

Alaiedon Township Planning Commission

Workshop Meeting

Monday, April 5, 2021

The Alaiedon Township Planning Commission met Monday, April 5, 2021 at the Alaiedon Township Hall to hold a workshop meeting.

Chairperson Matt Oesterle called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call was taken. Present were Laurie Koelling, Barb Kranz, Beth Smith, Matt Oesterle, Bill Schneider, and Kim Hafley. Absent was Roger Cook.

Beth Smith made a motion to approve the agenda. Laurie Koelling seconded. Motion passed.

Beth Smith made a motion to approve the March 15, 2020 with one change. On the first page, last paragraph, third line, the word "restrictive" should be changed to "broad." Bill Schneider seconded. Motion passed.

The Alaiedon Township Planning Commission engaged in a comprehensive discussion of the Memorandum of Township Regulation of Event Barns from Attorney Tom Hitch. The Planning Commission concluded that an Event Licensing Ordinance is the direction the Township should pursue. The Planning Commission wants to make sure the licensing agreement mandates that an "event barn" must be part of an existing agricultural operation and provides for easy enforcement of the licensing agreement. Beth Smith will request to the Board of Trustees that Attorney Hitch be present at the next Planning Commission meeting to deliver draft event barn licensing ordinance and answer questions including how the special use permit and the licensing agreement work together.

Old Business:

1. Residential solar review. The Planning Commission reviewed the Residential/Small Solar Energy Comparison grid and identified the following components it wants to have Attorney Hitch put into ordinance format.
 - a. Definition: Small SES: A solar energy system that relies on roof mounted and/or ground mounted collection systems intended to principally serve a single residential unit, agricultural operation, business or other singular facility located on the same lot as the SES.
 - b. Districts allowed: All districts.
 - c. Height Restrictions: Ground mounted: 16 feet from ground to top of solar collectors when at maximum lift. Rooftop shall not project more than 5 feet above the highest point of roof but in any event shall not exceed the maximum building height for that district. Also shall not project beyond eaves of roof. Wall mounted SES shall not exceed height of building to which they are attached.
 - d. Permits: By right. Submit a site plan and obtain all necessary permits from the Township and other applicable agencies. Shall be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator.
 - e. Glare: Shall not produce glare that is a nuisance to occupants of neighboring properties or persons traveling neighboring roads or air routes. Glare should be part of applicants site plan.
 - f. Maximum lot coverage: Solar collection panels shall not cause the district's maximum lot coverage standards to be exceeded.
 - g. Setbacks: Solar collection equipment is prohibited in the front yard. It may be installed in a required side and rear yard but shall not be located within 20 feet of a lot line (Setbacks are to match those for accessory buildings.)
 - h. Landscaping: Screening is required in cases where a ground-mounted system impacts view from adjacent residential properties. Screening methods may include material, colors, textures, screening wall, and landscaping that will blend the unit into the natural setting and existing environment.
 - i. Electrical Connections: All electrical interconnection and distribution lines within the project boundary shall be underground.
 - j. Noise: Shall not exceed 5ddbA of ambient sound levels as measured at the property line.
 - k. Abandonment. If a ground mounted system ceases to operate or is abandoned for 6 months or is deemed to be unsafe or not consistent with building code, the applicant shall repair and

restore the system to good working order within 30 days of notification or otherwise remove the system in its entirety and restore the ground to preconstruction state.

- I. Other: Does not apply to solar energy collectors mounted on fences, poles, or on the ground with collector surface areas less than 5 square feet. And, small SES shall not obstruct solar access to adjacent properties.
2. Light Industrial Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Beth Smith made a motion that the Board of Trustees approve the Light Industrial Zoning Ordinance Amendment with the following modifications:
 - a. Change all incidences of “crop based” to “plant based” as livestock commodities can also be considered a crop.
 - b. On Table 3-4, keep Item 4 for I-1 and I-2 by Special Land Use.
 - c. On Table 3-4, keep Items 5 and 11 for I-1 by Special Land Use.Laurie Koelling seconded. Motion passed.

New Business

1. Review zoning ordinance Commercial Wind Energy
 - a. Beth Smith informed the Planning Commission that the Alaiedon Township Board Trustees has implemented a moratorium on commercial wind farms.
 - b. The Planning Commission previewed the packet contents on this subject and identified the following:
 - i. Planning Commission wants to learn more about the Gratiot County Wind Energy district development. Beth Smith will research and present info at next meeting.
 - ii. Planning Commission wants information on current wind energy technology. Beth Smith will research and present info at next meeting.
 - iii. Planning Commission wants information on existing Michigan case law regarding wind energy and information on what other Michigan townships are doing. Kim Hafley to research and present info at the next meeting.
2. Planning Commission wants to research under what circumstances may it be appropriate for Alaiedon Township to ask a property owner to relinquish a special use permit.

No public comment.

Next meeting regular quarterly meeting will be rescheduled to June 7th at 7:00 pm

Beth Smith made a motion to adjourn. Bill Schneider seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kim Hafley, Secretary