

## **OID TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **OID TOWNSHIP OFFICE, BRANCH COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**March 2, 2021**

#### **MARCH MEETING MINUTES**

The Ovid Township Planning Commission meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Andy AcMoody at 6:00 p.m.

Members present: Andy AcMoody, Chris Donbrock, Sean Groves, Jim Snivley, Tammi Schorfhaar

Other present: Chris Khorey, Joe Haas, Robert Hawley, Greg Gemmil, Matt Drennan, Bill Benjamin, Brian Nunemaker, Lindsay Latre, Sam Gaglio, Brian Walker, Chick Gerber

Chris Donbrock made a motion to approve the Agenda; seconded by Andy AcMoody; motion carried.

Chris Donbrock made a motion to approve the February 2, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting minutes; seconded by Jim Snivley; motion carried.

Chris Donbrock made a motion to approve the February 16, 2021 Solar Workshop Meeting minutes; seconded by Andy AcMoody; motion carried.

Unfinished Business: The zoning ordinance for solar energy collectors and review of the Master Plan.

The Planning Commission reviewed additional revisions to the draft zoning ordinance for solar energy collectors. Tammi Schorfhaar made a motion to send the updated and amended zoning ordinance to the County Planning Commission and Township Board for their review; seconded by Sean Groves; motion carried.

Chris Khorey began an initial conversation about proposed updates to the Master Plan. The Planning Commission will continue to work with Chris and McKenna on a variety of changes.

Zoning report: Robert Hawley provided the February Zoning Report.

Comments from the Audience:

Matt Drennan said that he greatly appreciates all of our hard work. He is, however, still very concerned about the 500 foot setbacks and Matt doesn't believe the Planning Commission understands how difficult those will be to work with. Matt said that he finds the recommended setbacks to be very discouraging as a developer. Matt referenced the community meeting that they held virtually last week and said that he hopes that anyone with questions will reach out to them. Matt said that they will take a step back and see what the County and Township Board say about our updated zoning ordinance.

Bill Benjamin expressed three concerns with the proposed zoning ordinance. The first is the noise level in paragraph 6 – Bill feels that there should be a stated required distance from a residence. Second, in paragraph 9, Bill feels there should be a baseline fence requirement included in the description or he feels that the fence materials could be left to interpretation. Finally, in paragraph 11, Bill referenced the wiring and the requirements that it be underground. Bill is concerned because our ordinance only references two types of wiring and he feels that we should either include all wiring or else be more specific.

Brian Nunemaker referenced the article in the local newspaper which said that the City of Coldwater is short of electricity. Brian is very frustrated over the 500 foot setbacks. He is a landowner and a participant in the solar project. Brian doesn't understand what difference it makes if his neighbors are looking at pine trees at 500 feet or 200 feet or 100 feet? Landowners can currently plant trees right up to the property line. Why is this different?

Lindsay Latre referenced pages 4 and 5 as they relate to setback increases and decreases. Lindsay understands that the ordinance would give the Township Board the ability to decrease setbacks but she doesn't think it is likely and therefore, she doesn't feel that it is comparing apples to apples to some of the other setbacks that are currently in the zoning ordinance for other uses. Lindsay would suggest that an independent third party could be used to evaluate the necessary criteria rather than the Township Board.

Sam Gaglio requested a clarification on the potential 200% setback increase and asked exactly what that means.

Brian Walker thanked everyone for all of the time that has gone into this. Brian does, however, believe that there are some people on the Planning Commission who are not speaking their true mind. He thinks it looks like we are in a popularity contest and are afraid of upsetting people. Brian agrees with Brian Nunemaker about planting trees on the property lines and he asked if someone could tell him what are the actual negatives with solar? Brian said the only thing people say is that they don't want to see it but they never say anything else negative. He wants people need to take a hard look at all of this.

Brian Nunemaker spoke again and commented on other land uses and the associated setbacks. Brian said that he would rather have a solar farm within 200 feet of him than a hog building. Brian does not feel that solar is nearly as bad as a chicken barn or a hog farm.

Sam Gaglio spoke again and said that Lyndsay Latre had made the comment that the ordinance is complicated. Sam agrees and said that he feels that this is going to put a burden on the Township Board and will be very awkward. Sam thinks the ordinance needs to be "tightened up" and he feels that the possibility of increases and decreases make the whole thing even more complicated.

Chick Gerber asked if there is anyone else besides Brian Walker who has leased, or agreed to lease their property, that are currently on the call?

New Business: None

Andy AcMoody reminded everyone to check the Ovid Township website ([www.ovidtownship.org](http://www.ovidtownship.org)) for any updates and/or changes to upcoming meetings – including dates and times and details about whether the meetings will be held in person or virtually.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 6:00p.m.

Chris Donbrock moved to adjourn; seconded by Sean Groves; motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Tammi Schorfhaar, secretary.