

MIDLAND TOWNSHIP
PLANNING/ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
September 4, 2024
7:00pm

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 7:00 by Robin Holt, seconded by Andrea DuBois.

Attendance: Board: Guests:
Deb Braeutigam (see attached list)
Andrea DuBois
Paul Heyse
Robin Holt
Tim Mott

Approval of August 7, 2024 meeting minutes: Robin Holt called for approval of August 7 regular planning meeting minutes, Andrea DuBois seconded. Minutes approved as they stand.

Summary of findings regarding Special Land Use Permit application for proposed Battery Energy Storage System located on South Bus Road

Public Hearing – Robin went through the “rules” of a public hearing. She also explained the process of the decision to be made. She stated that much research has been done and we have asked many questions. We have found the answers as well.

Public input

- ESA spokesperson briefly reviewed the project and explained their purpose in attending the meeting.

Attorney was introduced and asked the ESA representative about the process of the project.

Residents asked ESA representative about the progress with their connection to the sub station.

Residents asked ESA representative about experience in building in a residential area.

Attorney asked ESA representative to explain the difference between the sub station and the BESS system. Added the question, “how does this compare to a transformer.”

Resident asked ESA representative how the power gets to the batteries.

Resident asked ESA representative about what will happen after the initial construction is completed.

Attorney associate asked ESA representative about voltage going into and coming out of batteries. Usage will be determined by time of day/time of year.

Attorney asked ESA representative about the noise level to be emitted by the generators and batteries. Sound was no more than ambient noise; no multiplicity effect.

Resident asked ESA representative about the displacement of animals; more animals will show up in their back yards.

Resident asked ESA representative about fire hazard of BESS System.

Attorney asked ESA representative about any new hazards from the BESS System. Will there be additional training for fire departments?

Attorney asked ESA representative about “worse case scenario” for this unit. (Something crashes into it, fire breaks out. Batteries are shut down automatically.) Followed up with the question about a hazard radius (200 feet and the closest house is 500 feet away.)

Attorney asked ESA representative about the decommissioning bond. (Batteries get hauled away as they are brought in.)

Attorney asked ESA representative about decommissioning the land. (Must be put back to the original state. All concrete must be taken out and seeded.)

Resident asked ESA representative about the need for batteries.

Resident asked ESA representative about the quote on the ESA flier “\$750,000 awarded to the Township”, etc.

Attorney asked ESA representative about the inflation of decommissioning bond.

Resident asked ESA representative about finding a different access road to the property. (ESA representative reported that they tried to go through the sub station, but it is private property, not responding to requests.)

Board member asked how the cost of the battery storage will be put on the consumer. (Private development will take care of costs; not a utility, costs not transferred to Consumers, etc.)

Close public hearing

- Planning Commission consideration of Special Land Use application (revised July 2024)

Board member spoke to Michigan Township Association and Michigan Public Service Commission and he cannot recommend the installation of the BESS System. No more information was given as to the nature of the discussion.

Board member asked about the public utility-ness of the BESS System

Robin Holt moved, based on information gathered and through township ordinances and compliance by ESA Solar, to recommend approval of the ESA Solar proposal to the township board. Motion failed due to lack of support.

Andrea DuBois moved to table the SLU permit application to a public hearing to be held November 6, 2024 for purposes of further research into public utilities and to look at literature to be provided (ie: noise studies, hazard radius, additional fire training, property values, etc). Robin Holt Seconded.

Deb Braeutigam Yes

Andrea DuBois Yes

Paul Heyse Yes

Robin Holt Yes

Tim Mott Yes

Motion carried.

Site Plan Review – Proposed BESS location (Postponed until the November 6, 2024 meeting.)

Other Business

Midland Planning Commission will meet on October 2, 2024 to go over the literature to be provided. Also to look at the ordinances (again) about public utilities.

Public Comment

More discussion about the definition of a public utility.

Adjournment: Robin Holt adjourned the meeting at 8:31pm; seconded by Andrea DuBois. Meeting adjourned.

Next scheduled meeting is Wednesday October 2, 2024.