

MINUTES
Blue Earth County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Wednesday November 4, 2015
7:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 p.m. by Chairman Lyle Femrite. Planning Commission members present were Bill Anderson, Kurt Anderson, Kip Bruender, Lyle Femrite, Chuck Grams, Berry Jacques and Joe Smentek. County staff members Aaron Stubbs, Chris Meeks, Ben Effah and George Leary were also present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Kurt Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 7, 2015 Regular Planning Commission Meeting. Mr. Bill Anderson seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Leary indicated there was no change to the agenda.

4. NEW BUSINESS

PC 28-15

Donna Jean Sharp Trust - Request for review and approval of the Preliminary Plat of Sharp Subdivision, a subdivision plat consisting of one lot and two outlots. The property is located in the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and part of the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 15, Sterling Township. The property is zoned Conservation and Agricultural and includes an area within the Shoreland Overlay District of Rice Creek.

Mr. Effah presented the staff report.

The applicants were present and had no comment.

There was no public comment and no further comment from the township.

There was little discussion by the Planning Commission.

Following the discussion, Mr. Smentek made a motion to forward a recommendation of approval of the request to the County Board. Mr. Bill Anderson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PC 29-15

James & Susan Schull and Mapleton Community Solar, LLC- Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit to construct and operate a 3 megawatt (MW) solar energy system. The project footprint will be approximately 22 acres. The property is zoned Agricultural and is located in part of the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 11, Mapleton Township.

Mr. Stubbs presented the staff report.

The applicants were represented by Tena Rytel of Geronimo Energy. Ms. Rytel indicated she supported the report presented by staff.

Ms. Rytel provided further discussion on three separate items. The first item was the drain tile issue. She indicated she has worked with County Ditch Manager Craig Austinson. She indicated that she and her clients understand the importance of drainage and that the plan has been altered because of this. She added that a map of the private tile lines has been obtained and it will be used in designing the foundations. Any tile damaged will be replaced. The tiler will be involved and will be consulted on any issues. The second item was stormwater. Ms. Rytel indicated the project will not require a stormwater pond and instead will rely on infiltration. She added that they will not and cannot allow runoff to impact neighboring property owners. Her third discussion item was wetlands. She indicated they have the same interests as the county and will try to minimize impacts on wetlands. She added that she is comfortable with the wetland condition recommended by staff.

Jim Schull discussed the subject of wetlands. He indicated that this is a touchy subject. He indicated that the SCS office has certified that the area is a prior converted wetland. It has been an agricultural use and has no wetlands.

George Pluym advised the Commission that any damage to the county tile will impact others. He added that they cannot afford to have any damage to the existing tile.

There was no other public comment and no further comment from the township.

Mr. Femrite advised the audience that the solar ordinance had recently been adopted by the county. He indicated the potential issues appear to have been addressed. He did comment on his concern with the MPCA impervious surface calculations.

Mr. Bruender indicated he is aware of the drainage concerns and that he has discussed the matter with Craig Austinson.

There was no further discussion.

Following the discussion, Mr. Bruender made a motion to forward a recommendation of approval of the request to the County Board. Mr. Smentek seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PC 30-15

Northern States Power Company - Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit for the expansion of the Wilmarth Ash Disposal Facility, a refuse derived fuel ash landfill. The existing landfill site and the proposed expansion area receive refuse-derived fuel (RFD) ash from Xcel Energy's Wilmarth Generating Station located in Mankato, Minnesota. The site is zoned Agricultural and is located in part of the northern half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 32, South Bend Township. The site is also located within the Urban Fringe Overlay District of the City of Mankato.

Mr. Leary presented the staff report.

The applicants were present and had no comment.

There was no public comment and no further comment from the township.

The commission indicated they had no questions regarding the proposal.

Following the discussion, Mr. Bill Anderson made a motion to forward a recommendation of approval of the request to the County Board and as outlined by staff. Mr. Bruender seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business. Mr. Bill Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Grams and the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Planning Commission Chair

Date

Planning Commission Secretary

Date