

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes July 16, 2019

The Empire Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Tom Kaldunski at 8:00 p.m.

Present were: Tom Kaldunski, Trent Larson, Jared Sachs, Chris Williamson, Bob Bjerke, Jane Kansier, Brian Hilgardner, Charles Seipel and liaison Ed Gerten.

The continuation of the public hearing regarding the proposed Conditional Use Permit (CUP) amendment for MCES Empire Waste Water Treatment Plant at 2540 197th Street West was opened.

Empire Township engineer, Brian Hilgardner, explained that he has received and reviewed a technical memo from the Met Council that addressed the questions regarding water flow and any potential impact from the proposed project at the MCES site. Brian stated that he did not see any negative impacts on water flow from this project and recommends approval of the CUP amendment.

Jeannine Clancy, assistant general manager of technical services for the Met Council, reported that the Met Council has hired contractors to inspect ditch culverts at the MCES site. One culvert required debris removal, and removal has been completed. Two culverts required replacement and this has also been completed. Additionally the Met Council is working with Empire Township to acknowledge drainage improvements that are proposed to take place in the future, including the installation of an additional culvert along the access road and a possible easement to construct a permanent ditch on the west side of the property.

Trent Larson asked if the improvements made to the road will have impacts on subsurface water flow. Brian Hilgardner stated that if anything, this should help subsurface flow as aggregate material will be used.

Jane Kansier outlined the list of proposed improvements and additions to be made to the site as well as the conditions to the CUP amendment that were stated in the Hearing Memo, dated June 18, 2019. Jane noted that some of the conditions include the need to obtain building permits for the proposed structures and the landscaping to be installed according to Plan A in the memo.

Discussion was held on the height of new structures at the site. There should be no dramatic impact from the new structures from a visual standpoint.

No additional public comment on the proposed CUP amendment was received.

Tom Kaldunski made a motion to recommend approval of the CUP amendment for MCES Empire Waste Water Treatment Plant to the Empire Town Board, with the conditions as stated in the Hearing Memo, dated June 18, 2019. Seconded by Jared Sachs. Motion carried 5-0.

Jared Sachs made a motion to close the public hearing regarding the CUP amendment for MCES Empire Waste Water Treatment Plant. Chris Williamson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Tom Kaldunski reported that representatives from a company that is working on behalf of Xcel Energy has been going door to door seeking households to enroll in solar energy credits as Xcel is in the process of phasing out a coal plant in the area. The representatives were told that they need to apply for a peddlers license, per Township Ordinance No. 270-A. Charles Seipel stated that they did receive the permit today. Tom stated that he encourages homes in the Township to enroll in this solar program.

Jane Kansier presented an update on the collaborative comprehensive plan. Three of the small cities and most of the townships in the collaborative have received completion letters from the Met Council regarding their portion of the comprehensive plan. The cities of Vermillion and Randolph are waiting to have information related to their water supply plans approved. Jane is working with the Met Council to address questions regarding I & I with Empire Township, but those items should be wrapped up soon.

Brian Hilgardner presented information on possible drainage ditch options to help address standing water near the Met Council sewer plant site. The Planning Commission recommended that these plans continue to move forward.

Discussion was held on the possible need to rezone portions of the Township to allow for commercial and industrial development. Jane Kansier recommended that this fall or winter, a joint meeting with the Town Board and the Planning Commission be held to discuss what the Township would like to see going forward and to decide on any possible amendments to the zoning ordinance or comprehensive plan.

Discussion was held on a possible IUP violation on Chippendale Avenue. Jane Kansier stated that she will follow up on this.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 P.M.