

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
June 26, 2018

The special joint meeting of the Robinson Township Planning Commission and the Robinson Township Board was called to order at 7:30 PM at the Robinson Township Hall.

Planning Commission

<p>Present</p> <p>Shawn Martinie Travis Vugteveen Bill Maschewske Tom TenBroeke George Schippers Steve Young Rich Sibley</p>	<p>Absent</p> <p>None</p>
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Township Board

<p>Present</p> <p>Kathy Kuck Bernice Berens Bonnie Hayward Travis Vugteveen</p>	<p>Absent</p> <p>Chris Saddler</p>
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Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje, Zoning Administrator Brian Werschem, and three members of the public. The attendance sheet is attached.

A motion was made by Tom TenBroeke and seconded by Travis Vugteveen to approve the agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Rich Sibley and seconded by Tom TenBroeke to approve the May 22, 2018 Planning Commission minutes as written.

The motion carried unanimously.

Non-Commission Inquiries – None

Reports and Communications

Travis Vugteveen reported the following from the Township Board.

1. The Family Medical Leave Act was discussed.
2. A decision was made to not use an AFLAC plan for the Fire Department.
3. The FEMA three year inspection plan was discussed.
4. Cell 4 of the Clark Farm mining site was approved for interim reclamation and Cell 7 was allowed to be opened pending Zoning Administrator inspection.

Announcements – None

Old Business

An updated draft Zoning Ordinance amendment from Township Attorney Ron Bultje with draft date of May 30, 2018 was discussed briefly. A presentation was then given by Doug Kilmer of TRC Solutions in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The presentation covered the Types of Solar PV Power, the Advantages of Solar Power, Zoning Considerations, the Permitting Process by Governmental Agencies, Taxation, Issues to Consider, Community Engagement, and other related considerations. A complete copy of the presentation is available at the Township Hall for inspection.

The presentation concluded at 9:00 PM.

A motion was made by Bonnie Hayward and seconded by Bernice Berens to adjourn the Township Board meeting at 9:02 PM.

The motion carried unanimously with one Township Board member absent.

The Planning Commission meeting continued.

Chairperson Martinie – Stated he had a discussion with a representative of Consumers Energy regarding Solar Energy and noted the following.

1. CMS Energy has no official policy on siting Solar Energy facilities.
2. No public power grid map is available.
3. Prime locations in Robinson Township
 - a. Near the substation on M-45.
 - b. Near the North-South Transmission line that crosses the Grand River at 118th Ave.
4. About 5 acres is needed per megawatt of solar power generation. About 15 to 20 acres would be required for a commercial solar energy facility.
5. Flat land is not required.
6. It is generally the opinion of CMS Energy to not utilize prime farmland.
7. Any location within a mile of a major transmission line is a good site.

At this time the meeting was opened to comments from members of the public.

Sean Harris and Adam Cohen of Ranger Power were present to introduce themselves and their company and offer themselves as a resource of information regarding Solar Power. They have worked extensively in Illinois and prefer to do larger projects.

Chairperson Martinie – If it were easy to permit, how much Solar Energy facilities would you like to have in Robinson Township?

Adam Cohen – They would like to be located near the 138KV line that runs North and South in Robinson Township. They would be interested in several hundred acres contiguous with a 40 year lease.

A submission was presented by Zoning Administrator Brian Werschem indicating how much M-1 Zoned land is in Robinson Township and not under water. It appears there is approximately 770 acres zoned M-1 that could be available for Solar Farm activity based upon the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment. Much of this land also meets the criteria for location near a major power line.

Bonnie Hayward – Why not include Commercial Zoned property?

Chairperson Martinie and Bill Maschewske – Explained the reasons Commercial Zoned property was located where it was and why it would not be advisable to utilize that land for Solar Farms.

Bonnie Hayward – Stated she has received comments from a farmer who is concerned the Township is not considering allowing Solar Farms on Agricultural Zoned property.

Chairperson Martinie – Explained the Planning process and why Agricultural Zoned property should be preserved for agricultural production and that there are other lands more suitable for Solar Farms.

Chairperson Martinie – Stated the strategy for developing a Zoning Ordinance amendment regarding Solar Energy would be for both the Planning Commission and Township Attorney Bultje to review the additional available Ordinances regarding Solar Farms prior to the next meeting. At that meeting, the Planning Commission would then provide direction to the Township Attorney to update the draft Zoning Ordinance amendment regarding Solar Farms for further review and public hearing. The Zoning Administrator is to print the five available ordinances and distribute to Planning Commission members.

At 9:35 PM., a motion was made by Rich Sibley and seconded by Travis Vugteveen to table action on review of the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment regarding Signs. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business – None

A motion was made by George Schippers and seconded by Steve Young to pay salaries for the month of June 2018 (one meeting). The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by George Schippers and seconded by Rich Sibley to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:40 PM.
The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission



SIGN IN SHEET
Joint Meeting of the
Planning Commission and Board of Trustees
June 26, 2018 at 7:30 pm

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

Adam Cohen

Sean Harris