



## Conway Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 | 7:00pm EST

Fowlerville Jr. High Auditorium | 7677 Sharpe Road, Fowlerville, MI 48836

Agenda	Items Discussed	Actions to be Taken
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>PC Members Present: Jeff Klein, Meghan Swain-Kuch, Dave Whitt, George Pushies - Ex-Officio, Shawn Morrison, Lucas Curd, and Kayla Poissant</p> <p>Zoning Administrator – Gary Klein</p> <p>Livingston County Planning Commissioner: Dennis Bowdoin</p> <p>Township Attorney: Abby Cooper, JD, and Michael D. Homier</p>	None
<b>Call to Order/Pledge</b>	<p>Chair, M. Swain-Kuch called the Conway Township Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:01pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.</p>	None
<b>Call to the Public</b>	<p>Steve Smith- 8763 Robb Rd.- He stated that he wanted to share some humor after last month’s stressful meeting. He went on to share jokes and “roast” PC members. He submitted his speech to the PC.</p> <p>Jim Dannemiller- 6428 Chase Lake Rd- He stated that he would be referencing a letter submitted to the Conway Township Planning Commission in December 2022. He stated that the materials posted on the website were not from the Solar Advisory Committee. He stated that residents were not consulted on the proposed amendment, and that Sarah Mills is a paid advocate for solar. He stated that M. Swain-Kuch is on the Library Board, and with regards to solar it is a conflict of interest and should not be allowed to be involved with it. He asked that the PC and Mr. Homier decide how much a conflict there is.</p> <p>Kennedy Parker- 7000 Hayner Rd.- She stated that a representative from one of the solar utility companies had showed up at her house a couple weeks ago. She also stated that workshops that were approved from the Board of Trustees hasn’t happened yet, and she is anticipating working and scheduling them. She stated that the best leadership can come from the most difficult</p>	None

conversations. She stated that the signatures from the petition were published online from the attorney letter submitted to the PC, and that the Solar Advisory Committee did not publish them but that Conway Township published them. She asked about the law regarding posting them publicly.

Sarah Porter- 9402 Sober Rd.- She stated that she appreciated that the PC took Mr. Homier's advise to not vote on the proposed amendment last month on solar, and that this issue is not a property rights issues, but a land use issue. She mentioned news stations not covering stories regarding wind or solar because they do not fit the story be portrayed. She stated that sources of information be checked, and although they are not against solar, they are against utility scale solar.

Mike Brown- 9265 Sober Rd.- He stated that Herman Eckler stated in research that large scale solar prefer open farm land to make it look better to the community, and that research from Kentucky on the impact of property values showed a 15%-30% drop in neighboring properties. He stated that solar panels are not that efficient with only a 20% efficiency rate over 5 hours, and that there is a federal tax break of around 30%. He stated that the life of solar farms went from 6 years to 30 years, and that if Eckler had concerns for solar than everyone should too. He also had a concern regarding the local jobs that are or are not being created by these projects.

Larry G.- 9341 Robb Rd.- He stated that he is opposed to any large-scale solar projects, and has submitted letters and spoke about this in the past. He stated that he hopes the PC, Township, and County listens to the public about not allowing this to pass. He stated that the community always passes the mileages, and does not need any financial benefit from the utility companies.

Gwen Kato- 4268 Larchmoor (Owns property in Conway)- She stated that her name has been bashed, and is here to clear the air. She stated that she does care about the land, and that her mother signed up their land for solar so that their future generations wouldn't have to work as hard as they used to. She stated that she believes that lands should be kept in the family, and not sold into separate parcels, and that selling to other farmers isn't plausible because no farmer wants to buy

it. She stated that she has seen beautiful solar fields in Virginia, and after 70 years of her family's land being farmed, she thinks that 20 years of rest would be great to see.

Steve Weiss- 7104 Sober Rd.- He stated that he is not an expert on solar, but he has worked on solar farms. He has never seen what is being proposed by the utility companies, and have properties completely surrounded by solar fields. He stated that it is horrible to see the utility companies are doing, and do not allow the 200 ft setback to go through.

Mary DeFaut- 8308 N. Fowlerville Rd.- She stated that the food shortages are important, and that those behind it are doing it from the bottom up. She stated that if there is no land to grow the crops, then crops can not be grown.

Mary Ratelle- 2345 Gannon Rd. Cohoctah- She stated that she is not against solar, but is against large-scale solar. She is concerned about the drainage issues being presented, and she personally is worried about the flooding impact. She stated that the run-off from Conway goes into the Gannon Road area, which will cause major flooding issues in that area. She is also concerned about the first responders if they need to respond to a fire or situation. She stated that the toxins in the panel will not just go into the ground, but also into the air.

Megan Beach- 9020 Eva Lane- She stated that she is opposed to the large-scale solar farms. She stated that the solar panels are not pushing honey bees or flocks of sheep, and has not seen this happen even in Shiawassee County. She also stated that the survey done by Ranger had open-ended questions, and the responses were only yes or no.

Jill Redinger- 6728 Hayner Rd.- She stated that she is concerned about the first responders and how a large fire would be handled. She is concerned about water quality, and that this area is like a big wind tunnel which would be bad if a fire did happen. She asked about trainings or special equipment that may be needed, and how different properties would be affected by this. She is also concerned about the waterfowl birds that mistake

the panels as water, and as a result the birds are burnt, unable to fly, and eventually die.

Joann Haas- 10785 Fleming Rd.- She stated that spraying will continue on solar fields, and they will be using even more because it will travel through the air. She also mentions that the mental health impact that the solar fields will cause will be dramatic. She agreed that the owners who own the land will control the food.

Duane Pickney- 5602 (unreadable) Ingham County- Lock Township- He stated that Granger just bought 550 acres in Lock Township, and rumor is that they are going to be building a landfill there. Granger claims they are going to be doing renewable. He stated that his township is also opposing solar, wind, and landfill proposals. He stated that if anyone was willing to go to their meetings, he would be appreciative. He stated he is concerned with the first responders, and how a fire or dangerous situation would be handled.

Tom Smyth- 9490 Sherwood Rd.- He stated that he is concerned about the utility companies are dangling money in front of the farmers where they get some upfront, and the rest after the deal is complete. He is concerned about companies being held responsible for noise ordinances, pollution, etc. He stated that these companies just keep selling the projects to another company, which causes problems.

Brian Williams- 6124 N. Herrington Rd.- He stated that he is land-use advocate, but that no one has the right to damage his property. He is concerned about companies not fulfilling their responsibilities and doing what they said they were going to do, and he stated that the right thing to do would be to zone against solar. He stated that the health, welfare, and destruction are reasons enough.

Russell Labadie- 6876 Hayner Rd.- He stated that he is against the large-scale solar projects. He asked about whom to send issues or concerns to. He also stated that we needed to be honest about the amount of sunlight we have received lately.

Eric Peterson- 8550 Sherwood Rd.- He stated that the Constitution can be complex, but it really comes down to the right to be left alone. He stated that Conway

	<p>Township was the most honest when it came to voting, and that he is proud of that. He stated that it is unconstitutional if another person’s property affects his. He stated that although there are different viewpoints, the main agreement is to be left alone on their own properties.</p> <p>Lu Smith- 10587 (unreadable)- She stated that the survey could have been done in another part of town which wouldn’t provide accurate responses and that if companies would lie about that, then what else would they lie about.</p> <p>Tammy Shoenbeck- (didn’t sign in)- She stated that she is a certified residential appraiser, and that property values will be affected with solar fields. She stated that she isn’t against solar, but doesn’t want drainage issues or property values losses either.</p>	
<b>Approval of Agenda</b>	Motion to accept the meeting agenda as amended for January 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2023. Motion by D. Whitt. Support J. Klein. Motion Approved.	Motion Approved
<b>Approval of December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Minutes</b>	Motion to accept meeting minutes from December 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2022. Motion by D. Whitt. Support by J. Klein. Motion Approved.	Motion Approved
<b>Approval of Planning Commission Annual Report for 2022</b>	<p>Corrections to the Annual Report</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. October- Added in the Citizens Planner Training</li> </ol> <p>Motion to approve the Planning Commission Annual Report for 2022. Motion by J. Klein. Support by D. Whitt. Motion Approved.</p>	Motion Approved
<b>Communications</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Zoning Administrator Report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Two land-use permits approved last month.</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. Board Ex-Officio Report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. G. Pushies discussed a motion from the Board of Trustees to make the 200ft setback back to the 1000ft setback in the proposed solar amendment. G. Pushies also discussed the workshops approved by the Board of Trustees. He stated that the intent of the workshops was not to violate the Open Meetings Act, but to progress this proposal along by allowing</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>

	<p>the Solar Advisory Committee to work with the Planning Commission. G. Pushies asked for legal advice from Mr. Homier on the workshops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Mr. Homier stated that the Open Meetings Act states that any meeting where there are deliberations have to be open to the public. He stated that an advisory committee could meet, but it would be to only gain information. Mr. Homier stated to be conservative, that all of these meetings need to be open to the public in order to not violate the Open Public Meetings Act.</li> <li>c. G. Pushies thanked Steve Smith on his letters regarding sound and the TAA information.</li> <li>d. G. Pushies stated that he doesn't have a conflict of interest to his knowledge in regards to his property being originally apart of the solar proposal, and that he has not been contacted by Ranger Power. He asked if the Planning Commission if there was a conflict of interest in which no one had an issue.</li> </ul> <p>c. Livingston County Planning Commission Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. M. Swain-Kuch attached the agenda from the LCPC meeting to the monthly packet. She stated she did not have access to the approved minutes.</li> </ul>	None
<p><b>Closed Session- Discussion of Written Confidential Legal Opinion with Township Attorneys</b></p>	<p>Motion for the Planning Commission to meet in a closed session under section 8(h) of the Open Public Meetings Act to discuss attorney-client privileged material in the form of a written legal opinion with the Township Attorneys, which is exempt from disclosure by the Freedom of Information Act. Motion by M. Swain-Kuch. Support by D. Whitt. Discussion- A time limit was discussed. Mr. Homier stated that the meeting depended on how long the PC needed, but no time limit was needed.</p> <p>Roll Call Vote-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Lucas Curd- Yes</li> <li>b. Jeff Klein- Yes</li> <li>c. Shawn Morrison- Yes</li> <li>d. Kayla Poissant- Yes</li> </ul>	

	<p>e. George Pushies- Yes  f. Meghan Swain-Kuch- Yes  g. David Whitt- Yes</p> <p>Motion Approved.</p> <p>The closed session began at 8:23pm. The Planning Commission left the closed session at 9:23pm.</p> <p>Motion to close the closed session and restart the meeting. Motion by M. Swain-Kuch. Support by D. Whitt. Motion Approved.</p> <p>Motion to set a Public Hearing to consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to impose a moratorium on wind and solar land uses for Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Motion by M. Swain-Kuch. Supported by G. Pushies. Motion Approved.</p>	<p>Motion Approved</p> <p>Motion Approved</p> <p>Motion Approved</p>
<p><b>New Business</b></p>	<p>a. Election of Planning Commission Officers- M. Swain-Kuch stated that there must be an election for the Officer positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.</p> <p>a. Motion to elect Meghan Swain-Kuch as Chair of the Planning Commission. Motion by D. Whitt. Supported by J. Klein. G. Pushies opposed. Motion Approved.</p> <p>b. Motion to elect Lucas Curd as Vice Chair of the Planning Commission. Motion by D. Whitt. Supported by M. Swain-Kuch. G. Pushies opposed. Motion Approved.</p> <p>c. Motion to elect Kayla Poissant as Secretary. Motion by G. Pushies. Supported by D. Whitt. Motion Approved.</p> <p>b. Cadence of Meetings- M. Swain-Kuch stated that the PC must meet no less than four times a year.</p> <p>a. Motion to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (second) Monday of every month. Motion by D. Whitt. Supported by J. Klein. Motion Approved.</p>	<p>Motion Approved</p> <p>Motion Approved</p> <p>Motion Approved</p> <p>Motion Approved</p>

<b>Commission Discussion</b>	None at this time.	None
<b>Last Call to the Public</b>	<p>Sarah Porter- 9402 Sober Rd.- She asked why the Township was paying for two attorneys for this meeting. She stated that Mr. Homier was hired for the solar matter, and when A. Cooper was asked a question, she deferred to Mr. Homier. She asked about the legal duties and why they cost so much, and wondered how other townships handle situations like this.</p> <p>Kennedy Parker- 7000 Hayner Rd.- She gave advise regarding PC minutes and how to use Microsoft Word’s dictation function to transcribe the minutes. She stated that she hoped to see more publicity for the upcoming Public Hearing in February. She stated that no one, even farmer, have the right to do whatever they want with their land, and that is why there is a local public body of government to oversee it. She stated that there is no demonstrated need in this community for solar, and that there is no farming in regards to solar.</p> <p>Speaker did not sign-in- She is concerned about the drainage issues she became aware of. She stated that she has two sump pumps to care for her house because of all the water, and has the county drain running under her driveway. The country drain water does flood her driveway, and is concerned about the increased flooding due to solar farms.</p> <p>Steve Weiss- 7104 Sober Rd.- He stated that the developers of solar farms do not care about the drainage, existing or future drainage issues. He stated that the Fire Department will have to allow the fire continue to burn because there is no special equipment or training to handle the situation. He also stated that it would take a lot of time to turn off the power to the site in order to put out the fire, and in the meantime toxins will seep into the ground and the air creating a toxic plume.</p> <p>Eli Skeyskal- 8875 Owosso Rd.- She thanks Steve Smith for his article in the newspaper, and stated that she refers to that article regularly. She read a portion of his article, and stated that the community needs to think about the community looks now and how it will look like after these projects are gone. She stated that the community should fight against the solar companies.</p>	None



<b>Adjournment</b>	Motion to adjourn at 9:47pm. Motion by D. Whitt. Support by J. Klein. Motion approved.	Motion Approved
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Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

*Kayla Poissant*

Kayla Poissant,  
PC Secretary

Meghan Swain-Kuch,  
PC Chair