

## **Planning Commission Meeting Minutes May 19, 2020**

The Empire Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Tom Kaldunski at 8:00 PM at the Empire Township Public Works Building.

Present were: Tom Kaldunski, Trent Larson, Jared Sachs, Chris Williamson, Jane Kansier, Charles Seipel, and liaison Ed Gerten. Commission Member Bob Bjerke was absent.

The Planning Commission reviewed a survey and site plan for a proposed new home on the lot at 1325 210th Street East. It was determined that this parcel was approved previously, and the proposed home meets all the Township's zoning requirements. Trent Larson made a motion to approve the site plan for the proposed new home at 1325 210th Street East. Jared Sachs second. Motion carried 4-0.

The Planning Commission reviewed a proposal to construct solar arrays at 20800 and 20828 Ahern Blvd. Brian Allen with AllEnergy Solar joined the meeting remotely. The proposed array at 20800 Ahern will be a DC System size of 20.8 KW and AC System size of 20.0 kW. The array at 20828 Ahern will be a DC System size of 27.2 kW and AC System size of 22.8 kW. The proposed arrays would be constructed to offset the electricity demand on the properties. Additional electricity generated would be sold to the utility company.

The proposal was discussed, and it was indicated that the proposed arrays would not be compliant with all aspects of the zoning ordinance. Discussion was held on the possibility of amending the zoning ordinance section pertaining to solar structures. Mr. Allen stated that some language in the ordinance does not make sense regarding solar structures that are manufactured today. Mr. Allen also noted that his firm was working on a zoning request based on the discussion at the last Planning Commission regarding the solar section of the zoning ordinance. The Planning Commission indicated that they would be willing to look at additional proposed language for possible amendments to the zoning ordinance and Mr. Allen could submit one application for all proposed amendments to this section. Mr. Allen indicated that he and his firm will prepare additional proposed amendments to the ordinance for the Planning Commission to review.

It was reported that the Town Board has asked the property owner at 19502 Cambria Court to remove a dock that was installed on Township property for liability reasons. Charles Seipel indicated that after checking with other cities in the area, they have similar policies of not allowing private docks on publicly owned ponds and outlots. A resident present at the meeting requested that the Township consider installing a dock on the pond that would be built to the proper specifications and could be covered by the Townships liability insurance. The Planning Commission recommended that this suggestion be brought to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

It was reported that the draft Land Conservation Plan for Dakota County was reviewed by the Town Board at their meeting last week. As a result, the Town Board sent a letter to Dakota

County Land Conservation and Commissioner Mike Slavik regarding their opposition to the amount of land included as potential conservation land in the plan. The plan included large sections of open farmland that the Township would like to set aside for future development. When this land is developed, property storm water drainage and filtration systems can be installed.

The Planning Commission agreed with the Town Boards reaction to the plan. It was suggested that the Metropolitan Council become involved with a response to the plan as it affects areas targeted for future growth in the County. It was also recommended that the Planning Commission send a response voicing concerns about the plan. Jared Sachs made a motion to send a letter to Dakota County Land Conservation with opposition to the amount of land in Empire township targeted for conservation in the plan. Trent Larson seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Jane Kansier presented a memo regarding the repeal of Ordinance No. 475, Wetland Management Ordinance. The memo reported that Ordinance No. 475 conflicts with much of the language already covered in Ordinance No. 350, Water Resources Management Ordinance. Ordinance No. 350 is the most recent and up to date. Tom Kaldunski indicated that Ordinance No. 350 will need to be continuously updated when new permitting comes out.

Tom Kaldunski made a motion to recommend to the Town Board, the repeal of Ordinance No. 475, Wetland Management Ordinance. Chris Williamson seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

The Planning Commission reviewed a letter that was sent to the operators of the Feely West solar array providing them until July 1st to install landscaping at the solar site, according to the landscaping plan.

The Planning Commission would like to invite Maxim Litvinov to the next meeting as the IUP for his automobile sale business expires on June 30th.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.