

## **MINUTES**

### **Blue Earth County Planning Commission**

#### **Regular Meeting**

**Wednesday July 11, 2018**

**7:00 p.m.**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Lyle Femrite. Planning Commission members present were Bill Anderson, Kurt Anderson, Lyle Femrite, Barry Jacques and Michael Riley. County staff member George Leary was also present.

#### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Kurt Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes for the June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018 regular Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Bill Anderson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Leary indicated there was no change to the agenda.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

### **PC 14-18**

**Key Cities Conservation Club** - Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a grading project. The project will require the movement of approximately 715 cubic yards of material for the creation of a berm to enhance the use of the property for firearms educational and training purposes. The property is zoned Agricultural and is located in parts of the Southern Half of the Southeast Quarter of Section 29, Jamestown Township.

Mr. Leary presented the staff report.

The applicant was present and made no further comment.

Mr. Femrite commented that staff had done a good job of presenting the details and asked if Planning Commission members had any concerns.

Mr. Kurt Anderson mentioned that he is an active member of the Key Cities Conservation Club and that members of the club contacted him in April and May 2018 to discuss the proposed project and seek his opinion and advice on whether it was a feasible proposal worthy of the attention of the Board. He added that he also addressed Members of the Board of Directors of the Club at their June monthly meeting to explain the process to them and to let them know what was going on.

Mr. Femrite added that he was aware and involved with the original Conditional Use Permit in 1985 for the grading and improvement of the road on the property, and that the proposal is in a good location and has adequate screening. Mr. Jacques added that it was a perfect place.

Mr. Kurt Anderson continued with a motion to approve the request with the findings proposed by staff. Mr. Jacques seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Femrite brought to the attention of the Planning Commission, information in the news regarding issues raised about the Solar Project that was brought before the commission during their June monthly meeting.

Mr. Bill Anderson mentioned that he was concerned about the energy capacity they will create for that line and the fact that it will probably be too close together.

Mr. Kurt Anderson also mentioned that, when a project of this nature is proposed, the applicant will have a connectivity agreement with a power company. And if the feed line they are tying into won't handle it, the power company will inform the applicant. He added that, during the prior workshop for the putting together of the solar ordinance the following issues were discussed: the diminished efficiency for these solar arrays as the distance from substations increases; how there is a finite number of substations and a finite number of suitable sites along with it; and that the person constructing the array and owning it certainly has the option to pay out of their own pockets to upgrade substations and service lines.

Mr. Kurt Anderson again added that, the consensus was that, there is a point of diminishing profitability that exist, and until some of the market factors change, investors are probably going to be limited by those initial efficiency factors relating to distance from the existing substations.

Mr. Kurt Anderson again asked if the Cities of Mapleton and Lake Crystal had adopted any type of solar ordinance with their city charters. He added that it will be beneficial if representatives from the various municipalities are invited during the discussions and are exposed to the body of work that has already been created, and the questions and ideas that have been presented to Blue Earth County regarding the solar ordinance.

Mr. Jacques commented that BENCO Electric Cooperative has been eliminating substations and upgrading their lines across the county because farmers needed less power due to increase efficiency. Therefore, this could result in a density issue since substations are located further apart.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Jacques made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bill Anderson seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

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Planning Commission Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Planning Commission Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date