

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
April 4, 2023
These minutes are not approved until our next meeting.

Vice-Chairman Mike Bossory called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Members present: Dan Schaible, Susan Ochs, Karen Flahie, and Mike Bossory.

Excused: Chairman Matt Little

Also in attendance were Planner Rodney Nanney, Engineer Marcus McNamara, and Supervisor Larry Lindemann.

A motion was made by Flahie with support from Bossory to adopt the agenda as amended to move Master Plan Review from new business to #3 under old business. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

A motion was made by Flahie with support from Bossory to dispense with the reading of the March 7, 2023 minutes and approve as presented. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. A motion was made by Schaible with support from Ochs to approve the March 7, 2023 minutes as presented. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Reports: Vice-Chairman Bossory reported on a 1,600-acre commercial solar project proposed in York and Augusta townships. Supervisor Lindemann reported on the budget adoption, the upcoming election on May 2, 2023, and available MTA classes for commissioners.

Audience Participation: Jan Culbertson, Scio Township planning commissioner, spoke on the Ann Arbor 2030 District nonprofit's offering of free energy audits and solar energy consultations.

New Business:

- 1) Barn Sanctuary Presentation. Cynthia VanRenterghem and Dan McKernan introduced their proposal to use approximately 70 acres of land on Ellsworth Road east of S. Fletcher Road to house and care for rescued farm animals. The facility would include group tours, field trips, seven short-term rental units, and drop-in visitors generally between May and October. Other potential activities include outdoor recreation (cross-country skiing and snowshoeing) with the intent of being a destination and place for education and to demonstrate sustainable practices. They have 16 full-time staff members plus numerous volunteers and paid internships at their current location on the McKernan farm parcel south of Chelsea. They have a small number of quarantined animals on the Ellsworth Road site currently and have a goal to move approximately 120 animals to the property within two years. In response to a question, Mr. Nanney confirmed that the Barn Sanctuary proposal is not consistent with the list of allowable uses in the AR District, and recommended a Planned Unit Development (PUD) application as the means by which this proposal could be considered by the Township. Cynthia VanRenterghem asked about amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the Barn Sanctuary in the AR zoning district. Mr. McKernan confirmed in answer to a commissioner's question that he had not checked the Township's ordinances before buying the property and proceeding with preparation of the plans presented with the initial site plan application. He also confirmed that he would abide by the Township's rules.

- 2) Stoneco – Burmeister Gravel Pit – Conditional Use Permit Amendment Application. Vice-Chairman Bossory introduced the item and Mr. Nanney provided a report. Austin Fisher from Michigan Paving and Materials (Stoneco) spoke about the proposed expansion and the vibration study, and stated that the expanded extraction operation would meet all Ordinance No. 32 requirements for berming, and for dust and noise control. The Planning Commission discussed the application and timing of a hearing. A motion was made by Flahie with support from Bossory to hold a public hearing on Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 7:30pm. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Old Business:

- 1) Consumers Energy City Gate – Updated Final Site Plan Application. Vice-Chairman Bossory introduced the item. Mr. Nanney provided a report, noting that the updated site plan received on 3/7/2023 had been incomplete, and that the additional stormwater management and exterior lighting details were received much later. Lighting details as proposed do not conform to Zoning Ordinance standards. Mr. McNamara reported that the stormwater runoff calculations were acceptable but must be included on an updated site plan. Doug Scott, project engineer from ROWE commented that this had been done in plans recently delivered to the Township Hall but not in time for distribution to the consultants or commissioners. The Planning Commission discussed the stormwater and lighting details. A motion was made by Shaible with support from Bossory to postpone action on the Consumers Energy City Gate final site plan with a request for updated plans to address lighting compliance and to include the stormwater calculations. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- 2) Review of Lake District Article 3.0 and Ordinance 43-B. Vice-Chairman Bossory introduced the item. The Planning Commission discussed elements of the potential scope of Lake zoning district revisions prepared by Mr. Nanney and the responses related to height, setback, basement story, grading, and ground floor coverage prepared by Pleasant Lake residents Chris Mikesell and Carol Westfall. It was the consensus of the commissioners to include an action item on the regular May meeting agenda to consider whether or not to amend the Zoning Ordinance for the Lake District.
- 3) Master Plan Review. No discussion or action on this item.
- 4) Adjust May meeting date. In response to a question about whether a formal action had been taken at a prior meeting to move the May meeting date to accommodate the May 2, 2023 election, a motion was made by Flahie with support from Ochs to confirm that next month's meeting is changed to Thursday, May 4, 2023 at 7:30pm. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Communications: Nothing new to report on the state legislature.

Audience Participation: Dennis Herrst, 11939 Elmdale Dr., spoke about a land combination application. Mr. McNamara reminded the commissioners of the scheduled gravel pit tour on Saturday, April 15, 2023 at 9:00am starting at the American Aggregates/Levy pit.

Vice-Chairman Bossory adjourned the meeting at 10:10pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 4, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Rodney Nanney, Acting Recording Secretary