

Springfield Township

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

May 3, 2023

Members Present: Karen Bedics, Bobb Carson, David Long, Bruce Whitesell, and Nicole Zane.

Also Present: Anthony Matzura, Jim Nilsen, Lisa Gerhart and Bill Ryker via Zoom.

Chairwoman Karen Bedics called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:05 PM and opened with the pledge of allegiance.

1. Business

- a. ECA SOLAR, 3016 Moyer Rd., Zoning Hearing Board Variance Application.
 - i. K. Bedics concerns/comments
 1. Soils, Class II, potential loss of prime farmland to Township.
 2. Property is not preserved.
 - ii. N. Zane concerns/comments
 1. Concerns about leaching from solar panels.
 2. Firefighting efforts and training for first responders.
 3. Proposal for purchasing land and then decommission the solar panels after 25-30 years.
What happens after that time?
 - iii. B. Carson concerns/comments
 1. Concerns from shorts in wiring resulting in electrical fires, batteries.
 2. Proposed community solar use and that use is not legal in PA.
 3. K. Bedics will forward link to article from Penn State Municipal Officials' Guide to Grid-Scale Solar Development in Pennsylvania.
 4. Township should support solar energy.
 5. Bond for decommissioning of panels.
 6. Array should not be expanded in future.
 7. Bedrock, stormwater infiltration.
 8. Fence and/or buffer proposed does not comply with ordinance.
 9. Conditional use.
 10. Noise from inverters.
 - iv. D. Long concerns/comments
 1. If we don't allow this use, would houses be built there?
 2. Grid scale or Community use, explanation needed?
 - v. B. Whitesell concerns/comments
 1. What is the benefit to residents?
 - vi. B. Ryker concerns/comments
 1. Is there another location in Township that this use could go on? PPL land, Hickon Road.
 - vii. Follow-up with Scott MacNair (K. Bedics) on variance use, training first responders and special equipment.

2. Minutes

- a. Approval of April 5, 2023 meeting minutes.
 - i. Minor corrections noted by B. Carson. Item 1B-correct name "Mease".
 - i. Motion by K. Bedics, seconded by D. Long, motion carried.

- b. Approval of April 20, 2023 meeting minutes.
 - ii. Minor corrections noted by B. Carson. Revise 1b - Parks and Recreation could look into a “Bike and Visit Our Township Trails” promotion.
 - i. Motion made by B. Carson, seconded by N. Zane; D. Long abstained, motion carried.

3. Correspondence

- a. K. Bedics sent programs funding for broadband expansion to members.

4. Planning Commission Comments and Project Reports

- a. Overview: Zoning Overlays (D. Long)
 - i. Review of memo from Scott MacNair.
 - ii. Discussion of Upper Saucon zoning map.
 - iii. Municipal Planning Code discussion.
 - iv. Public comment from Pete Jones, 1876 Salem Road about variances and overlay differences? Why have zoning or is it spot zoning then?
 - v. Villages, public water/sewer discussions.
 - vi. Real Estate tax and EIT taxes discussion for revenue streams. Hotel tax brought up. Event venue tax.
 - vii. Air B&B’s and taxing those properties, registering those properties, regulating those properties.
- b. Comprehensive Plan Update (D. Nicholson & B. Carson)
 - i. B. Carson provided update on latest meeting. Civil engineer and conceptual planner speakers at meeting. Streetscape and define ends of Springtown Village.
 - ii. Revenues discussed in terms of businesses and village districts.
 - iii. Affordable housing.
 - iv. Survey results and availability to public?
- c. PC Member Suggestions and Comments for Comprehensive Plan Committee and BOS meetings
 - i. K. Bedics asked for questions/comments for next comprehensive plan committee.
 - 1. Bobb and Karen will get together to discuss further.
 - ii. K. Bedics asked for comments for next BOS meeting she will attend.
 - 1. Need to coordinate with Comprehensive Plan Update and zoning overlays.
 - 2. Conflicts on BOS priorities and PC priority topics. Need to shift priorities.

5. Public Comment

- a. Pete Jones, 1876 Salem Rd.
 - i. Comprehensive plan finished before overlay districts and listen to residents’ wishes.

6. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn made by B. Carson, seconded by D. Long. Motion approved and meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.