

**Thetford Township  
Planning Commission  
Meeting of 11/08/18  
6:30 P.M.**

Called meeting to order: Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Members Present: Dennis Bloss (Acting Chairperson), Peggy Castle, Eric Gunnels (Trustee), and Ralph Henry. Absent was Chairperson Michael Fromwiller. Also present was Gary Stevens (Supervisor) and Marie Canterbury for minutes.

Motion by: Eric Gunnels to open the Public meeting, supported by Ralph Henry, all ayes, motion approved.

Dennis Bloss advised that the meeting was now open for public comments, to please keep your comments to 3 minutes and to state your name and address when you speak at the podium.

Keith Lanko – 10036 N Lewis advised that since we had a moratorium on energy services, why there was a meeting to discuss same. He was advised that Thetford did not have one and that Genesee and Vienna Township did. He also wanted to know how much water would be used, would the lands be depreciated and how did the panels get cleaned?

Dawn Prueter – 1298 E Dodge Road wanted to know if there would be a decrease in property values, would the panels hum all the time and did we check to see if other areas had a decrease in property values.

James Rynbrandt - 4410 E Vienna wanted to know why we did not have a moratorium.

Dale Yaklin – 1082 E Hollywood wanted to know if it would be fenced in. Acting Chair Bloss stated that yes it would be fenced in.

Terry Eggert – 1337 E Dodge wanted to know who owned the properties involved. When the survey was done, the survey stated that the property line went through his pool and would like to know if the owners would be willing to sell a few feet of the property to him. Mr. Eggert also wanted to know if these panels would reflect. Acting Chair Bloss stated that he would need to speak to the property owner and then the assessor. Commissioner Henry advised Mr. Eggert to speak with Nancy at Land Records downtown to see if she could help him with his property line problem.

Acting Chair asked if there were any more questions, hearing none, he recommended to close the Public meeting – Trustee Gunnels motion to close the Public meeting, Commissioner Henry seconded, Public meeting closed.

Motion by Trustee Gunnels to approve the July 12, 2018 meeting minutes, seconded by Commissioner Castle, motion approved.

New Business:

1. Carmen Lombardo asking for a special land use and site plan review for a new 40 x 60 building located at 9254 N Dort Highway, Mt. Morris, MI 48458.

Mr. Lombardo brought his civil engineer with him who stated that it will be a 2,400 sf facility with 16 parking spaces. It is currently zoned GC on all 4 sides.

Commissioner Henry stated that the greenhouse was already demolished and asked if the house next door was included, which he was advised it was not. Trustee Gunnels asked if the site plan was inspected by the building official Michael Mantei and was advised that it was.

Mr. Lombardo was advised that the building will be so much better than what was there previously and that it will add value to the area. Acting Chair Bloss stated that the Board of Trustees makes the final decision from their recommendation.

Trustee Gunnels motioned to approve the site plan and Special Land Use for 9254 N Dort Highway, seconded by Acting Chair Bloss, all ayes – motion approved.

2. John Walden – 5088 W Lake Road – special land use for a 2MWac Solar Farm located on two vacant parcels on E Dodge Road, Clio – Parcel #'s 17-30-400-001 and 17-30-300-002

Speaking for Mr. Walden was Dewey Klurfield and two of his associates from Cypress Creek. He stated that they are in over 10 states. The pipeline has doubled and over 2 years ago more renewable energy was being developed for Consumers to buy and then sell to consumers. Factors involved in locating the right parcels were existing power lines for the substation. They spoke with the landowners on lease options for 40 years.

Mr. Klurfield stated that water is not needed to be run to the panels, it uses rain water and that also cleans the panels. The glare is minimal as the panels have resin on the top. The panels have no noise. The only sound coming from this is the inverter, which is approximately 6 x 7 feet and it is in the center of the property. It only runs between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and there is no noise at all when the sun is down. The noise itself is like an air conditioner, and since it is in the center of the property, it will not be heard from any homes that are close to the parcels. They understand that people are concerned about property values, but in all the research that they have done, they have found no correlation between the panels and property values changing.

Cypress Creek has an investment of 1.4 million per project and the only change on the properties themselves is for personal property, not a change in the property value. In regards to the two properties, they will only be using a portion of the property for the panels, the rest will still be farmed by Mr. Walden. Caty Weber from Cypress Creek stated that the panels are just in the ground and that they are easily removed. Mr. Klurfield stated that the panels are 6-7 feet tall and move only with the sun. The angle stays the same all the time. They also have a pollinator program which they plant plants at the projects

that help with the bees and is low lying so that it only has to be maintained a few times a year. There is no soil brought in or taken out.

Commissioner Henry asked about the acreage being used and was told on the larger piece they would be using approximately 20-25 acres with the rest of the 40 still being farmed. On the smaller piece, they would be only using around 10 acres and the remaining 20 will be farmed.

Trustee Gunnels asked about the vegetation and was told that they would use native grasses, they do mow and maintain the property. They would look to use a local landscape contractor and would use only 2' high plants.

Klurfield also stated that the outer perimeter would have a fence and would also put up berms and low lying trees that could easily be removed when the project is complete. In Ingham County, there are panels near a nature trail and they placed ornamental grasses which are better than trees.

Acting Chair Bloss complimented them on the packet that they all received and that it would be nice if it could be sent to the township so that it can be placed on our website so that the residents can read it.

Trustee Gunnels stated that it was very well done and he does not see it making an environmental impact on the properties. He also asked about any problems with theft/vandalism and was told that they do have security to keep an eye on the panels.

Commissioner Castle thanked them for their presentation and stated that they were highly organized. Commissioner Henry also thanked them and asked if both projects were going to be done at the same time and he was told yes, they would be.

Trustee Gunnels advised them that they make recommendations to the Board of Trustees, who then makes the final decision.

Trustee Gunnels recommended to approve the Special Land Use for the solar site development on parcel # 17-30-300-002, Dodge and Dort, Commissioner Henry seconded – all ayes, motion carried.

Trustee Gunnels recommended to approve the Special Land Use for the solar site development on parcel # 17-30-400-001 on Dodge and Lewis, Commissioner Henry seconded – all ayes, motion carried.

The Board also had to decide to elect a new Chairperson, but before any motion was made, was informed that they only needed to do that if they felt it necessary. Chairperson Fromwiller was not at the meeting due to a family illness. It was decided and approved by all, the Chairperson Fromwiller would remain.

Keith Lanko came up to the podium again and stated that he was not happy about a humming noise and did not want it in his backyard.

Motion was made by Trustee Gunnels to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Henry, all ayes, meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.