

Joint Planning Commission / Town Board Meeting Minutes October 6, 2020

The Joint Empire Township Planning Commission / Town Board meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Tom Kaldunski and Town Board Vice-Chair Ed Gerten at 8:00 PM at the Empire Township Public Works Building.

Present were: Tom Kaldunski, Trent Larson, Jared Sachs, Chris Williamson, Bob Bjerke, Jane Kansier, Brian Hilgardner (via Zoom), Charles Seipel, Ed Gerten and Jamie Elvestad.

Staff from Metropolitan Environmental Services provided a presentation that discussed the background and purpose of Metropolitan Environmental Services, the Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant, current improvements being made to the Empire Plant, and activities associated with the proposed Phase II expansion of the Empire Plant. The presentation also highlighted the partnership that the Empire Plant currently has with Kemps to utilize whey from the Kemps facility to help process wastewater. An application for CUP amendment for the proposed Phase II expansion has been submitted to the Township and it is anticipated that a public hearing for the CUP will be held on December 1st. It is proposed that work will begin in the first quarter of 2021 and be completed in the fourth quarter of 2023. When all expansions are completed, the capacity of the plan will increase from 11 million gallons per day of processing to 25 million gallons per day.

Seipel reported that the Metropolitan Council has been working with Empire Township to move forward with the proposed 190th Street ditch.

Metropolitan Council staff reported that the partnership with Kemps adds 3 to 4 trucks per day to the site, during normal business hours and sometimes on Saturday mornings.

The Commission and Town Board thanked the Metropolitan Council for the presentation.

Jane Kansier reported that she has reviewed the site plan for the proposed hoop structure for salt storage at the Rock Hard Landscaping property on 170th Street. There were no issues to report with the site plan. Trent Larson made a motion to approve the site plan for the proposed hoop structure for salt storage at the Rock Hard Landscaping property. Jared Sachs seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

The Planning Commission reviewed a proposed landscaping plan for the Ames Construction parking lot and office area. The plan exceeds the landscaping requirements. Discussion was held on issuing a temporary certificate of occupancy for the office structure until June 30, 2021, when all landscaping at the site, including the landscaping as was indicated in the site plan, can be installed. This will need to be brought to the Town Board for final approval.

Tom Kaldunski made a motion to recommend approval of the landscaping plan and issuance of temporary certificate of occupancy for the Ames Construction site. Bob Bjerke seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Discussion was held on the proposed Dakota County Land Conservation Plan. Empire Township and representatives from some of the other townships expressed their opposition to the plan as is at the last DCTOA meeting. One representative expressed support for it.

It was recommended that a meeting be set up with Al Singer from the Dakota County Environmental Resources Department and Commissioner Mike Slavik to discuss the plan further. There needs to be better indication that townships will be involved in the decision-making process when it comes to placing land into a conservation easement.

The Joint Town Board and Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.