

ELY TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission
December 11, 2023 – 6:30pm
Meeting Taped and In-Person

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

ROLL CALL

Steve Bertucci Jr., Cheryl Grove, Aaron Carr, and Michael Anderson – Present. Randy Ruppel – Absent/Excused. Also present Erin Bertucci, Zoning Administrator.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was in order.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Motion was made by Carr to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Bertucci Jr. Ayes - 4, Nays - 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was read from Marquette County Road Commission regarding HMA paving and chip sealing suggestions. Carr will recommend to the Township Board the approval of the suggested chip sealing of Perch Lake Road.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Suggested by ZA Bertucci the addition of Painting of the Diorite Park Sign under new business. Motion by Bertucci Jr. to approve the agenda with the addition of Painting of the Diorite Park Sign to new business, with support from Grove. Ayes - 4, Nays - 0, Absent - 1. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- A. North Lake Stone Rezoning (Opened: 6:35pm): The findings of fact were read for an application from North Lake Stone, LLC for parcel 52-03-212-002-10 to consider rezoning from Timber Production (TP) to Residential-2 (R-2) or Residential-5 (R-5) in preparation for a land division they have applied for. Area will not be part of the existing condominium area known as North Greenwood Lakes, therefore will not have same rules, access will be off Carp Creek Drive. A public hearing was previously held for this property for rezoning but due to a notification and publication error, it was suggested by the Marquette County Planning Commission to hold another public hearing. A representative for North Lake Stone was not present. Public comment was heard from John Tyrell asking for clarification on difference between R-2 and R-5. With no further questions or comments, the public hearing was closed at 6:42pm. Motion by Bertucci Jr. to approve rezoning of parcel from TP to R-2. Supported by Carr. Ayes – 4, Nays – 0, Absent - 1. Motion carried.
- B. Ely Township Property Rezoning (Opened: 6:42pm): The findings of fact were read for an application from Ely Township for parcel 52-03-212-002-00 to consider rezoning from Residential-5 to Public Land in preparation for future development of a recreational park space. With no further questions or comments, the public hearing was closed at 6:48pm. Carr will discuss RFP for driveway and parking lot with Township Board. Motion by Carr to approve the rezoning from R-5 to Public Land. Supported by Bertucci Jr. Ayes – 4, Nays – 0, Absent - 1. Motion carried.
- C. Ely Township Conditional Use for Solar Panels (Opened 6:48pm): The findings of fact were read for an application from Ely Township for parcel 52-03-212-055-00 for the use of solar panels at the Ely Township Hall, located at 1555 Co Rd 496, Ishpeming. The Township Board approved the project at their September 2023 meeting and plan to use ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. The panels will supplement the current electricity at the Hall, and no storing of batteries will be done. Ben Schimpf and Eric Schoneman of Peninsula Solar were present. Ben stated that they have worked with many townships in the area who have taken advantage of solar power and have had success. He also expressed his opinions on solar ordinances in Townships and the ways they can cause projects to become more expensive and take longer than necessary. They describe solar panels as no more than an accessory structure, which typically does not require a public hearing to occur in order to erect one. He also stated that longer processes at a municipal level can affect the timeframe for potential tax incentives. They have also worked with other townships to help with their solar ordinances, such as setbacks, etc. to make them more efficient and easier to follow. Correspondence with Ben Carrigan at MDOT stated that they are in support of the solar panels as long as right of way rules are followed since the intended solar area runs along US Hwy 41. Correspondence was read from Melissa & Benjamin Bursack regarding the placement of the panels and concerns of safety as well as ideas for improvement. Second Correspondence from Melissa and Benjamin Bursack was read regarding possible solutions and uses to the area where the solar panels are intended to be placed, such as the construction of a pavilion. Public comment was heard from Ben Schimpf with Peninsula Solar regarding the work that is put into the plans for installing solar panels regarding safety is addressed during the permitting process. They have a licensed electrician on staff and work with Marquette County to ensure the upmost safety with installation and use of these solar panels. They also specifically made plans for

Ely Township's solar panels to have features that will help with the safety and longevity of the panels. He reiterated that Peninsula Solar strives to use all American-made or local products with each of their projects. He also stated that any resident is welcome to contact Peninsula Solar with any questions and concerns about the project. Carr stated, in regard to the Bursack's suggestion of a pavilion, the Township has tried in the past to move forward with a plan to construct a pavilion at the Hall but has yet to happen due to lack of community involvement and opinion. With no further questions or comments, the public hearing was closed at 7:39pm. Carr stated that further discussion regarding placement of the solar panels and exploration of placement on the roof versus on the ground and any safety concerns is something that will need to be discussed with the Board again. ZA Bertucci would like to express that safety concerns are not something that should be taken into consideration as the Planning Commission can only approve or deny the Conditional Use to allow the use and placement of solar panels at the Hall. The Township Board themselves will make the decision on installation and safety measures. If the Board decides to explore other placement options, they can present the new plan to the Planning Commission again. Motion by Carr to approve the Conditional Use for the use of Solar Panels at the Ely Township Hall. Supported by Bertucci Jr. Ayes – 4, Nays – 0, Absent – 1. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Master Plan was discussed during work session before meeting. A public hearing will be held in February.
- B. The US-41 Corridor minutes were discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Painting of Diorite Park Sign – John Jessen at Westwood High School suggests powder coating for longevity. Township Board will discuss pricing and local options. ZA Bertucci suggests getting a plaque for the sign posts as well stating year it was made and students who helped create the sign.

ZONING ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Zoning Administrator Bertucci discussed all new approved zoning permits.

Ongoing:

- A. Slawski/Former Diorite School: A progress report was sent to Attorney Zappa, who prepared another brief for the court. He was not aware of Mr. Slawski submitting anything. No further action can be taken on property as there has been no decision from Judge Kangas. The status of permitting is being contemplated. Possible buildings erected on the property per Township Board, but nothing visible from the road.
- B. Carello/Beaupied: A progress report was sent to Attorney Zappa with no response. There has been confusion from the Attorney on parcels and ownership. Mr. Carello is no longer in the Marquette County Jail.

- C. Jerzi's: Spoke with Mr. Niemi after a complaint was filed from a neighbor with concerns about direction of lighting, employee parking, and delivery trucks. This letter will be addressed at the Board meeting next week. Mr. Niemi is going to put up temporary snow fencing along back area of restaurant, instruct employees to park elsewhere, and talk to the county about his options for deliveries.

State News: New solar legislation which will impact large solar and wind projects. Smaller projects are still addressed with local ordinance.

Erin Bertucci, Zoning Administrator

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56pm by Vice Chair Anderson.

Respectfully submitted,
Leah Dompierre, Recording Secretary