



# Watertown Township

2630 South Sandusky Road, Sandusky, Michigan

48471

## Watertown Township Planning Commission

**Unapproved Minutes: Thursday June 20th, 2024 - 6:00 P.M. Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER WITH PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE @ 6:03 PM by Chairman Jim Hacker**

**PRESENT:** Becky Cambridge, Nathan Campbell, Mark Batkie, Jim Hacker, Al Stoutenburg, Jim Franzel, and Jason Radloff

**ABSENT:**

**GUESTS:** Scott Kenny, Marc Kaszubski, Mike Homier, Clint Stoutenburg, Rick Pangborn, Ray Welker, Mike & Christine Papp, Jim & Holli Boyles, Dale & Phyllis Chambers, Dave Faber, Lori Cowley, Mike & Karen Smith, Jeff Renaudin, Bill Parrish, Mike & Lyne' Stauffer, Steve Scribner, Randy Fahs, Soyoung Park, Seth Arthur, Han Jo Jung, Mike Butler, Dick Henderson, Nick Stone, and many others.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES FROM THE LAST BOARD MEETING:**

*Motion to accept the minutes as presented by: Nathan Campbell, Support By: Al Stoutenburg, motion passed unanimously*

**ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO AGENDA:**

*Motion to accept the agenda as presented by: Becky Cambridge, Support By: Nathan Campbell, motion passed unanimously*

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Letter from O'Reilly Rancilio P.C., Marc Kaszubski

**PUBLIC OFFICIALS:** none

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:** none

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**Opened @ 6:06PM**

Presentation by Watertown Solar, LLC. Soyoung Park talked about the project overview, benefits, and general information pertaining to there proposed solar development spanning over 500 acres within the township. Mike Butler from TRC, Watertown Solar's engineer went into more detail of the project's layout, design, and discussed the buffer area and setbacks. Soyoung asks that the township approves the current application because they respect the township and all that they have done in amending the solar ordinance and they would like to build under the township ordinance. If the application is denied they would then go to the state and would build under the less restrictive ordinance with smaller setbacks that the state has.

**PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS:**

1. Marc Kaszubski representing citizens of the township questioned if the application was complete, his review it is missing an agreement for the power generated to be purchased by a utility, he talked about the over development of renewables within the state and how much farm land is being taken out of

production. He also talked about the negatives of an industrial solar development within the community. Hail storms, chemicals getting into the ground, also the Master Plan Survey and people do not want solar or wind within the community. Urges the PC not to vote tonight until the application is complete and all considerations are taken.

2. Jim Cambridge questioned if Watertown Solar is going to drill into the aquifer for soil testing and if they are how are they going to plug the holes. He also asked how the holes were plugged with the sampling that they already have done.
3. Mike Smith a resident of 35yrs read a letter he wrote, asking the PC to represent the constituents, that we stand for our constitutional republic, and embrace integrity embracing the future for our children. He talked about agenda 2030 and the plan of them to take control of our land, water and food in the name of climate change. He talked about the unsustainability of renewable energy powering homes.
4. Rick Pangborn talked about buying his home over 60 years ago and planting trees and developing his home and landscaping. He talked about his discussions with Samsung Jim and later finding out that he was trying to be bribed to sign a good neighbor agreement. He has tried to sell his home but can not once the word solar is brought up. He received an offer that was \$50,000 less than the original offer he can't sell.
5. Ray Welker, a neighbor to Rick agrees with what he said. He questioned if the panels will really come out after 35 years. He asked where the panels are being imported from? He questioned the cadmium Tellurite in the panels and where they are going to be disposed of. He asked if there is going to be a second phase of development. He also questioned where the electricity is going to go, is it going to benefit us locally.
6. Peter Sinclair a resident of Midland a videographer that talked about his interviews that he has conducted with people around the state about positive effects of large solar developments. He stated there has not been any contamination of water because of a solar development. He talked about the added benefits for the bugs and pollinator habitats.
7. Dick Henderson talked about the thing that jumps out at him is the talk about money. He reminded the board that they represent the township. The township has over \$800,000.00 and can't spend it, why does it need more.
8. Sam Owens with the Land and Liberty Coalition, he farms over 600 acres, they support the approval of the application by Watertown Solar. He does not want to see it go to the state, agrees that it should stay at the local level.
9. Joe Selleke Ayotte Rd., not super excited about the project, from where he stands there's an ultimatum and he does not want the state to take over. Hopefully there's a plan if the development gets voted down.
10. Randy Fahs did his own research before signing with Watertown Solar. He supports the project, its going to bring a lot of revenue into the township. He looks at it as its his land and should be able to use it how he wants to.
11. Jeff Renaudin asks about the state mandate. He would like to know if the application is approved is Watertown Solar going to go to the state for a smaller setback.

***PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED @ 6:58PM***

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Jason Radloff asks Samsung (Watertown Solar) will they stick to their current application after Act 233 comes into effect the end of November. Their answer is that if their application is approved before Act 233 comes into effect, they will build to their current application. If the application is not approved before Act 233 comes into effect, then they will proceed to the state for approval.
2. Discussion of other areas of the site plan. The PC pointed out areas that were missing trees in the buffer zone.
3. Becky asked how the holes were plugged when the soil testing was done.
4. Discussion of how the noise model was created.
5. Mike Smith asked about the frequency level that the inverters and solar arrays produced. He is worried about the different frequency levels and how they affect health.

6. Al questioned about the tax dollars that may or may not come into the township thru taxes. The state has made changes about how renewable energy is getting taxed. There answer is that they are not tax experts that did not put together the economic study. The PC discussed the tax issue more and Samsung used figures in their presentation to represent the PILT program. Mike Homier told the PC about the solar facilities reduction tax act, explaining the depreciation over time.
7. Discussion of including the substation on the application. More discussion of the noise made by inverters and substations.
8. Jason asked about the agreement between ITC and Samsung for purchasing the power generated. Conclusion is that it could be a condition of approval.
9. Becky asked about the cleaning solution used to clean the panels. The answer is that they mainly depend on the rain to keep the panels clean.
10. Becky asked about the panels and if there's a liquid inside that we should be concerned about leaking into the ground water if they were broken.

**QUESTIONS WITH THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER:**

Spaulding DeDecker was present to talk about there review of the submitted site plan. The outstanding items could be requirements of an approval with conditions. Jim asked why the screening was overlooked and also the agreement with ITC. Jason asked if Spaulding DeDecker reviewed the ordinance 200 and asked where wells and sceptic systems were listed. Also, if there was a traffic study.

**DISCUSSION WITH ATTORNEY:**

Discussion about Act 234 that pertains to revoking a permit if conditions are not meant. Since January permits can not be revoked if conditions are not meant. Conditions have to be drafted in a contractual manner so they can be decided in court. Conditions and resolutions are necessary because certain big projects are exempt from building permits. Conditions need to be made to hold the developer accountable. There are more conditions that need to be made in order to move forward. Samsung needs to submit a new updated site plan for review. Discussion of setting a new date.

*Motion to set a meeting date of August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 @ 6PM for further review of Samsung's revised application and site plan, by: Jason Radloff, Support by: Becky Cambridge, motion passed unanimously*

**ADJOURN:** *Motion By: Jason Radloff @ 8:17 PM Support By: Al Stoutenburg, motion passed unanimously*

**Next Planning Board Meeting Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 at 6:00 pm.**