

**ONEIDA CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

August 1, 2017

**MEMBERS PRESENT: WALTERS, GREEN, KILGORE,
SCHULTZ. AND SCHERER**

MEMBERS EXCUSED: SHROEDER

**OTHERS PRESENT: ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
GOSCHKA, CLERK CAMPBELL, REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE GERONIMO ENERGY COMPANY, RESIDENTS OF
ONEIDA TOWNSHIP AND RESIDENTS OF THE
PROPOSED AREA FOR THE SOLAR FARM
DEVELOPMENT.**

1. Chairman Walters called the Meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.
2. The Agenda was approved in a Motion made by Mr. Green and supported by Mrs. Scherer. Motion Carried.
3. Minutes of July 5, 2017 were approved as amended in a Motion made by Mr. Green and Mrs. Scherer. Motion Carried.
4. Elect new vice Chairman. Motion was made by Mrs. Schultz and supported by Mr. Kilgore to name Mr. Green Vice Chairman. Motion Carried.
5. Public Comment: There was none.
6. Solar Ordinance: Draft Review. Chairman Walters directed that each change made by the Board would be a separate motion. After discussion, it was decided that this being a Draft Ordinance it would be much simpler to discuss changes and make one motion to amend the Ordinance at the end of the discussion.

The first discussion by Chairman Walters was on (page 6, item F. discussed was the not to exceed 30 feet at any time or location

on the property.) This had been discussed at the last meeting and adjusted to not to exceed 15 feet. Also added to item F. last meeting was that the building height meet the district code for building height. Mrs. Scherer discussed the parking lot solar energy being installed at Michigan State University also roof top units. There was discussion on conditions as to height that could be set under the Special Use Permit also. Chairman Walters felt that we should make clear to our Attorney the limit on height of buildings.

Chairman Walters next discussed using non-operational for six months instead of abandoned for six months. This reference is to item L. page 2 and Page 8 item Q.

Mr. Green discussed Page 8, item P. (The Planning Commission may waive this requirement if it determines that it would be impractical or unreasonably expensive to install, place or maintain such collection lines and interconnections underground.) Mr. Green wanted to have the attorney review this and clarify it.

There was discussion on Page 2, item K. and Page 9 N. it was decided to leave them as is.

Mrs. Scherer discussed Section 3.29 Solar Systems small and section NN Solar Systems Large. She felt that we should change paragraph 15, page 5. To read (The Official Environmental impact of the Large Solar Energy System, as reflected in an environmental impact study.)

There was discussion on stipulating what type of Impact Study should be done. Zoning Administrator Goschka said she was sure there were State and Federal guidelines that would have to be

followed by the Solar Energy System Companies. Geronimo said this was true.

There was discussion on Page 7 item L. it was asked that Section 14 NN item 11 on page 5 be added to this Section. Regarding safety related signs.

Mr. Green discussed page 5 item 17. He felt we should add that the Township needed proof of a written contract or sworn affidavit showing that the Solar Energy Company had a source to sell the energy to.

Mr. Green discussed page 6 item H. He and Chairman Walters felt that it needed clarification. This item addresses (A Large Solar Energy System shall not exceed 250 acres in total area, regardless of whether said System is located on one or multiple parcels.) They discussed whether this meant one company could have several parcels or not.

Mr. Green also suggested that paragraph K2 and K4 be combined on page 7.

There was discussion on Page 9. Item X. as to how it would be handled if the property were to change hands. And to be sure that it remained if there were a change in ownership.

Page 10 item Z, In regard to completion in one year with an allowable one-year extension. What if the project were not finished in that time frame, can there be multiple one-year extensions? Ask Attorney to clarify.

There was discussion by Mrs. Scherer who felt that Section 3.29 addressed mainly small systems and Section NN mainly large systems and Chairman Walters and Mr. Green regarding classification, they discussed having three classifications such as Residential, Commercial and Industrial, rather than small and large. They discussed B 1 and B 2 zoning also having to have a Special Use Permit. They want to ask the Attorney to explore the three classifications.

After all discussion by the Board and having each change read aloud by the secretary, Motion was made by Mr. Green to forward the changes made by the Commission, and the requests for clarification, as well as all questions posed by the Commission to the Attorney and ask for a clean copy for review by the Planning Commission. Support was given by Mrs. Scherer. Motion Carried.

7. Chairman Walters opened the Floor to Public Comment:

A Resident from Benton Township discussed use of roof tops and the 3-tier discussion and rezoning of additional 250 acres if needed to Industrial.

Mr. Coakley discussed setbacks for large solar arrays around residential properties. He felt that they should be increased to 500 or 1000 feet. Unless there was a written agreement between the parties for less.

Mrs. Deer Hall addressed a letter from the Citizens regarding the Geronimo Open House.

Mrs. Coakley asked Geronimo about her school district not being invited to the Open House they were holding. And how Otto Road would look with Solar rather than the existing corn fields.

Geronimo asked 1 year time frame to address the start of construction and beginning of Special Use Permit. They pointed out page 10 item Z.

Resident of Benton Township felt that it would be easier to lessen than increase the setback requirements.

There was also a request from the attorney of the definition and clarification of Non-Operational and Abandonment by the Chairman Walters.

Mr. Burman discussed the use of farmland and need for added production in the next 10 years.

Resident from Benton Township discussed growth since the 1-69 had been moved and how local production impacts us directly by making gasoline and feeding our people and animals. He noted that local productivity is a great resource.

There was discussion by Mr. Coakley and Geronimo regarding the definition of prime farmland.

There was no more Public Comment.

Chairman Walters adjourned the Meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jan Schultz

APPROVED:

MICHAEL WALTERS, CHAIRMAN

DRAFT