

**PLANNING COMMISSION
ERIE TOWNSHIP
ERIE, MICHIGAN
Regular Meeting
September 21, 2021**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Bill Jacobs called to order the Regular Meeting of the Erie Township Planning Commission on September 21, 2021 at 7:00 pm at the Township office, Erie Road, Erie, Michigan.

2. ROLL CALL

Bill Jacobs	Present
Dave Cousino	Present
Dr. Larry Guinn	Present
Dan Taylor	Present
Paul Perry	Present
Robert Schwartz	Present
Manny Evola	Present

Also present: Mike Demski and Recording Secretary, Kristine Crammond.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Paul Perry made a motion to approve the Agenda. Dan Taylor seconded. Motion carried.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Dr. Larry Guinn made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 17, 2021 Planning Commission meeting. Paul Perry seconded. Motion carried.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Budget Report

The budget report was reviewed. Bill Jacobs stated the budget is in good shape.

- Paul Perry made a motion to approve the budget dated 08/31/2021 as presented and place on file. Robert Schwartz seconded. Motion carried.

B. Public Comment

1. Diane LaPlante – 1324 Sterns Road, Erie, MI. - Diane stated the Solar Field on Dixie Hwy and Sterns is an eye sore. She discussed property maintenance and landscaping issues.
2. Diane LaPlante asked the Planning Commission if their budget contains a line item for Education or Legal. Diane stated there is an educational retreat through MTA that the Planning Commissioners may be interested in. Bill Jacobs stated they have not had any attorney fees. Education in the past was pulled from Fees and Dues. They do have a Consultant line.

3. Ricki Roelant-11625 Geiger Road, Temperance MI. – Ricki stated Agricultural land owners are being approached by Solar Farms. Ricki stated there are hazardous materials in the solar panels. Storms and hail will damage the panels. The panels are fragile and crack easily. If broken, the panels need to be taken to a hazardous landfill. Solar panels are a fire hazard and a deterrent for bees and birds. She is asking that Agricultural land stay that way. She is asking the land not be rezoned to industrial to allow solar fields.
4. Charlie Pobee-Mensah – 2147 E. Erie Road, Erie, MI - age 8. Charlie stated we need farms for fruits and vegetables. No Solar panels on our farms.
5. Christine Stofka-1008 Rauch Road, Erie, MI. Christine lives near the four townships of Bedford, Ida, LaSalle and Erie. She stated the solar farms look ugly and industrial. She is concerned about our ordinance allowing specialty case basis. She stated that sounds tricky. What are the special cases? Allowing a solar farm on land zoned Agricultural Preservation (AP) is a conflict of interest. The Master Plan refers to Erie’s Agricultural land and livelihood.
6. Mark Sherwood – 2632 E. Erie Road. Erie MI. – Mark stated solar farms will degrade the property in Erie and the community. Solar panels do not fit in for Erie Township.
7. Andrea Allen – 10744 Cemetery Road, Erie, MI – Andrea commented on land owners being approached in Bedford and Ida. She is asking everyone stay vigilant. She commented that Bedford has a solid Ordinance but that Ida does not.
8. Brenda Vandercook – 2812 E. Erie Road, Erie MI. Long family farm history in community. Want to preserve land and community to remain Agricultural.
9. Theresa Pobee-Mensah- 2147 E. Erie Road, Erie, MI - Theresa stated Erie is the Best. She commented on the blessings of the rural landscape of Erie.
10. Denise Benore – 1417 Dean Road, Erie MI – Think ahead, look at the future. No solar farms on Agricultural land.

Bill Jacobs asked for Erie residents to get involved in their Township by serving on committees and boards.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Final Site Plan Review-3371 Erie Road-FisH2O (Tabled August Meeting)
FisH2O-Michigan Operations Manager, David Breneman was in attendance.
Expansion of fish farm business and loading dock. Fish H2O has purchased another business that is related. The property is currently zoned Agricultural. Need to determine with this expansion if the property will need to be re-zoned to Commercial.

David Breneman stated fresh fish are brought from Saginaw and placed into ponds on the property. Some fish are brought in dead, fully refrigerated. To remain AG, 50% of product should be live fish placed in the ponds, generated on the land. Tonnage is needed to determine live farm raised vs dead being brought in.

Currently there are four trailers and 2 semi-trucks. If allowed to expand it will increase to an additional 7 trailers and additional four semi-trucks. These trucks are on the road 6 days a week and will only be at the facility two days a week for unloading. These trucks will be hauling fresh fish.

- Paul Perry made a motion to Table the discussion regarding FisH20 until the October Planning Commission meeting. Tonnage is needed between live fish and dead fish. Dave Cousino seconded. Motion carried.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Downtown Revitalization Update

Dan Taylor stated the Downtown Revitalization Committee is working with Mannik & Smith. The Downtown Revitalization project is proposed at \$627,000. Mannik & Smith will be writing a TAP (Transportation Alternative Program) Grant request. It will probably be Autumn 2022 before we see any action if we can get a grant.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gary Wilmoth has been in touch with the plant manager of the solar field to get the property mowed and the ditches cleaned. Gary stated there is a warranty on landscaping. He will be working to resolve these issues.

10. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS

Paul Perry stated that he appreciated the public participation.

11. MEETING DATES

Park Commission	Thursday, October 7, 2021	7pm
Township Board	Tuesday, October 12, 2021	7pm
Planning Commission	Tuesday, October 19, 2021	7pm

12. ADJOURNMENT

Paul Perry made a motion to adjourn. Robert Schwartz seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Kristine Crammond
Recording Secretary

