

PLANNING COMMISSION  
Erie Township  
Erie, Michigan  
Special Meeting  
May 3, 2022

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Special Meeting of the Erie Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Erie Township Hall, Erie, Michigan.

**2. ROLL CALL**

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

Also present: Kim Cousino, acting Recording Secretary

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Robert Schwartz moved, supported by Dan Taylor to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Jeff Benore - Mr. Benore provided the commissioners with a print out of page 14 from the current Erie Township Master Plan which outlines that the Agricultural Conservation and Preservation areas are designated as such to encourage the long-term protection of farmland resources of the township. Mr. Benore also provided a copy of the survey completed by residents, which shows the majority of those surveyed support Erie Township remaining primarily a rural community.

Ricki Roelant - Shared with commissioners the petitions she has received with over two-hundred signatures of individuals in support of keeping solar arrays on industrial zoned property only.

Brenda Vandercook - Shared a map of Monroe County which details how each jurisdiction plans to regulate large solar arrays in their respective townships.

Diane La Plante - Spoke to the fact that Erie is a zoned community and has a zoning ordinance that outlines and regulates the use of property in the township.

Dan Rigatto - Spoke in regards to the fiduciary responsibility of township officials.

Gary Wilmoth - Shared that in 2005-2006 the intermodal was attempting to develop a yard in the township and force landowners to sell; he and others in the community refused to sell their land and took the matter to court, landowners prevailed on property rights.

## **6. DISCUSSION ON CURRENT SOLAR REGULATION**

Bill Jacobs stated that he, Mike Demski, and Gary Wilmoth met after the April 19, 2022 planning commission meeting at which the commissioners compiled a list of proposed amendments to the current solar regulations. The commissioners were provided with a rough draft ordinance which included the compiled list of additional regulations.

Dan Taylor stated he believes solar arrays should not be permitted on agricultural zoned properties and allowed only in industrial areas, the residents have spoken in favor of keeping Erie a rural community and preserving prime agricultural ground.

Further discussion was held.

Dan Taylor moved, supported by Manny Evola to keep solar power plants on industrial land only. Roll called; Dan Taylor - yes, Robert Schwartz - yes, Bill Jacobs - Yes, Manny Evola - yes, Paul Perry - absent, Dave Cousino - yes, Dr. Larry Guinn - yes. Motion carried.

## **7. SOLAR REGULATION RECOMMENDATION TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD**

Dave Cousino moved, supported by Larry Guinn, to make the recommendation to the township board to allow solar power plants on industrial land only. Motion carried.

## **8. MEMBER & PUBLIC COMMENT**

David Cowdrey - stated the final decision goes to the township board next week, this is only a recommendation.

Dan Taylor - Thanked everyone for coming to the meetings.

Marijan Ford - Asked if the township receives any benefit from solar being here. Treasurer Cindy Wisbon responded that the township does receive real property and personal property tax, which totals \$60,000-\$70,000 per year between the police, fire, and township operating. Cindy Wisbon also stated that the personal property tax will eventually be going away.

Bill Jacobs - stated that we do need to allow businesses into Erie to bring in revenue, the landfill will be closing in a few years and the township receives a generous amount of money from them every month allowing the township to invest in road improvements. Bill Jacobs asked Supervisor Gary Wilmoth if a committee could be formed for economic development; Gary agreed that is a great idea.

Jeff Benore - Stated there is roughly 80 acres of industrially zoned land left undeveloped in Erie Township.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Dave Cousino moved, supported by Robert Schwartz to adjourn at 7:41 p.m. Motion carried.

Kimberly Cousino  
Acting Recording Secretary