

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes July 7, 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.

Tom Kaldunski opened the public hearing to consider amendments to section 6.20 of Ordinance No. 400, the Empire Township Zoning Ordinance. The public hearing notice was read. The amendments were applied for by All Energy Solar.

The Planning Commission reviewed a memo from Jane Kansier. The memo noted that the proposed amendments relate to roof top solar mounts, with language removed in Item D; pertaining to roof top solar systems not being located any closer than three feet from any side, top of bottom edge of the roof, and shall not occupy more than 75 percent of the area of the roof plane it is affixed to. Also, language modified in item E, increasing the allowable height of ground mounted systems from 6 feet to 15 feet.

Discussion was held on the desire to limit ground mounted systems to areas outside of the MXR District. State Statute permits these types of ground mounted systems in residential areas, provided that a roof top system is not feasible on the property. It was noted that if the proposed changes are approved, a property in the MXR District would need to apply for a variance to construct a ground mount system. At that time, specific requirements regarding height and screening may be included in the approval of a variance. The property owner would need to demonstrate a hardship. It was recommended that reference to State Building Code be included in the ordinance language.

Jared Sachs made a motion to close the public hearing. Trent Larson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Jared Sachs made a motion to approve the recommended amendments to Ordinance No. 400, Section 6.20, items D and E. Tom Kaldunski seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

The Planning Commission reviewed a memo relating to the IUP for automobile sales at 20485 Chippendale Avenue. It was reported that the site has been much approved and there are vehicles for sale on the lot. Signage from the old business has been removed. All vehicles are located behind the fenced in area. The property owners reported that tall weeds and piles of parts have been removed, other weeds that exist on the property will be sprayed. The Planning Commission reviewed photos of the site as it sits today. It was noted that the property owner expects to pave the gravel lot behind the fence before next year. The Planning Commission discussed the recommendation to approve the extension of the existing IUP. If the applicant would like to increase the number of vehicles on the lot, they would need to apply for an amended IUP as a public hearing would need to be held. Although the owner previously

applied for 60 vehicles, the result of that application and public hearing was to limit the number of vehicles to 30.

Tom Kaldunski made a motion to recommend approval to extend the existing IUP for automobile sales at 20485 Chippendale Avenue until March 31, 2022. Trent Larson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Diane Pothan at 19995 Chippendale Avenue presented information on a proposed grain bin style gazebo that she would like to install in the backyard of her property. The Planning Commission was in agreement that this style of gazebo would be permitted. Prior to construction, a building permit would be needed. The side wall support beams can be no taller than 11'. The building would need to follow required setbacks and follow the guidelines relating to an accessory structure. The property owner should submit a site plan.

Ralph Hanson at 20655 Clayton Avenue presented plans for a proposed shed on his property. The shed would be constructed, along with a new home on the property. This property is in the AG District. It was recommended that the shed be constructed at the same time as the home. It cannot be constructed before the home. The property owner may also construct a pool on the property. A site plan, including information on the pool covering, should be provided prior to construction.

Residents from the Blaine Ave. area were present to discuss their concerns with the residents at 19688 Blaine Avenue. In addition to calling the Sheriff's Department relating to disturbances at the property, the neighbors wanted the Planning Commission to be aware of the issues with this property, including the construction of a racetrack on the property. Discussion was held on if a grading permit for the racetrack would be needed. It was recommended that the Township consider sending a certified letter to the residents at 19688 Blaine Ave. outlining the rules and regulations that exist in the Township.

The Planning Commission reviewed photos of the landscaping that has been installed at the Feely West solar array site. The trees and shrubs should be inspected to make sure they are at the height and number as indicated in the landscaping plan.

The Planning Commission reviewed letters that were sent from the Township to the Met Council regarding the proposed drainage ditch to be constructed on the west side of the wastewater treatment plant and to the Dakota County Land Conservation office regarding the Townships opposition to items included in the proposed County Land Conservation Plan.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.