

## **Bengal Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes August 30, 2023**

**Meeting Called to order** at 7:16PM by Chairman Nolan Solomon

**Pledge of Allegiance** led by Chairman Solomon

**Members Present:** Eric Boak, Kurt Koenigsknecht, Nolan Solomon and Brenda Zlotek

**Public Present:** Christopher Khorey, Township Zoning Administrator; Forrest Thurston, Township Zoning Inspector/Enforcement Officer; Nick McDonald, Township Supervisor.

**Additions to Agenda:** Motion by Kurt Koenigsknecht to add discussion of Essex Township and Bengal Township entering a joint Planning Commission under New Business as line 8 b of the agenda. Seconded by Brenda Zlotek. Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Kurt Koenigsknecht to approve the Minutes from May 31, 2023, seconded by Eric Boak, motion carried.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items:** Nick McDonald, Bengal Township Supervisor, informed the Planning Commission that he was approached by Essex Township with a request to potentially have a joint Planning Commission between Bengal and Essex Townships. Chris Khorey presented the board with some information on how a joint planning commission could be developed along with some of the most common benefits and drawbacks. Essex Township could either develop their own Master Plan or the townships could share a singular Master Plan. Among other issues, would be the need for a fair and balanced Planning Commission with members from both townships, the establishment of inspection, financial, and Zoning administration responsibilities. Nick McDonald will bring the issue to the Bengal Township Board and will invite the members of Essex Township board to attend and discuss the issue at the next Bengal Township Planning Commission Meeting.

**Report from Forrest Thurston** on Inspections/Zoning Enforcement update, he is working with Sharon Bassette (township Clerk) and Nolan Solomon on documentation and language in the notification letters to homeowners. The Township is still having some issues with builders starting construction before the sight inspection. Mr. Thurston informed the Planning Commission he currently has one new home build that has inspection pending.

**Report from Kurt Koenigsknecht** on the Zoning Board of Appeals update, no pending appeals. Mr. Koenigsknecht informed the Planning Commission he will be resigning from the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Commission as of June 30, 2024.

**Unfinished Business:** The Zoning Compliance Application document has been clarified, completed and sent to the Township Board and Township Clerk. Chair Solomon will forward for posting on the Township Web page.

**New Business:** Chris Khorey informed the Planning Commission of Michigan House and Senate bills set to be introduced that would remove local zoning control over solar arrays that are designed to generate more than 100 MW of energy (these are generally areas of 400 to 700 acres in size). Additionally, a group is gathering signatures to put a referendum on the ballot to ban "utility-scale solar farms" on agriculturally zoned land, State-wide. Chris will keep the Planning Commission updated on these pending issues and the impact on Bengal Township's Zoning if they progress.

Chris stated he had a phone call from a Clinton County Sheriff to determine if a large private event on private property violated the Township Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission discussed looking at adding some language in the Ordinance for large parties/gatherings on private property in the future if needed.

Article 7 Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) was discussed and reviewed as it is currently in the Zoning Ordinance. We discussed some possible changes to the language and Chris Khorey will have a few suggestions for the planning commission to review at the next meeting.

**Public Comment Non- Agenda Item-** none

**Planning Commission Comments:** Eric Boak, Liaison to the Bengal Township Board, shared he had been contacted by a resident with a complaint about mud on the roads from tractors and fields. The consensus was the resident needed to contact the County Road Commission, which Eric had instructed the resident to do.

Chair Solomon discussed absences and pay equity for the Planning Commission Board Members. It will be added to the next agenda for further discussion along with setting the 2024 Planning Commission meeting schedule at the next meeting.

**Motion of excused absences:** Brenda Zlotek motioned to excuse the absence of Sam Nielsen, seconded by Eric Boak, motion passed.

**Meeting Adjourned** at 8:44 by Chair Solomon.

Respectfully submitted, pending Approval

Approved 09/27/ 2023.

Brenda Zlotek

Bengal Township Planning Commission Secretary