

MINUTES
HOPE TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 5, 2022

The agenda-business meeting of the Hope Township Planning Board was held on Monday, December 5, 2022. Chairman Larena called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and he announced that notice of the meeting was given in compliance with the “Open Public Meetings Act – This meeting has been advertised in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.” He then led the Board in the pledge to the flag.

Roll Call:

Members present: Steve Larena, Brad Bartow, Matthew Koski, Chris Maier, John Koonz, Betsy Peterson, Mayor Timothy McDonough, Terry Urfer, and Robert May.

Member absent: Donna Marie

Also Present: Attorney Clifford Gibbons, Engineer Stefanie Williams, and Board Secretary Alfia Schemm.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of October 3, 2022 were distributed prior to the Board meeting. Ms. Peterson asked if the Board Secretary ever spoke with the Tax Assessor about the Park and Ride. Ms. Schemm stated that she had and she reviewed Mr. Motyka's email response.

Mr. Bartow made the motion adopt the minutes. Motion seconded by Mr. May. In a voice vote, all were in favor of adopting the minutes, except for Mr. Urfer and Mayor McDonough, who were not present at the Board's October meeting.

Bills:

French & Parrello

Re: Matarazzo \$1675.00

Dolan & Dolan

Re: Matarazzo \$674.92

Re: General \$163.04

The Board reviewed the vouchers. Mr. Koonz made the motion to approve the vouchers. Motion seconded by Mayor McDonough. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

New Business:

#22-002 Matarazzo Solar Farm, LLC., Block 200, Lots 200 & 300

Mark Bellin, Esq. was present on behalf of the Applicant. He reviewed the individuals who will present testimony this evening: the Engineer and a Sound Engineer.

Robert Streker, of Bohler Engineering, was present on behalf of the Applicant and he was sworn in and he went on to provide his Engineering qualifications. The following were displayed and marked as Exhibits:

A-1 Colorized aerial exhibit, dated 6-2-22

A-2 Colorized version of site plan

A-3 Dual use farming layout exhibit, dated 12-5-22, sheet C-301

A-4 Line of sight plan, dated 11-7-22

Mr. Streker described the property in question and the surrounding properties. He stated that they also plan on filing a companion application in White Township. He described the present site conditions, the solar farm area footprint, the different subsidies, the grid supply proposal, the proposed earth berm, tree (evergreen) planting, and fencing. He then

described Exhibit A-3 and the dual use proposal. The State subsidies (dual purpose or grid supply) were reviewed and Mr. Bellin stated that they are applying for both and they will wait to see what subsidy they receive (dual purpose or grid supply) from the State. Mr. Streker continued to describe the access driveway, the gate, the Knox box, motion sensor light, the waiver of paving the entire driveway, the slope of the driveway, the proposed panels and posts, remote monitoring, no odor or traffic, no noticeable noise generated, the inverters/fans, transformers, drainage, row crops vs. meadow mix, detention basin for quantity control, and permit status. The Board questioned the subsidies with the Applicants. Ms. Williams had questions regarding storm water and the proposed light (dark sky compliant), which were addressed by Mr. Streker. The following Board Members had questions: Mr. Maier questioned the transmission lines, the leasing of the land, and the operator of the solar farm; Mr. Bartow questioned the access for a fire truck, if there was a fire. He stated that he would like to hear from the fire department and he asked if there was any glare; Ms. Peterson questioned the fencing; Mr. Urfer questioned the life of the project and the bonding. Mr. Bellin addressed the decommissioning agreement/bonding, rollback taxes, commercial taxes, and the subsidy determination from the State of NJ. He stated that the lease is contingent on receiving the State subsidy. Mr. Maier questioned the difference in the proposal of dual use/vs. grid supply.

The meeting was opened to the public for questions of Mr. Streker.

Robert Belstra asked about the taxing /commercial assessment. Mr. Bellin stated that the project will be assessed commercially with roll back taxes.

Joe Stewart stated that he thinks that this proposal will adversely affect his property (environmentally, resale value of his home, and aesthetics). He stated that the proposal does not belong in a residential area. The Applicants stated that they provide a lifetime (of the facility) landscaping guarantee and the residents are invited to attend a site visit during the planting of the landscaping to make sure that there is sufficient screening. The Board discussed the height of the berm and the planting. Mr. Bartow asked if there is an elevation/cut cross section map, which depicts what will be seen by the homes in the area, which Mr. Streker reviewed. Mr. Maier asked if there is any data/study that can be supplied which proves that there is not an effect on neighboring homes and their resale values. Ms. Williams stated that the proposed light should be night sky compliant. Mayor McDonough left for the evening.

With there being no further public questions, the meeting was closed to the public.

John Orgar, of Colliers Engineering, was sworn in and he provided his qualifications as a sound/noise consultant and he stated that he has testified in the past on solar field applications as a noise expert. He addressed the noise generated from the proposal (inverters/transformers). He stated that the project makes no noise at night. He stated that he is not aware of any wind induced whistling/noise; however, there are established methods dealing with wind noise. The Board continued to question the proposal and what noise may be generated. Mr. Maier asked if an electromagnetic field is created. Mr. Bellin stated that they can bring an EMF Expert to address those questions and provide testimony. Mr. Maier also asked about other possible disturbances and his concern that the project can impact the quality of life for the nearby residents. Mr. Bellin stated that

they are not trying to create a nuisance and Mr. Orgar stated that there are established ways to direct air flow. Mr. Bellin stated that the issue can be addressed as a condition of an approval.

The meeting was opened to the public for questions of Mr. Orgar.

Monica Sobon questioned the impacts to insects/wildlife/bees and the planting of native landscaping.

Joe Stewart questioned whether the proposal is a permitted use and he stated his concerns over this project being installed in a residential area.

Mr. Maier questioned the status of the State regulations, which Mr. Bellin addressed and he also described the permitting and build out time frame.

With there being no further public questions, the hearing was closed to the public.

Mr. Bellin stated that they have concluded for this evening. The Board discussed a January meeting date and the availability of the professionals.

Mr. Bartow made the motion to schedule a meeting on January 9, 2023. Motion seconded by Mr. Koonz. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

The Applicant requested that they be carried to the Board's February meeting. It was announced that this matter is being carried to the Board's February meeting of February 6, 2023, without further public notice.

Other Business:

Zoning Discussion

Ms. Peterson stated that what has been circulated, for discussion, is per the Board's request back at the October meeting.

Adjournment:

With there being no further business a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Alfia Schemm
Board Secretary
12/26/22