F. Second by Theresa C. Verbal vote: GregF YES Theresa C YES NormF YES. DeanV YES. Motion to approve agenda passed.

Zoning Administrators report given by Al Gareau. 4 new permits were issued. Pictures were turned into Attorney on LaBumbard blight case.

Escanaba Township Board liaison report given by Theresa Chenier: Board meeting was held November 8, 2021. The Board passed the Conflict of Interest ordinance. The Board was notified that the Planning Commission is needing another member due to Renee Richer resignation. Reports pertaining to payroll policies, attorney fees and cemetery sexton were reviewed to verify if they are staying on budget. The fire department's main pumper did not pass inspection. Fire Dept wages are increased but they have received grants and receiving revenue from fire calls. The Delta County Association at their October 2021 meeting requested Escanaba Township's process on splitting properties/land divisions. As soon as possible they would like the following from our township: 1) Land division ordinance 2) Boundary line adjustment ordinance 3) Platted lot split ordinance.

Under Old Business: **Motion was made by Norm F with second by GregF to nominate Cathy Culliton, the current Recording Secretary, to fulfill the vacancy of Secretary for the Planning Commission until another Planning Commission member is sworn in. Cathy Culliton accepted the temporary non-voting position. Verbal vote: GregF YES DeanV YES NormF YES TheresaC YES. Motion passed.**

Ann LaBumbard asked the Planning Commission to reconsider the Future Land Use Map designated area for residential development. She is a land owner in that area and would like to keep the lands north of Chaison Road along M35 as they are zoned and not be considered for residential zoning. Mr. VanLoon explained that the Future Land Use Map is not a change of zoning. It is a future projection of where residential growth may happen in the next 20 years. The Planning Commission has voted on the plan but there will be time to address the Board with her concerns.

The members continued to discuss and review the proposed draft ordinance for solar power within our township. Some items, but not limited to, that were discussed: lease agreements, operations agreements, emergency procedures, site plan of all proposed structures, setbacks, fences, drain tiles, bodies of water, road right of ways, how connection of power grid will be done, copy of power purchase agreements, decommissioning, a plan for handling resident complaints and concerns, and a plan for handling waste. TheresaC suggested they add a list that identifies “waste”. NormF said *the (DEA) s/b DEQ* and EPA will be involved in waste regulations and guidelines of reporting. Dean feels the township should receive a list of materials related to the project. He would like to also see a transportation plan and proof that compliance is met. Other concerns discussed were: Soil erosion with attention to lakes, streams and wetlands including endangered species protection. Height of system and height of all buildings. Lighting, security signage and noise.

The proposal suggest a 500 feet setback from adjacent property lot lines and road right of ways. The height of all buildings and of the system is not to exceed 15 feet max, except for addition of lightning rods. Underground transmission lines will eliminate several overhead lines. Battery placement in secure containers. Drain tile inspecting to ensure it stays in working condition with a 3 year inspection with a remote camera detecting any issues. There should be a 60 day repair time with a township member present when repairs are made. GregF said they probably should have a 3rd party independent do the inspection due to conflict of interest.

Norm suggested a designated area for commercial solar development may be a good idea. Dean responded that the commission’s responsibility is to protect the land in our township. Flat Rock is an area with shallow top soil and there are numerous ground water concerns that come with drilling. The developer was given another option to place down pads to build on other than drilling several holes but the developer saw that option as too expensive.

Theresa C would like to see added in the ordinance defining who will be responsible for the upkeep of the greenery in case of die off. The draft ordinance lists that screening needs to be 50% 6 foot evergreen trees and 50% opaque fencing. Dean would like the Planning Commission to receive updated reports on the commercial operation of solar. Annually seems too long of a period without information. GregF suggested quarterly or bi-annual reports. NormF thought one a month would be helpful and feels there needs to be grounds set for abandonment definition. He stated that panels already have gotten smaller so maybe less land would be needed.

Dean added there needs to be a guideline if the current landowner transfers ownership that the new owner needs to comply with. Dean then asked the members to go through all the notes and be prepared to continue discussions at the January 2022 meeting.

The Commission proceeded to the next agenda item to decide and vote on the following regular meeting dates for the 2022 calendar year.

Jan 3, 2022	Feb 7, 2022	Mar 7, 2022	Apr 4, 2022
May 2, 2022	Jun 6, 2022	Jul 5, 2022 (Tues)	Aug 1, 2022
Sep 6, 2022 (Tues)	Oct 3, 2022	Nov 7, 2022	Dec 5, 2022

Motion to approve 2022 regular meeting dates was made by GregF. Norm F second. Verbal vote: GregF YES DeanV YES NormF YES TheresaC YES. Motion passed. 2022 meeting dates are accepted.

There were no Zoning Board of Appeals meeting held this past month.

Public Comments: Fred Minor

Motion to adjourn was made by NormF. Second by GregF. Verbal vote: GregF YES DeanV YES NormF YES TheresaC YES. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Next meeting of the Escanaba Township Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday January 3, 2022 at 7:30 pm EST. Escanaba Township Hall 4618 County 416 29th Rd Gladstone MI 49837.

If you require any assistance to attend any meeting, please contact 906-280-6182 via phone call or text.