Members: Bob Hagen, Don Kline (Chair), Karen McClain, Marisa McGlue,

Patti Sargent, Stephen Niezgoda

Recording Secretary Julie Goericke, Zoning Administrator William Schmiege

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. The meeting was called to Order at 7:00 PM
3. Roll Call: Bob Hagen – absent, members present: Karen McClain, Marisa McGlue, Patti Sargent, Stephen Niezgoda, Don Kline.
4. Agenda Approval. Sargent moved to approve the agenda. McGlue seconded. All present in favor, none opposed. The agenda stands approved.
5. Thank you to Superintendent Johnson for use of NBC school cafeteria.
6. Opening Comments: Chair Kline read through the norms for respectful dialogue.
7. Public Comments other than renewable energy zoning: Comments to be kept to 3 minutes each. None
8. Open Public Hearing and Introduce WRT Zoning Ordinances
   1. Sargent moved to open the public hearing on 60-2024 (Renewable Energy Overlay). Niezgoda seconded the motion.
      1. Chris Rogers, WRT Resident, in favor of the overlay ordinance.
      2. Matt Hedges, WRT Resident, in favor of all 4 ordinances.
      3. Lori Coleman, non-resident, believes the overlay will delay possible grant money from the state.
      4. Tracy Dobson, WRT Resident, concerned the overlay will lead to further lawsuits at a cost to the residents.
      5. Keith Ramthun, WRT Resident, in support of all 4 ordinances. Reported that corn absorbs 8xs the amount of carbon dioxide that oak trees absorb.
      6. David Roodvoets, WRT Resident, in support of the ordinances.
      7. Peter Sinclair, non-resident, solar energy supports the farmers and the habitat.
      8. Bruce Froelich, non-resident, on the CEIC committee. Against the overlay. CEIC has worked hard to get Chemours to clean up their property.
      9. Lauren Wackernagel, WRT Resident, in support of the ordinances. Cited PA233, stating brownfields should be considered first in the placement of renewable energy facilities.
      10. Jim Rose, WRT Resident, does not support the overlay. CEIC is for restoration and conservation and the overlay will deforest the Chemours property.
      11. Nathan Nagelkirk, WRT Resident, in support of the ordinances.
      12. Tim Langland, WRT Resident, asked if the overlay includes waterfront.
      13. Rose Roen, WRT Resident, supports the ordinance.
      14. Amy Wilkinson, WRT Resident, supports the ordinance.
      15. John Wilkinson, WRT Resident, in favor of the ordinance.
      16. Mary Jo Ernst, WRT Resident, supports the overlay. Stated that the overlay is a compromise, and that solar will happen on the Chemours property regardless.
      17. Irene Skokna, WRT Resident, Supports the ordinance.
      18. Connie Crancer, WRT Resident, walked the Chemours property. Stated that the 300 acres to the north and area to the south is quality land. The middle parcel is where the buildings were and is compromised. Proposed that the township use the middle parcel for the overlay. If more acres are needed, then go to the farmland.
      19. Clair Sclaff, WRT Resident, does not support the ordinance. Does not support deforestation of the property. Stated that the tree roots help to purify the ground water and the trees need to be preserved.
      20. Paul Shroeder, WRT Resident, does not support the overlay and Chemours will not act quickly.
      21. Chelsea Bender, WRT Resident, is in support of the overlay especially the middle parcel.
      22. Lori Sheehan, WRT Resident, Not sure which way to support. Doesn’t trust Chemours to not log off their property anyway, and because of climate change, Michigan might become the nation’s breadbasket.
      23. Sam Bender, WRT Resident, supports the ordinance. Stated that an industrial solar project would fit in an industrial zone.
      24. Mike Vargo, WRT Resident, supports the overlay.
      25. Liz Hedges, supports the overlay and the ordinances.
      26. Nancy Hoos, WRT Resident, supports a limited overlay on the brownfield and a small portion of the overlay on farmland.
      27. John Kough, WRT Resident, supports overlay with a portion of the farmland.
      28. Deb Hopkinson, WRT Resident, supports overlay. States that the overlay keeps the large scale solar away from 89 homes in the township. It also follows PA233 by considering brownfields and industrial lands first.
      29. Bill Boquist, WRT Resident, supports ordinance.
      30. Bill DeNeut, WRT Resident, supports overlay and ordinances.
      31. Sargent moves to close public comments on 60-2024. Niezgoda seconds.
   2. Sargent moves to open public comments on No. 61-2024 (Utility Scale Solar Energy Systems). McGlue seconds.
      1. Tim Langland, WRT Resident, commented on each ordinance.
      2. Connie Crancer, WRT Resident, suggested the bottom height of the panels be high enough for animals to graze.
      3. Ted Franklin, WRT Resident, had a question about the height.
      4. Tim Balcom, WRT Resident, stated the Montague solar array was supposed to produce 35mw but only produces 6mw.
      5. Sargent moved to close public comments on 61-2024. Niezgoda seconded.
   3. Sargent moved to open public comments for No. 62-2024 (Wind Energy Systems). Niezgoda seconded the motion.
      1. Tim Langland, WRT Resident, stated the ordinance limits height to 130 feet and the average decibels are 30-40, which can be harmful to human health.
      2. David Roodvoets, WRT Resident, against this ordinance.
      3. Sargent moved to close the public comments for 62-2024. McClain seconded the motion. All present in favor, none opposed.
   4. Sargent moved to open public comments on No. 63-2024 (Utility Scale Battery Energy Storage Systems). Niezgoda seconded.
      1. Lori Sheehan, WRT Resident, asked about the size of the battery storage system.
      2. Sargent moved to close the public comments. Niezgoda seconded.
9. Public Comments: Comments to be kept to 3 minutes each
   1. Irene Skolka, WRT Resident, stated Chemours is the best place for the overlay.
   2. Angela Hughes, WRT Resident, supports the overlay.
   3. Roger Simon, WRT Resident, asked if the agenda calls for a vote.
   4. Delores Demaro, WRT Resident, supports overlay on the open portion of Chemours, but is against solar panels.
   5. Barb Reese, WRT Resident, member of CEIC and suggests the overlay may help speed up the cleanup of the Chemours property.
   6. Chris Rogers, WRT Resident, supports the overlay. Stated that the state will take over everything in November and we don’t know what they will do.
   7. Peter Sinclair, non-resident, believes that the farmers are the best stewards of the land.
   8. Debra Hopkinson, WRT Resident, stated that the overlay and the other ordinances aren’t about keeping 8 farmers in business, but for looking out for the whole community.
   9. Liz, Hedges, WRT Resident, stated that farmers aren’t the only ones eeking by.
   10. Dave Roodvoets, WRT Resident, commented that solar takes off the top soil and causes erosion.
   11. Mike McCoy, WRT Resident, commented that people living outside of the township have no skin in the game.
   12. Theodore Franklin, WRT Resident, reminded residents that the golf course used to be farmland. In addition, solar panels generate heat.
   13. Amy Wilkinson, WRT Resident, reminded the audience to be respectful.
   14. Bill Nagelkirk, non-resident, commented that his son lives here and that we should be concerned about the 89 residents that will be affected by solar panels.
   15. Delores Demaro, WRT Resident, asked about solar power.
   16. Theodore Franklin, WRT Resident, answered Delores’s question.
   17. Kurt Guter submitted a letter to the planning commission, but did not speak.
10. Sargent moved to close the public hearing. Niezgoda seconded. All present in favor, none opposed. The public hearing stands closed.
11. WRT Planning Commission Discussion. Niezgoda stated that he liked the idea of keeping a residential corridor along Indian Bay Road out of the overlay. Sargent used a large map and pointed out the 3 parcels of Chemours property that are being considered. Discussion of saving the wooded parcels from deforestation. McGlue asked if the other 3 ordinances keep the township in compliance, or if the state is requiring an overlay. The Michael Homier, the Swift-Foster lawyer replied that the 3 ordinances keep the township in compliance, but the township must determine where we will allow each renewable energy system. The overlay meets that requirement. Sargent moves to remove the residential corridor along Indian Bay from the overlay and the top two parcels, leaving the largest parcel (582 acres) in the overlay. McClain seconds. Discussion on ordinances 61-2024, 62-2024, and 63-2024, came down to the fact that they were issued by the state and specifics cannot be changed.
12. Vote on Resolutions
    1. Sargent moves to approve Resolution No. 68-2024 (Renewable Energy Overlay), with corrections to the parcel numbers. McClain seconds. Roll call: Bob Hagen – AB, Karen McClain – Yes, Marisa McGlue – No, Patti Sargent – Yes, Stephen Niezgoda – Yes, Don Kline – Yes. With 4 yes votes and 1 no vote, the resolution passes.
    2. Sargent moves to approve Resolution No. 69-2024 (Utility Scale Solar Energy Systems). Niezgoda seconds. Roll call: Bob Hagen – AB, Karen McClain – Yes, Marisa McGlue – Yes, Patti Sargent – Yes, Stephen Niezgoda – Yes, Don Kline – Yes. With 5 yes votes, the Resolution passes.
    3. Sargent moves to approve Resolution No. 70-2024 (Wind Energy Systems). Niezgoda seconds. Roll call: Bob Hagen – AB, Karen McClain – Yes, Marisa McGlue – Yes, Patti Sargent – Yes, Stephen Niezgoda – Yes, Don Kline – Yes. With 5 yes votes, the Resolution passes.
    4. Sargent moves to approve Resolution No. 71-2024 (Utility Scale Battery Energy Storage Systems). Niezgoda seconds. Roll call: Bob Hagen – AB, Karen McClain – Yes, Marisa McGlue – Yes, Patti Sargent – Yes, Stephen Niezgoda – Yes, Don Kline – Yes. With 5 yes votes, the Resolution passes.
13. Public Comments: Comments to be kept to 3 minutes each. Many residents thanked the Planning Commission and Board for their time and hard work.
14. Sargent moved to Adjourn. Kline seconded. All present in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Goericke

Deputy Clerk