

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
ERIE TOWNSHIP  
ERIE, MICHIGAN  
Regular Meeting and Public Hearing  
October 18, 2022**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Bill Jacobs called to order the Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of the Erie Township Planning Commission on October 18, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Erie Fire Department, 2048 Manhattan, 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: Planner Megan Masson-Minock with Carlisle/ Wortman Planners, Mike Demski and Recording Secretary, Kristine Crammond.

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- Dan Taylor made a motion to approve the agenda. Manny Evola seconded. Motion carried.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Robert Schwartz made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 8, 2022 Special meeting. Paul Perry seconded. Motion carried.
- Manny Evola made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 20, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. Dan Taylor seconded. Motion carried.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Budget Report

- Paul Perry made a motion to approve the budget ending 9/30/22 and place on file. Manny Evola seconded. Motion carried.

B. Correspondence

Letter Alexandra E. Dieck-Bodman Law

- Dave Cousino made a motion to place the letter on file. Robert Schwartz seconded. Motion carried.

C. Public Comments

Diane La Plante - 1324 Sterns Road, Erie MI wanted clarification regarding the Planning Commission's procedure of the Public Hearing.

- Paul Perry made a motion to close the Regular meeting. Dan Taylor seconded. Regular meeting closed at 7:05 pm.
- Manny Evola made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Paul Perry seconded. Public Hearing opened at 7:06 pm.

7. **PUBLIC HEARING** - Proposed (2) ordinances to amend portions of the Zoning Ordinance regulating solar power plants.

Planner-Megan Masson-Minock reviewed the two zoning ordinance amendments: Solar power plants in Industrial Zones and Solar power plants with Special Use Approval in Agricultural zones.

1. David Cowdrey – 11001 Victory Road, Erie MI – David stated there is a bill in the Senate that would allow all solar power plants to be tax exempt.
2. Diane La Plante – 1324 Sterns Road, Erie MI– Diane lives near the solar field. She commented there is a need for more landscaping. The current site is not being maintained. She discussed requiring a 3-year review. Questioned noise level.
3. Gary Wilmoth-3635 Luna Pier Road, Erie MI – Gary stated this is not about solar it is about property rights. The land owner should have a say as to what they can do with their property.
4. Randy Burlen – 2801 Luna Pier Road, Erie MI -Randy stated that Gary has been petitioning other people to vote for property rights. That he should resign.
5. Jeff Benore – 2811 Erie Road, Erie MI – Jeff questioned the buffer zone. Industrial 15 ft, Agricultural 25 ft. Megan stated the setback for Industrial is 30 ft, with a buffer of 15 ft. Agricultural has a setback of 50 ft with a buffer of 25 ft.
6. Brad Jacobs – 9933 Grodi Road, Erie MI – People should not be told what they can do with their property.
7. Tony Yoakam – 1406 Sterns Road, Erie MI – We are not able to make more farm land. Solar energy will not generate enough electricity. She cited recent brownouts.
8. Sandy Dobbs – 9845 Lorden Drive, Erie MI – almost every township in this county has voted to keep solar in industrial. She is concerned that Erie would be the only township with solar throughout. Zoning Ordinances will keep Erie presentable.
9. George Correia-2450 Sterns Road, Erie MI – nuclear and coal have been shut down because of regulations. Not going to build any new plants. All fuels are being sold world-wide. Solar panels are reliable. Renewable energy is good for this country.
10. Larry La Pointe – 1066 Substation Road, Erie MI -He is in favor of solar in Agricultural. Solar benefits everyone not just the land owners. Solar provides an income stream for farmers.
11. Brenda Vandercook –2812 Erie Road, Erie MI - Limit Solar power plants to Industrial land only. She discussed following the Master Plan and following the zoning ordinance.
12. Martin McCarty – 6293 Grandview Drive, Erie MI – Discussed solar on Consumer's property in Luna Pier Michigan. Keep solar off Agricultural land.
13. Theresa Pobee-Mensah – 2147 Erie Road, Erie MI – Zoning regulates everything. She asked the Planning Commission to take courage to do what is right for Erie Township.

14. David Cowdrey – 11001 Victory Road - He stated as of June 30, 2022 there is a bill # 116 for Solar energy to be Tax Exempt. Electric generated does not stay local. It is sold to the highest bidder.
  15. Mary Tizedes – 7341 Geiger Road, Temperance MI– Zoning is about property rights and community values. Keep solar in Industrial. Zone to protect the community.
  16. Bill Saul – 4080 Stein Road La Salle MI – Solar is safe and efficient energy. No pollution. Opportunity of a lifetime to bring money into the community.
  17. Ted Taylor – 1422 Sterns Road, Erie MI – Technology has ruined nuclear energy. We can not survive on renewable energy.
  18. Nicki Martin – Best to keep solar in the South West of the country.
  19. Christine Stofka – 1008 Rauch Road, Temperance MI – She supports solar on Industrial land only. Zoning is basis of civilization. Special Use is a nightmare. It allows certain people to get approval while others do not.
  20. Paul Wohlfarth – Ottawa lake MI – There are 3700 residents in Erie Township. There are less than 100 people at this meeting. People don't care.
- Paul Perry made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Robert Schwartz seconded. Public Hearing closed at 8:07 pm.
  - Dan Taylor made a motion to open the Regular meeting. Manny Evola seconded. Regular meeting opened at 8:07 pm.

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Review Solar requirements with Planner

Proposed (2) ordinance to amend portions of the Zoning Ordinance regarding solar power plants.

Bill Jacobs stated he had more petitions and he needed a motion to place them on file.

- Robert Schwartz made a motion to place the petitions on file. Paul Perry seconded. Motion carried.
- Dan Taylor made a motion to change the buffer to 250 feet near residential zoned property. Manny Evola seconded.

**Vote**

Bill Jacobs	No
Dan Taylor	Yes
Robert Schwartz	No
Manny Evola	Yes
Paul Perry	No
Dave Cousino	Yes
Dr. Larry Guinn	Yes
Motion carried.	

- Manny Evola made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed amendment #117-X of the Erie Township Ordinance regarding solar power plants in the form drafted by the Township Planner and considered by the Planning Commission which *Removes* solar power plants as a Special Use in all Agriculturally zoned properties and which provides for solar power plants as a by-right use in the Industrial Districts which the Planning Commission finds to be in the spirit of following the guidelines of our Master Plan and which protects the integrity of our Agricultural Identity with the changes identified

by the planner at the beginning of the Public Hearing. This is to include the change of the buffer to 250 feet near residential zoned property. Dan Taylor seconded.

**Vote**

Bill Jacobs	Yes - Industrial
Dan Taylor	Yes - Industrial
Robert Schwartz	Yes - Industrial
Manny Evola	Yes - Industrial
Dave Cousino	Yes - Industrial
Dr. Larry Guinn	Yes - Industrial
Paul Perry	No

Motion carried.

Bill Jacobs stated the recommendation will be made to the Township Board for Solar in Industrial only.

B. 3949 Luna Pier Road – Station / Truckstop – Parcel 5805-010-002-00

Update questions/comments on preliminary site plan.

Mike Demski stated there has not been any new information. Table discussion until new information is available.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

None

**10. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**11. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS**

None

**12. MEETING DATES (meetings moved back 1 week for election)**

Bill Jacobs stated he would like to move the next Planning Commission meeting up one week to accommodate everyone for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

- Manny Evola made a motion to schedule the next Planning Commission meeting to Thursday November 17, 2022 at 7 pm. Robert Schwartz seconded. Motion carried.

Township Board Meeting                      Tuesday, November 15, 2022                      7:00 pm

Planning Commission Meeting                      Thursday, November 17, 2022                      7:00 pm

(Regular meeting & Public Hearing)

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

Paul Perry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dan Taylor seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Kristine Crammond  
Recording Secretary