

East Manchester Township  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
June 22, 2021

At a regular meeting held at the Township Building, the following members were present: Blaine Rentzel, Robert Nace, Edward Hewitt, Mike McCowan, and Mike Scarborough.  
Also present: Engineer Laymon Mortorff and Zoning Officer Brittany Kohler.  
Chairman McCowan called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm:

**Minutes**

**Motion by Rentzel, second by Scarborough, to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 27, 2021. All members voted aye; motion carried.**

**Plans**

Solar Farm Ordinance 2021

Rewrite the ordinance to move the thresholds in order to capture or eliminate some applicants from having to go through an extensive accessory list in order to obtain a permit for a solar panel roof-mount on residential properties. Discussion of using wattages as the measurement for roof-mounts on residential properties instead of square footage. The properties would be measured in 9, 10, or 11 kilowatts. Confirmed by a local solar company that the stated figures are an average number of kilowatts needed to power a residential home. Panels are on average twenty-five (25) square feet, but there is no average amount of panels used for residential homes. The amount of panels needed is dependent on the electric intake of each home, which is discovered through an extensive background search performed by the solar company and utility company. Each residential property is allowed to generate 110% of its electric bill. The issue of the solar panels creating glare was brought to the Board's attention. Ms. Kohler confirmed this is taken into consideration under the performance standard in the ordinance. She also discussed this issue with a local solar company, who confirmed the companies use anti-reflective black framing and anti-reflective glass, which has no glare.

Discussion of commercial ground-mounted farms. Board agreed there needs to some additional language in the ordinance to discuss the surface area allowed to be used on these farms. Mr. Nace suggested a system to ensure that if a property were leased for this purpose, it would be adequately closed after the lease has concluded. Mr. Blaine suggested the use of a surety bond. Mr. Mortorff confirmed the suggestion would be a valid consideration and the addition of an exculpation clause that states the bond must be updated to the present value every five to ten years, depending on the length of the lease. The issue of maintenance of the ground beneath the panels was brought to the Board's attention. Board members suggested using livestock, robot lawn mowers, and low-height vegetation to keep the area under the panels maintained. Mr. Scarborough suggested placing trees or fences around the farms as a buffer to avoid an eyesore and for the public's safety.

The Board discussed solar farms being placed on agricultural lands. Board questioned if it would still fall under a farm reserve. They suggested putting a clause in the ordinance to limit the amount of farm ground allowed to be used for solar panels to avoid a situation where there are hundreds of acres of solar panels. It was confirmed that the solar panels do not affect a clean and green status.

The newest draft of the ordinance with changes will come out in July. Mr. McCowan suggests reviewing neighboring townships' current solar farm ordinances for additional information that may have been overlooked.

**Additional new business**

Final Land Development and Final Subdivision Plan for Neil B. & Tammy M. Gingerich. Located at 170 Beshore School Road, Manchester, PA 17345. Mr. and Mrs. Gingerich will be attending Planning Commission in July.

Core5 phase 2 is coming through, and they will need to attend a staff meeting in July for buildings 2 and 3 and then hopefully come to Planning Commission the end of July.

**Motion by Hewitt, second by Nace, to adjourn. All members voted aye; motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Mollie Joines