

SALEM TOWNSHIP PLANNING AND ZONING MEETING

March 20, 2019

Members Present:

Drew Moessner
John Donovan
Sonya Mansfield
David Rassel
Teresa Carstensen
Greg Reich
Vince Hoover

Alternates Present:

Alternates Absent:

Matt Petersen
Brenda DeCook
Kate Herness

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Sonya Mansfield.

Pledge of Allegiance

Secretary's Report John made a motion to approve the minutes, David seconded, minutes approved.

CUP Rezone - Public hearing

DeCook Sand and Gravel Rezone Sec. 24

7:02 Public hearing opened. Roger Ihrke presented the staff report. This would be considered infill development. Pit would be accessible from 2 ways, old Donovan pit or Daniels DeCook's current pit, both have turn lanes. Parcel meets criteria for rezoning. Daniel D. commented that it is between the current pits and connects them, it is out of the flood plain and he has talked to his neighbors. He could not reach one neighbor but spoke with the rest.

Board questions- David R. asked about set back from the river, is there a wash out moving in? Daniel responded that it has been fixed by filling it in. He will keep an eye on it. Drew asked if the pits would connect making a larger lake? Daniel said no, he is thinking of keeping separate, smaller ponds and maybe a fish farm. Drew asked about issues from the DNR? Roger said they would be addressed in the CUP process. The state has changed regulations and it will be put on next public hearing.

Motion to open meeting to public comment at 7:13 p.m. by David and seconded by Greg R., motion passed. No comment

Motion to close public comment at 7:14 p.m. made by Drew and seconded by Vince H., motion passed. Board comment, none.

A motion to approve with staff comments and recommendations and to move to Town Board made by Greg and seconded by David. Motion passed.

Daniel asked about the gas pipeline staging at his place again, he asked for permission to burn the brush pile that was on the Landscape site. The company that was going to take the brush had a backlog and would not be able to take it in time for the gas pipeline. Permission from the Town Board was given, get it done while ground is wet.

CUP request - Public hearing

Bryan DeCook- Novel Solar Garden CUP 9.5 acres Sec. 4

7:26 Public hearing opened. Roger presented staff report. 1 mega watt of power, parcel is 120 acre total, site in NW corner. A driveway will be needed, a grading and erosion control plan will be necessary.

Board questions for Roger, will there be a setback from road to diminish glare? Screening and fence will be required. The DNR does not like chain link fence due to migratory birds. DNR requires prairie grasses to be planted and not mowed for wildlife. This will be up to applicant, Edgar Lara and Paula Fitzgerald with Novel, applicants said they are willing to meet all conditions of the DNR and Township.

Vince asked if screening would be needed? Roger commented that there are no neighbors close to site, if they do come it would be up to them to screen as the Solar Garden is there first. Drew asked if a hard surface road would be adequate? None are present or close. Roger said that the site will have less traffic than a house. We can require them to have a bond during construction for the road and require them to bring road back to good shape. Drew asked about a bond. Roger said 1) for the road and it would go away after site is installed. 2) removal of site or decommissioning, can be requested. Applicants are willing.

Drew asked is there are plans to grow into a larger solar garden? Applicants replied that they are limited to 1 mega watt on the parcel. The property owner could lease to another company and have more solar gardens on property. Roger commented that Paulson site in Kalmar has 2 sites side by side. John asked why the limit? Applicant replied that Xcel put the limit up. Sonya asked if the limit was raised would they add more solar panels? Applicant said it would depend, could site handle it, infrastructure? In order to do more they would need P&Z approval. John asked how long has the company been around? Since 2012, How many sites? They have 18 in Minnesota and are now going into Illinois. John asked if they have prairie grass in other sites? Yes. John asked how they handle snow? Is it an issue? Applicant said that the panels are at a 30 degree angle and snow usually slides off, efficiency is still okay. In case of extreme snow they would have to remove it. John asked if they would have a building? No.

Roger said a letter would be needed from Xcel saying they will buy the electricity. The applicant said they are working with Xcel. Drew asked about construction time? Applicant said about 8 weeks. David asked about life expectancy of the solar garden? Applicant said it is 95% efficient at the end of 25 years with 2 potential extensions of 5 years each on the lease with the property owner. John asked if they were using high tech panels? Applicant replied that will be using tier 1 panels and buy the newest when approved. Vince asked if the efficiency will degrade? Applicant said they are still a new company, if panels are not efficient they will replace them.

Vince asked how they are tied into the grid? Underground? Yes, until it reaches the poles. Drew asked about the height of the panels? There will be 18' long poles, 9'6" in height average, no grading, they are trying to keep the tilt on the panels. John asked if there would be motorized panels? No, they may be more efficient but they cost more, Novel will be using fixed panels, they are sturdier.

Motion to open to Public Comment 8:04 p.m. by Drew, seconded by Vince. Meeting opened. Al Dols, neighbor, asked about dust control? Applicant replied that if it is a condition they will meet it, they want to be good neighbors. Al Dols asked if this site is more than a mile from McAnnulty's? Applicant does not have a site at McAnnulty's, they do not have to be a mile away. Paul Teig, neighbor, asked about drainage? On driveway. Rick Lutzi asked about annexation from Byron, interim use permits. Roger said they can request but this is not an urban Service area. Applicant is willing to do whatever the board decides. Daniel D. asked about runoff? Would there be culverts on access road? Roger replied that this would be part of the access permit and grading permit. Rick asked if there would be a gate at the entrance or by the site? Roger said it would normally be at the site.

Motion to close public comment at 8:18 p.m. made by Greg and seconded by John, motion passed.

Vince asked what the differences would be between a IUP and a CUP? Roger said that if Novel left, a new company would have to go through this process again if it was under an IUP. If it is a CUP, a new company could set up operations as long as they meet all the conditions.

Roger said that the applicant is willing to meet all of the conditions. The board would need to decide between an IUP and a CUP. The bond for the roadway and site setup could be set at \$25,000 for one year after completion. Dust control for the entire length, on complaint. Roger asked the board if there were any questions on conditions that were already printed? None. The site would be checked once a month after it is up and running. Dust control during construction. Novel will get in touch once they have the permits. Sonya asked IUP or CUP? Roger said the property owner would want a CUP, Novel wants project approved. Vince said that at the end of an IUP they would need to get a new one. A decommissioning bond is not needed.

Vince made a motion to make this a CUP, Drew seconded, motion passed.

David made a motion to approve this CUP with Staff recommendations and conditions that were discussed. Greg seconded. Motion passed.

Other Business

Conditional Use Permits for Sand Pits and renewal date reviews (the purpose of this is to devise a sheet with the bond renewal dates and have that checked every meeting to see if any are coming up).

Discussion of the Town Board's directive towards developing a land-use plan.

Upcoming Reviews

April: None

Adjournment

John Donovan moved to adjourn, seconded by Greg Reich. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonya Mansfield
Chair

Teresa Carstensen
Secretary

DRAFT