

PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2019

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: All board members were present or accounted for plus Bruce Palmer (Planning & Zoning Administrator), Tammy Bressette (Asst. Planning & Zoning Administrator), 3 representatives from Cypress Creek Renewables (Solar Company), and 33 guests.

Russ Herlache made the motion to approve the Agenda as written, Joanne Cammin supported the motion and it carried unanimously.

Ron Robishaw made the motion to accept the minutes from the August meeting, Russ Herlache supported the motion and it carried unanimously.

There was no Public Comment or PA 33 Reports.

Secretary Thon gave the report on the August Board of Trustees meeting.

Chairman Kiss suspended the regular meeting and opened the Public Hearing.

Steve Jonas the president of Saginaw Future spoke in support of the solar farm. Dan Satkowiak who farms near the proposed solar farm said he wasn't totally against the project but had some questions about it. Jim Kowalczyk, who lives in the area said he was totally opposed to the farm because of what he considered common sense reasons. Mark Garrett, a farmer from the neighboring Tittabawassee Township spoke totally in favor of the project and commended Kochville for what he called "moving into the future regarding energy". Tammy Satkowiak, who lives next to the site was concerned about what this would do to her property value. Al Trautner, the owner of the land where the solar farm would be built said he understood that there would be objections to the farm but he saw solar as the energy of the future.

There were no more questions and Chairman Kiss closed the Public Hearing and we returned to the regular meeting.

New Business:

Bruce Palmer stood and said we would now turn to the site plan review and introduced Mr. Paul Irby, the lead representative for Cypress Creek Renewables. He told us that Cypress Creek was a division of Stone Heart Solar and that it was the 2nd largest solar company in the U.S. He stated that this was their first site in Michigan but there would be many more to follow in the next couple years.

He explained to the group that there were two types of solar panel systems. One being a fixed system and the other being a tracker system which means that the panels would be designed to move ever so slowly to remain in a direct line with the sun as the day went on. After his presentation he answered any questions the planning commission members had. Mr. Robishaw stated that he would like to see the Township get copy of each required maintenance report that was made by the company during their regular maintenance inspections and they agreed to this. Mr. Irby also addressed concerns voiced by the audience members during the open session. Then he turned the meeting back over to Mr. Palmer. Mr. Palmer stated that he wasn't here to speak in favor of or against the proposed project but only to see that the site plan met all of the requirements of Federal,

state, and Local ordinances. He said he had a few concerns but they should be no problem because he had already spoken to the solar farm representatives about them. He recommended moving the fence on the west side of the site, near where a house currently stands, to be moved slightly over into a buffer zone to give the residents a little more space, and that he would like to see grass planted and maintained among the trees in the buffer zones. He recommended that the Township Board require a surety bond before approving the Site Plan to ensure that the funding would be available to dismantle the project in case the company would go out of business or abandon the project before the end of the contract. He also stated that the Kochville Fire Department wanted no vegetation under the solar panels or within 10ft of them because when it would dry out it would become a fire hazard. He also wanted training for the volunteer firefighters as to how to handle fires on the farm. As a last request he asked that the decommissioning costs be re-evaluated every 10 years.

Chairman Kiss thanked Mr. Palmer for the presentation, and also the Cypress Creek representative for their participation.

At this point, Chairman Kiss said he would entertain a motion on whether to accept the proposed site plan.

Ron Robishaw made the motion to accept the site plan Spr-19-02-S brought forward by Stone Heart Solar, to be built on the property with the PIN 18-13-4-28-1001-000, located at 4097 Pierce Rd, in Kochville Township as long as the recommendations offered by Mr. Palmer were met. Ed Thon supported the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Kiss stated that now he would send the project forward to the Township Board to be considered for final approval.

Comments:

Joel Kiss asked Bruce Palmer what project was going up on Kochville Rd between Mackinaw and Bay Rds. Bruce told him that there was a big new home going up with a large pond on the property.

Ron Robishaw made the motion to adjourn and it carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. and the next meeting was scheduled for October 14, 2019.