

COVERT TOWNSHIP

PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2024 REGULAR MEETING

6:30 P.M., COVERT TOWNSHIP HALL

Call to Order / Roll Call / Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Rendell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Robert Brown, Tom Bury, Luke Dennison, Jena Johnson, Wayne Rendell, Lonzey Taylor

Members Absent: Austin Harding

Others Present: Rebecca Harvey, Township Planning Consultant

Chair Rendell introduced and welcomed new Planning Commission member Tom Bury.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Taylor, seconded by Brown, to approve the agenda of the February 21, 2024 regular meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes – January 17, 2024 Regular Meeting

Johnson advised that the spelling of her name should be corrected to read 'Jena'. Motion by Brown, seconded by Chair Rendell, to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024 regular meeting, as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

No further comment was offered on non-agenda items.

Public Hearing: Text Amendments – Lake Access Regulations (Keyhole Development/Anti-Funneling)

Chair Rendell stated that the next matter to come before the Commission was consideration of the proposed amendments to Section 2.02 – Definitions and Sections 15.01/15.02 – Schedule of Regulations (Table & Notes), and the proposed addition of Section 18.34 – Non-Public Waterfront Access Lot Regulations so as to address ‘keyhole development’ in the Township.

Chair Rendell opened the public hearing.

Harvey provided an overview of the draft text, highlighting the changes made pursuant to the Commission’s review in January.

No public comment was offered on the matter and the public comment portion of the public hearing was closed.

Motion by Brown, seconded by Chair Rendell, to recommend Township Board approval of the proposed amendments to Section 2.02 – Definitions and Sections 15.01/15.02 – Schedule of Regulations (Table & Notes), and the proposed addition of Section 18.34 – Non-Public Waterfront Access Lot Regulations so as to address ‘keyhole development’ in the Township, as referenced in public hearing notice items #1 - #4 and as presented in the ‘public hearing draft’ text. Motion carried unanimously.

Ongoing Business

2023 Planning Commission Annual Report

Harvey provided an overview of the 2023 Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Summary Table, noting again the significant work accomplished by the Commission in 2023.

Motion by Dennison, seconded by Bury, to accept the 2023 Planning Commission Annual Report and Work Summary Table as presented and to distribute same to Township Board for information. Motion carried unanimously.

2024 Planning Commission Work Plan

Harvey provided an overview of the 2024 Planning Commission Work Plan, highlighting the changes made pursuant to the Commission's review in January.

Taylor noted the importance of including a joint meeting of the boards in the Work Plan given the nature and quantity of projects being introduced in 2024.

General discussion ensued as to whether the Work Plan should be expanded to also include a discussion on the need for Zoning Ordinance amendments to address large- and/or small-scale principal use solar energy systems (SES), as well as battery storage systems.

There was consensus to modify the Work Plan to add the aforementioned items, noting the battery storage systems as a Priority #1 item, with work on the solar energy systems amendments to follow.

Motion by Chair Rendell, seconded by Taylor, to approve the 2024 Planning Commission Work Plan as modified. Motion carried unanimously.

Text Amendment: Solar Energy Systems

Chair Rendell reminded that the Township Board considered the Planning Commission's recommended amendments related to 'solar energy systems' in November, 2023 and acted to return the proposed text to the Planning Commission to consider questions related to location standards for ground-mounted SES and the 'secure enclosure' requirement applicable to battery systems. The questions were considered by the Commission in January and modifications were agreed upon.

Harvey provided an overview of the revised draft text, highlighting the changes made pursuant to the Commission's review of the Township Board's questions in January.

It was agreed that the revised text accurately reflects the discussion of the Commission and that the recommended amendments may be returned to the Township Board

New Business

Discussion: Battery Storage Facilities

Harvey referenced three informational articles on 'battery storage facilities' and the recently adopted zoning text for same by the City of Walker.

Following discussion of the material provided, Commission members expressed support for the format and general content of the sample ordinance provided

Harvey was directed to prepare draft text based on the City of Walker ordinance for Planning Commission consideration in March.

Communications

Harvey reported on the status of the Master Plan/Coastal Management Plan project. She advised that the submission of the preliminary draft plan remains on schedule for late February. It was suggested that Planning Commission review of the preliminary draft plan and a discussion of 'next steps' can be tentatively scheduled for March.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rebecca Harvey, AICP, PCP
(McKenna)
Township Planning Consultant