

Midland Township
Planning Commission Meeting
February 7, 2024

Call to order 7:06 pm

Board:

Deb Braeutigam
Andrea DuBois
Robin Holt
Tim Mott

Guests:

Nathan Hightower: ESA Solar Energy
Spencer Denman: ESA Solar Energy
Dave Bosco: Father-in-law owns the property

Approval of January 3, 2024 meeting minutes as they stand: moved by Robin Holt, seconded by Tim Mott. Minutes approved as they stand.

Old Business

Further discussion regarding ESA Solar Special Use application

Information came from Robin Holt in her research over the past month

- Info from Ohio Chapter of the American Planning Association webinar
 - BES system isn't entirely new
 - Risk and nuisance differ between different types (ie: thermal run-away)
 - Life span is tough to estimate
 - In Minnesota, BESS systems can be in all zoning districts—called an accessory facility
 - Minnesota: Recycling for the decommissioned batteries
 - Minnesota: Units are climate controlled
 - Only 22 battery fires from similar facilities across the nation since 2012
 - Noise is due to AC units in the summer
 - Don't have to be white—just cooler in the summer
- Info from Michigan Townships Association (MTA) webinar
 - Covered PA 233 and PA 234: Renewable Energy Bill
 - Goes into effect: PA 233 goes into effect 11/24; PA 234 goes into effect 2/24
 - Company can go to the state after these ordinances go into effect
- Township Attorney, Andrew Thompson correspondence
 - Is this a public utility? Still a question
 - Under our ordinance it would be a utility, tough to make a distinction at this point
 - No more hazardous than substation that already exists
 - Safety plan would be imperative before continuing
 - Bring in a planning or engineering consultant (Spicer Group) before making a decision

- Jennifer Stewart, Planning Consultant from Spicer Group thoughts and opinion
 - Cost will be passed onto the inquiring company if brought to the attention of the company before application
 - Jennifer Stewart will be drafting a letter with possible fees (attorney/Spicer Group/etc.) for review by the Midland Township Board
 - More fees will be incurred as the process goes on (newspaper publishing, professional services, etc.)
 - She will offer more guidance as the process progresses

- Cindy Winland phone conversation
 - She asked if there were any questions that needed to be answered
 - Timeline: tabled original meeting (December) until March 6, 2024. This will be a public hearing to present information (Prior to this meeting, notices will go out/be published)
 - Approve/deny a recommendation to the board at March 6, 2024 meeting OR table until June
 - Option of having an on site tour by ESA in April–prior to a June meeting

Public Comment

Nathan Hightower: Sub station ownership reviewed (ITC is the owner of the substation—a subsidiary of Consumers Energy)
 Other companies can “wield” power from this source
 Consumers Energy doesn’t have enough power for needs so they get power from other places (California or Maine)
 Why this location? This location has available load and available generation (capacity); maybe a matter of convenience—maybe look into Dow property

Other business

Next meeting date is March 6, 2024 for a public hearing at 7 pm on same matter

Adjournment

Robin Holt adjourns the meeting at 7:52; seconded by Andrea DuBois. Meeting adjourned.