

Butler Township Planning Commission
June 3, 2024
Minutes
DRAFT

Members present: Rick Funt (Chair), Deb Ruppert, Gail Sweezey, Danielle Helwig, Township Secretary, Jon Holmes, Township Engineer

Rick Funt called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

MOTION: Funt made the motion to approve the May minutes. Ruppert seconded the motion. All were in favor with a 3-0 vote.

Five visitors were present.

Business

Zoning Amendment Discussion

We reviewed and agreed with the language allowing for a conveniences store in village core.

MOTION—Sweezey made the motion to recommend that the supervisors adopt the proposed language that puts convenience stores in the village core section of the zoning ordinance. Ruppert seconded the motion. All in favor with a 3-0 vote.

Zoning—Solar

We discussed the following recommended changes to the Solar Farm Requirements in the Zoning Ordinance and would like the Butler Township Supervisors to consider and give feedback on the following:

1. **Lot Size**—We suggest that a minimum 100-acre lot size be reviewed and considered. This is in accordance with the solar ordinances of both Mt. Joy and Cumberland Townships.
2. **Setback**— The setback is currently 50' and we recommend changing this requirement to 200' with a screening width of 50'. This would be a total of 250'. Jonathon Holmes suggested a review of the properties in the township that would comply with this setback change.
3. **Panel height**—We recommend changing the panel height from 15 feet to 10 feet.
4. **Fencing**—the height is currently specified as 4'. We recommend using language from both Cumberland and Franklin Township solar ordinance as follows: "A ground mounted solar array shall be completely enclosed with an 8' high fence with a self-locking gate."

5. **Panel material**—We recommend adopting the language from Mt. Joy, Cumberland and Franklin Townships solar farm ordinance that states the following: “Non-reflective material in panels and the supporting structures.”
6. **Trees and vegetation**—We recommend adopting the following language from the Franklin Township solar ordinance: “Vegetation buffering shall be designed to emulate a mix of species and appearance of existing tree lines, hedge rows, and wooded areas already in existence. Vegetation shall be selected to provide year-round buffering and shall be of significant height, density and maturity to screen the facility from visibility within 36 months of the installation. The primary use of evergreen trees shall not be permitted. Monotonous straight row of the same species, particularly evergreen trees is not permitted.”
7. **Access**— We recommend adopting the following language from the Franklin Township solar ordinance: “a minimum 25' wide access road must be provided to the site from state or township roadways that is paved and maintained in a dust-free condition. A minimum 20' wide cartway shall be provided between the solar arrays to allow access for maintenance, vehicles and emergency management vehicles including fire, apparatus and emergency vehicles.”
8. **Well Testing**-- We recommend adopting the following language from the Mount Joy Township solar ordinance: “Water samples from domestic supply wells on lots adjacent to the proposed facility shall be checked for cadmium, zinc, nickel, mercury and copper performed by a recognized PA laboratory. Results of such testing shall be provided to the township and the owners of the wells prior to the start of development.” We suggest adding well testing a year after installation.
9. **Transformer**—We recommend using language from both Cumberland and Franklin Township solar ordinance: “a clearly visible warning sign shall be placed at the base of all pad-mounted transformers and substations and on the fence surrounding the solar panels informing individuals of potential voltage hazards.”
10. **Damaged panels**—We suggest that damaged panels be removed, repaired or replaced within 30 days instead of 60.
11. **Decommissioned process**—We reviewed the Adams Solar Decommissioning plan from Strahan Township and believe we should consider adding the following:
 - a. The decommissioning cost estimate for review every three years. This could also be done yearly if that is in the best interest of the township.
 - b. We should include a section on hazardous waste that is similar to point 8, page 2 on the Adams Solar Plan: “in the unlikely event, and to the extent that, the project contains any hazardous materials as defined by federal, state and/or local laws at the time of decommissioning, the solar company shall dispose of such materials in

accordance with federal, state and local laws and regulations governing such materials and the disposal of the same.”

SALDO Edits Review

MOTION

Sweezey made the motion to recommend that the Supervisors approve the updated SALDO. Ruppert seconded the motion and all were in favor with a 3-0 vote.

Public Comments

Joan Bushie asked that we consider the following in regards to the solar zoning discussion:

- Inverters are noisy and we should consider the location of these structures.
- Review the decommissioning bond yearly.
- Work on a plan so that township residents can receive a commission on electricity produced.
- The solar panels need to be cleaned every 6 months. What kind of cleaning products do they use?
- Wells should be tested before and after installation.
- There is general concern that solar companies are already working within the township to determine best site locations.

Rick Funt adjourned the meeting at 8:25pm. The next meeting is Monday, July 1, 2024 at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Sweezey, Secretary