

## Planning Commission Meeting Minutes June 2, 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, Bob Bjerke, Chris Williamson, Jane Kansier, Charles Seipel, and liaison Ed Gerten.

The Planning Commission reviewed the status of the IUP at 20485 Chippendale Ave to permit the sale of automobiles. Jane Kansier reported that the existing IUP expires on June 30th and permits the storage of up to 30 vehicles on the property, provided that the vehicles are located on hard surfaces and behind the fence. The Planning Commission expressed concern that only boats have been stored on the property in recent months. The property owners reported that the property has now been transferred over to the automobile sales operator and all boats have been removed from the property. The Planning Commission wants to see how the property operates with just automobiles at the site at a maximum of 30 vehicles. The applicant reported that they had previously applied for an IUP that would allow 60 vehicles on the site and the public hearing for that application resulted in the current IUP. After some discussion, Jared Sachs made a motion to make the recommendation to the Town Board that the existing IUP for the operation of an automobile business at 20485 Chippendale Ave be extended to July 14, 2020 in order to provide more time to assess the property as an automobile dealership.

**The motion also included the recommendation that the Town Board consider the fact that a hearing was already held for the application to allow 60 vehicles at the site when determining the requirement for an additional public hearing.** Tom Kaldunski seconded. Motion carried 5-0. The IUP is to be reviewed again at the July 7th Planning Commission Meeting.

It was reported that concerns regarding a newly constructed storage shed at 19416 Caravel Court were brought to the attention of the Township. It does not appear that the sidewalls are within the 11' height requirement and the pitch of the roof on the shed does not match the roof design of the home. Building inspector, Ron Wasmund, reported that because the sq. footage of the shed is less than 200 sq. ft. a building permit was not required for the shed. The property owners stated that based on the handout for sheds provided by the Township, they believed they were in compliance with the ordinance. The Planning Commission indicated that the sidewalls of the shed will need to be brought under the 11' side wall requirement and the roof design will need to match that of the home on the property. It was recommended that the

property owners contact the Providence HOA before anything is done to the shed as the HOA may have additional requirements.

Bill and Wendy Wustenberg presented information on the construction of proposed solar panels on their properties at 20828 and 20800 Ahern Blvd. Wustenberg reported that the proposed panels will be used to help offset the large energy bills at the properties. These properties use a lot of energy and they want them to operate more sustainably. The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed location of the arrays. Wendy Wustenberg indicated that the arrays will be constructed out of the site view from other properties, however the arrays would not be able to be compatible with the height requirement as stated in the current zoning ordinance. Brian Allen with All Energy Solar proposed some language revisions for the zoning ordinance. These revisions related to ground mount height as well as roof mount placement.

The Planning Commission discussed the need to add more definition to the zoning ordinance pertaining to retail vs. wholesale solar panels. A complete review of the solar section of the zoning ordinance was recommended. **Trent Larson made a motion to schedule a public hearing on July 7th to review the solar section of the zoning ordinance. Jared Sachs seconded. Motion passed 5-0. Jane Kansier reported that a complete review of this section will take some time and would not be able to be presented as early as July 7th.** Brian Allen requested permission to submit an application for specific language revisions in the zoning ordinance prior to a hearing on the complete review solar section of the ordinance. It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that a zoning request would be considered.

Evan Carlson with IPS Solar requested an update relating to the regulations of installing solar farms in the Township. It was reported that installations of these systems are no longer permitted in the zoning ordinance. The Planning Commission recommended that no modifications to this language in the ordinance be made.

It was reported that the Comprehensive Plan for Empire Township has been approved by the Met Council. Jane will ask the Town Board to adopt a resolution to formally approve the plan at the June 9th Town Board Meeting.

It was reported that the Township is following up on landscaping at both the Feely West solar farm site and the Ecoplexus solar site. Some trees that were planted as landscaping at the Ecoplexus site are dying. A representative from Ecoplexus indicated that they will be reviewing trees at the site.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.