

MINUTES
Blue Earth County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Wednesday September 6, 2017
7:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:13 p.m. by Chairman Lyle Femrite. Planning Commission members present were Bill Anderson, Kurt Anderson, Kip Bruender, Lyle Femrite, Barry Jacques, Michael Riley, and Joe Smentek. County staff members Garrett Rohlfing, Aaron Stubbs and George Leary were also present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Jacques made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 2, 2017 Regular Planning Commission Meeting. Mr. Bruender seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Femrite asked Mr. Leary how the Planning Commission should proceed with the first item on the agenda.

Mr. Leary stated the Chairman should ask the applicant whether or not he wished to proceed with his request.

4. NEW BUSINESS

PC 16-17

Gross Revocable Family Trust - Request for review and approval of an After-the-Fact Conditional Use Permit for the movement and placement of fill within the Bluff Impact Zone for the purpose of bringing an existing lake access path into compliance with County Zoning regulations. The property is zoned Rural Residence, and is also within the Shoreland Overlay District of Lake Washington. The property is described as Lot 6, Block 1 of the Gurni Subdivision, and the portion of the now vacated CSAH 2 adjacent to the property. All located in part of the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 20, Jamestown Township.

Mr. Smentek motioned to continue the item to the October Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Kurt Anderson seconded the motion.

Mr. Leary stated that if the applicant elected to withdraw the application pending the action on his continued Board of Adjustment case, the County would not need to be concerned with the 60-day rule.

Mr. Gross asked for clarification on what the 60-day rule is.

Mr. Stubbs explained the 60-day rule to the applicant.

Mr. Gross asked whether or not this meant he would have to pay an additional application fee. The applicant requested this item be delayed until the regularly scheduled October Planning Commission hearing.

Mr. Smentek withdrew his motion.

PC 17-17

Roy Laborde and USS Rapidan Solar, LLC - Request for review and approval of a conditional use permit to allow seasonal use of the property for fall festivals. The property is zoned Rural Residence and is located within the Urban Fringe Overlay District of the City of Mankato. The site location is in the Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 4, Decoria Township.

Mr. Stubbs presented the staff report.

David Watts spoke on behalf of USS Rapidan Solar, LLC. Mr. Watts stated they had amended the initial Site Plan based on the County Highway review. He provided the Planning Commission and staff with a copy of the revised Site Plan. He also added two proposed findings to the proposed findings provided by staff.

Mr. Watts stated the conditions proposed by staff were both wise and fair.

Mr. Kurt Anderson asked the applicant about the 2013 State Legislature mandate regarding the requirement that by 2020, all public utilities generate at least 1.5% of their energy from solar energy.

Mr. Watts stated he did not have the current figures in front of him, but based on the number of projects that are constructed or being constructed, he feels as though the industry is or target to surpass the goal initiated by the 2013 State Legislature.

Roy Laborde requested the project be approved. He stated he felt this proposal would improve the area. Mr. Laborde also stated his house is the only house that will have a direct view of the project, the other surrounding homes are screened by trees and other topographic features.

There was no further public comments.

Mr. Femrite stated staff had put together a very thorough report.

Mr. Kurt Anderson stated that the ever increasing size and scale of modern farming, makes it difficult for smaller pieces of farm ground to engage in farming activities. It is his opinion that using the smaller parcels for solar is a viable option for property owners, and he fully supports the request.

Mr. Femrite stated he was glad to see the road access had moved. It is his opinion that the County does not need additional access points along County roads.

There was no further discussion. Mr. Smentek made a motion to adopt the proposed findings as presented by staff, and recommend approval of the request with the conditions included by staff to the County Board.

Mr. Bill Anderson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Leary indicated there was no further business.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Smentek made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Bruender and the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Planning Commission Chair

Date

Planning Commission Secretary

Date