

Keene Township Planning Commission Special Meeting

Minutes from meeting - Thursday, June 13, 2024

Denny Briggs called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:02 PM.

Roll Call:

Present: Denny Briggs, Christine Hendrick, Ray Krieger, Nancy Solomon, Matt Stahlin, Cori Wilber, and Corey Wojcik.

There were approximately 25 members of the community present along with Zoning Administrator, Jeanne Vandersloot and Supervisor, Bob Schafer.

Denny Briggs mentioned that laptops are in the same category as cell phones and are not permitted at the table.

Changes to the agenda:

Denny Briggs motioned to approve the agenda as is. Matt Stahlin seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of last meeting minutes:

Corey Wojcik motioned to approve the minutes as written. Ray Krieger seconded. Motion carried.

Report from Township Board Representative:

Corey Wojcik mentioned Cori Wilber's presentation at the June 11, 2024 Board Meeting. He also mentioned that the sides of the roads need mowing, taxes are coming out and that three business personal property taxes are delinquent. One has recently been caught up and they are still working with the other two businesses.

Report from Zoning Administrator:

Jeanne Vandersloot gave her report.

Permits issued for:

- 1 story pole barn horse riding arena
- 1 story home addition

Land divisions:

- None

Planning Commission:

- Members met on May 8, 2024 to work on commercial solar energy amendments. Special meeting set up for June 13, 2024.
- Regular fiscal year meeting dates are May 8, August 7, October 1 and February 4, 2025.

Zoning Board of Appeals:

- ZBA recommends that the Planning Commission look into accessory building height maximums. The previous variance applicant pointed out that there were many nearby buildings taller than the maximum height.

Other:

- Many calls received from appraisers and residents with miscellaneous zoning related questions.

Public Comment - Topics Not On The Agenda:

Denny Briggs asked to limit comments from the audience. There were no objections to this from the Planning Commission Members.

It was mentioned that not enough signatures were gathered to make the ballot for November to return zoning control back to local government.

Bob Schafer mentioned brining the roads.

It was mentioned that the missing "weight limit" sign will be replaced.

Old Business:

Review renewable energy survey results.

Denny Briggs wants to focus on the results of the survey.

Cori Wilber mentioned that Tom Sprague is good at creating graphs and has offered to give a presentation on the survey results chart. Cori Wilber stated she would coordinate with Tom Sprague.

Denny Briggs had questions about the survey in regards to question number 8 and number 4.

Matt Stahlin mentioned that some answers didn't relate to the questions and should be related to solar. Matt stated it was a good survey otherwise.

Cori Wilber stated that the topic of noise has not been researched yet.

Cori Wilber has offered to get help from Tom Sprague to analyze the data from the survey which will be presented to the Planning Commission by the end of July.

Commercial Solar Amendments - Work on new commercial solar amendments.

It was agreed that it was not necessary to work on this topic until the survey results can be analyzed.

New Business:

Christine Hendrick mentioned that some townships have hired attorneys to write an ordinance they could defend in a court of law. It would be beneficial for Keene Township to also do this to prevent lawsuits.

Denny Briggs asked Bob Schafer if we could pay for Foster and Swift. Bob Schafer stated that he wants a win-win. The State decision will affect whatever we and or the lawyer decides. New lawyers will know the laws and give us the best.

Jason Hardy wants an attorney for both sides.

Ray Krieger stated we are risking dividing our township more if we hire a new lawyer.

Bob Schafer will ask our insurance carrier for their opinion.

Moratorium expires at the end of November.

After much discussion, a motion was made by Christine Hendrick to request the Board to get two estimates from lawyers: 1st one to author the entire solar ordinance, 2nd one to author sections for acreage caps and setbacks with provided data from the survey results and former historical ordinances. Motion seconded by Matt Stahlin. All in favor. Motion passed.

Christine Hendrick mentioned rezoning solar to commercial. Denny Briggs stated that Almer Township uses a special use permit.

Someone mentioned an overlay district. This needs to be clarified.

Cori Wilber will bring noise information to our next PC meeting.

Denny Briggs asked if we have done anything for wind.

Ray Krieger mentioned cattle grazing under panels.

It was agreed that we need to add more meetings for Wind/Solar. This will be added to the agenda for the August 7th PC Meeting.

Bob Schafer mentioned possibly adding a kayak launch to the Whites Bridge boat launch site.

Ray Krieger suggested using ARPA monies.

A general parking ordinance was mentioned but it would be difficult to enforce.

Corey Wojcik motioned to adjourn the meeting. Matt Stahlin seconded and all agreed. Motion passed to adjourn the meeting at 8:23pm.

Minutes recorded by Nancy Solomon.