

TOWN OF DICKINSON PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes for February 26, 2024

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m. by Chairman Van Houten

Members Present: H. Van Houten, J. Ford, D. Morello, B. Sands

Absent: J. Mickelson

Also attending: Councilman T. Burns, Councilwoman S. Exley, K. Doyle, T. Gourley, PE, B. Blaise

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes: Approval of January 29, 2024 minutes. No comments or corrections proposed. Motion to approve by D. Morello with second by B. Sands. All in favor. Motion passed.

Comprehensive Plan Update: Chairman Van Houten gave an update on his contact with County Planning for assistance with the Comprehensive Plan update. He has had one meeting with Beth Lucas so far and learned that a cost would be involved and that County Planning is currently booked up and unable to take on this assistance at this time. She will get back with Hans soon on possible help the County could provide. Member discussion involved extent of help likely desired and possibly limiting help to specific topics, tables and graphic presentation and if this would adjust cost. Hans indicated that all members are welcome to attend the next County Planning meeting once it is set up. Debbie advised she has provided Judie with her assigned section update but is still in need of information on businesses in the town. It was suggested she contact Darrell for a possible business list.

New Business:

Solar Farm 494 and 518 Glenwood Road

Tim Gourley, PE, project engineer, was invited to present an update on changes included in the new project submission resulting from new requirements in the revised Town Solar Code and Solar Overlay Zone. A handout was provided and reviewed indicating addition of another parcel along the north side of the project (Kocak property), increased spacing between panel rows and increased distances from panels to property lines and residences. The new submission includes changes to the EAF forms, O&M Plan, Decommissioning Plan, Noise & Glare Report, SWPPP and Viewshed Analysis. A preliminary fire safety plan is now also added as required.

Following Tim's presentation, members and officials present provided information, asked questions and noted concerns. Kyle Doyle advised Tim of need to combine the three parcels in the project site to one parcel with one address in order to process a building permit. Kyle also advised of County requirement to obtain a permit to allow any work within the County road R.O.W. Questions and concerns continued with the following comments from member Ford.

1. The three small wetlands identified and protected on prior plans are now gone with panels covering these areas. Tim advised that they have been in contact with the Corp of Engineers and are awaiting confirmation that these small areas are not under any jurisdiction. If confirmed, panels will be installed as shown. Tim advised that the Kocak property was checked and no wetland locations were identified.

2. Page 3 of Stormwater Discharge Permit form shows only 17 acres of disturbed area. This seems low considering project involves removal of trees on 26.35 acres with stump removal as necessary when in conflict with foundations and likely conflict with underground wiring. Tim advised the 17 acres referred to areas of repeat equipment tracking. This limitation should be reviewed.
3. EAF page 6 lists 0.01 acres of impervious surface for the entire project. This disregards any possible storm water impacts of the panels. Since the panels do not run with the contours, scenario 2 of DEC Memorandum of Feb.21,2020 applies. Can the requirements of this criteria be met without considering the panels in the quantity control sizing criteria of chapter 4 of the Stormwater Design Manual. This is a long standing question still to be resolved.
4. Use of an Envirotran Solar Transformer with Envirotemp FR3 biodegradable fluid should be specified for this project.
5. Existing trees along the east side of Glenwood Road should remain for added project screening where possible.
6. A defined drainage route to the roadside ditch should be established for both outlet ends of the proposed waterbar along the west side of the project. This should include grading of the south access road to function as this flow path.

Comments from Board members also expressed concern for protection of evergreen trees for screening along the west side of the project. Use of netting was suggested to resist deer damage. Tim advised that the tree type selected is rated as deer resistant but should tree damage ever happen, the owner would be responsible to correct in order to maintain screening.

Discussion about the decommissioning plan included Tim's reference to the required review and update every 3 years. It was noted that the Town Engineer is required to review the Decommissioning Plan and cost estimate and make a recommendation to the Planning Board as part of the review process.

A discussion on resumption of the project reviews, including the 239 reviews, indicated that the process will start as soon as notice of official State recording of the two new solar laws is received. Hans will check with the Town Attorney.

VISITOR COMMENTS:

Councilwoman Exley brought up desired inclusion of housing need in the Comprehensive Plan update. She also advised that the County was having a presentation of the “County Housing Assessment Report” the following evening at the County Library. The report includes the Town of Dickinson. The report is also available on the County Planning web site. She recommended reading the executive summary.

NEXT MEETING: March 25, 2024

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by B. Sands, seconded by J. Ford. All in favor – meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.