

Richmond Township Planning Commission

January 31, 2022 Monthly Meeting

7:00 p.m.

Kenneth Schlegel called the monthly meeting of the Richmond Township Planning Commission to order at 7:00 P.M. Ken welcomed our newest member Ben Kemmerer to the meeting. In attendance were Samuel Burkholder, Nicholas Stoltzfus, Scott Anderson; Kraft Engineering, Michelle Mayfield; Hartman, Valeriano, Magovern & Lutz, PC. and Jennifer Galomb, Commission Secretary. Also in attendance was members of Kimley-Horn and Heelstone Renewable Energy.

I. 2022 Planning Commission Reorganization

Michelle took nominations for the chairman for the Richmond Township Planning Commission. Sam Burkholder nominated Ken Schlegel for chairman and Nick Stoltzfus seconded the nomination, Ken accepted. Motion carried unanimously. Michelle turned the meeting back over to Ken.

Ken Schlegel took nominations for vice chairman of the board. Nick Stoltzfus nominated Sam Burkholder for vice chairman, Ben Kemmerer seconded the nomination. Motion carried unanimously.

Ken Schlegel took nominations for secretary of the board. Ken Schlegel nominated Jennifer Galomb as the secretary and Sam Burkholder seconded the nomination. Motion carried unanimously.

II. MINUTES

A motion was made by Ken Schlegel to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2021 monthly meeting, Sam Burkholder seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – AGENDA COMMENTS

None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

None

V. NEW BUSINESS- Lyons Solar Farm

Andrew Miller from MPL-Law Firm appeared as counsel to his client Lyons Solar, LLC. and its parent company Heelstone. With him were representatives from Heelstone, Trevor Sprague,

Andrew Cummings, David Henderson and J.P. Hackney. Also, members of Kimley-Horn; Paul Hughes and Tom Katelhon. Andrew gave an overview of the project at 194 Weaver's Road. The parcel is zoned as part light industrial and the other part is agricultural. The 100-acre parcel on the corner of Fleetwood Lyons Rd and Weaver's Road. Right now, the area is primarily cultivated farm field. The project is a proposed 20-megawatt solar project, solar panels, proposed access roads for navigation around the site, converter pads and perimeter fence with associated landscape buffering, primarily around the right of ways of Fleetwood Lyons Road and Weaver's Road, as well as on the west side of the site where there are residential structures. There is a substation on the north east corner, which interconnects the power up Mertz Rd towards an existing power line. In terms of storm water controls, right now the site primarily flows from west/southwest to the northeast, most of the on-site runoff is captured the existing drainage swale. For their purpose of managing runoff at the site they have proposed 2 storm water basins. He further discussed that from the substation arial crossing from Fleetwood Lyons Rd. that follows Mertz Rd. and ties onto a power pole further up on Mertz Rd. Nick had questioned the water runoff being contained in the swale. They explained that there are not the best infiltration results on the site they are using retention ponds on the southern areas on the site. It will slow down the runoff all of the areas south of the rail road and will slowly release into the drainage swale which starts on Weavers' Road to get a little less of a flow through the larger storms that will happen. The impervious area on the solar farm is just over 3 acres. The solar panels are about 7' x 3' in size that will be mounted on poles allowing them to pivot. For this project there will be approx. 40,000 solar panels being installed. It was discussed the size of the intended landscape plants and if it would have effect on the panels or privacy height. Also discussed was how often maintenance would happen at the project, like grass cutting or pulling of weeds. They plan on using mechanical mowing and weed control products to control the weeds. The maintenance would happen quarterly except in the spring and summer months when grass is growing and landscaping needs to be attended to more frequently.

In response to the letter Kraft Engineering sent to Kimley- Horn regarding the development, it was discussed the request of a variance to have a proposed height of the power lines of 70' instead of the maximum 50' that is part of the ordinance, as going underground is not an option. They have contacted the FAA regarding the height of the lines and they had no issues with it. Met Ed was contacted and asked if they would lower their lines and they would not budge but they did say that there were no issues with going higher than 50'.

Michelle questioned who would be responsible for making repairs on the roadways that will be traveled with the tractor trailers, as those roads are not meant for heavy truck traffic. They will be submitting a road maintenance agreement that specifies what will need to be done during construction. Construction time frame is about 6-9 months of heavy tractor trailer traffic.

The solar panels do have a 30-year warranty on them so maintenance will be very limited.

Scott asked what the status was of The Berks County Conservation District NPDES permit and they stated that is has been submitted and awaiting on a response. Scott made a

recommendation that the planning commission make a motion to allow them to go from preliminary to final plan. Scott also made the recommendation that the planning commission give them a waiver on putting a curb or sidewalk in the plan as well.

Nick Stoltzfus made a motion to have the plan more from Preliminary to Final, Ben Kemmerer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Nick Stoltzfus made a motion to approve the waiver for a curb or sidewalk for the plan, Sam Burkholder seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Kenneth Schlegel to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. The motion was seconded by Samuel Burkholder. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Galomb
Secretary, Richmond Township
Planning Commission

Kenneth Schlegel, Chairman
Richmond Township
Planning Commission