

Covert Township

Planning Commission Minutes

Regular Meeting, June 15, 2022

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Harding at 6:30 PM.

Present: Brown, Berry, Harrington, Taylor, Harding, and Rendell

Absent: Hawood

Others Present: Rebecca Harvey, Planning Consultant.

Approval of minutes:

A motion was made by Berry and seconded by Taylor to Approve the Minutes from the May 18, 2022 meeting as presented.

Motion Carried with 1 No Vote and 5 Yes Votes.

Public Comment Concerning Non-Agenda Items:

Jessy Walker talked about the benefits of having a solar energy array. He has solar energy at his home on 38th street and encouraged us not to limit their instillation.

Public Hearing Items:

Public Hearing on Text Amendment – Section 18.24 B. and C. – Requirements for Dwelling Unit:

Motion by Taylor seconded by Berry to open the public hearing.

Rebecca Harvey explained to the audience why the text amendment was needed and why we were doing the amendment.

There was no public comment on the text amendment.

Motion by Taylor seconded by Brown to close the public hearing.

Motion by Brown seconded by Harding send the text amendment to section 18.24 B. and C.

“Requirements for Dwelling Unit” to the Township Board and recommend approval.

Motion carried.

Ongoing Business:

Text Amendment – Solar Energy Facilities:

We reviewed draft # 1 prepared by Rebecca Harvey. After much discussion we had several recommended changes to draft # 1. Rebecca Harvey said that would incorporate the changes into a new draft and send them out to the board next week. This will give us time to look it over and to show it to anyone that we think qualified to make recommendations for changes.

Rebecca Harvey will also give a copy to Ted Hanson, Covert's Building Inspector, for him to look over and make suggestions if needed.

New Business:

Rendell suggested that we add a review of our ordinance "Section 26.09 Contiguous Nonconforming Lots in Common" to our 2002-2003 Work Plan.

After discussion it was agreed to add it to our work plan.

Communications:

None

Next meeting date:

Next regular Meeting – July 20 at 6:30 PM

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Wayne Rendell, secretary

1. Lower Energy Costs

Like any product, electric power is subject to the laws of supply and demand. The higher the demand, the more the suppliers (public utilities) can charge for it. But, when more homes generate their own power through solar panel systems, they rely less on energy produced by the utility. The savings of solar don't just apply to individual homeowners, but to all customers in the service area.

2. Improvements for the Environment

Most power plants run on fossil fuels. In order to create electricity, generators are usually powered by burning natural gas, coal, or oil. This results in a buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which leads to a host of issues ranging from air pollution to climate change.

The constant demand for power means more and more greenhouse gases are entering the air. According to the EPA, electricity generation is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the country. Widespread use of solar energy, however, reduces the need for energy from power plants. As a result, the dependence on fossil fuels is diminished. This in turn is beneficial for the local environment.

3. Taking Pressure Off the Grid

Delivering power to homes throughout a community or service area is a massive undertaking. In addition to the fuel demands of powering a city or town, the infrastructure to deliver electricity is enormous, as is the cost of maintaining it.

This is what people mean when they are talking about "the grid." The core responsibility of public utilities is to maintain all aspects of the grid to keep power flowing constantly. It is a never-ending job, and one you and your neighbors pay for every month via your electric bill.

However, when individual homes generate their own electricity through solar power, this reduces the amount of power the grid needs to produce. And, when there is a surplus of power, homes with solar power that are connected to the grid can help support the community as a whole.

- *Integration and Storage of Solar Power*

Solar integration and surplus output to the grid may help with energy consumption when the sun is out, but what about at night or in periods of inclement weather? To counter this issue, public utilities are exploring the possibilities of large-scale battery storage for solar power.

4. Improving the Value of Homes

As more homeowners go solar, the value of properties with solar power systems will continue to grow. Homeowners who invest in solar power on their property enjoy not only energy independence but the satisfaction of helping their community and the environment. If you sell your house, a functioning solar panel system is a major asset. According to Zillow, homes powered by solar can sell for over 4 percent more than a comparable house without solar power.

Solar panels are designed to be nonreflective, and they blend in seamlessly with roofing shingles and paneling. What's more, neighborhoods with many houses utilizing solar tend to get a significantly

larger amount of sunshine due to having cleared an area for their solar panels, so they are already happier on average (can aid with seasonal depression issues).

5. Local Economic Stimulus

Solar energy is a growing part of the U.S. economy. Clean energy companies employed 113,456 Michiganders at the end of 2020, a 9.5 percent drop from 2019 and the first year-to-year decline since Clean Jobs Midwest began tracking Michigan clean energy jobs in 2017. But Michigan's clean energy sector grew by 20.4 percent in the second half of the year, exceeding the overall state economy's job growth rate in that period. Despite the industry's overall decline, more than twice as many Michiganders worked in clean energy than the number of lawyers, accountants and auditors, web developers, and real estate agents combined.

So, when you invest in solar, you are also investing in the people and companies that make the energy-efficient solutions for your home possible. Ultimately, this drives all of the other benefits we've discussed so far. Lower electric bills, a healthier environment, less demand for nonrenewable energy, and higher home values are all possible because homeowners like you push for an efficient, comfortable, and affordable way to power your home.



