

Joint Empire Planning Commission – Town Board Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2021

The Empire Township Planning Commission was called to order by Trent Larson at 8:00 PM.

Present were: Trent Larson, Jared Sachs, Doug Clark, Jane Kansier, Brian Hilgardner, Brad Fischer, Charles Seipel-Teng, Chairman Terry Holmes, Eric Hanson and liaison Jamie Elvestad. Tom Kaldunski and Bob Bjerke were absent.

Eric Hanson was introduced as the new Town Board Supervisor. Brad Fischer was introduced as an engineer with Bolton & Menk. Brad will be providing technical expertise to the Planning Commission.

Tom Schmidt of Aggregate Industries presented a proposal to run a conveyor along the northern portion of Biscayne Ave. to assist with transporting aggregate material from upcoming mineral extraction operations south of 170th Street. The Planning Commission reviewed a map of the proposed operations and conveyor. The conveyor would need 30' of ROW.

The proposed conveyor is most needed north of 170th Street, but ideally it would run south of 170th to the new mineral extraction operations.

It is proposed that the conveyor would operate 20 hours per day. Aggregate Industries would like to start on the project this spring. It would likely operate as long as there are reserves in the new mines, approximately 10 years.

The Planning Commission expressed concerns with potential noise and dust issues, especially if the conveyor were to operate 20 hours per day. Aggregate Industries would need to provide guardrails, maintain the ROW, and make sure there is sufficient height to permit farming operations in the area to continue. Aggregate Industries should provide information on decibel levels from the motor of the conveyor.

Once all the information is gathered, Aggregate Industries will need to submit an IUP application for the proposed operations and a public hearing will be held.

Bolton & Menk staff will check to see if there is adequate ROW in that section of Biscayne Ave.

Thomas and Debra Hagen were present with Rick Kirchner to ask for information on the possibility of transferring building rights from the Hagen owned parcels to the Kirchner parcel to the east. The Planning Commission indicated that it would be possible to transfer the building rights to the Kirchner parcel. The transfer would need to be done according to the steps outlined in the Zoning Ordinance. For the transfer, the Township would need to enter into an agreement with the building rights seller and buyer. This agreement would need to be reviewed by the Township's attorney and approved by the Planning Commission and Town Board.

It was reported that the property owners of a parcel to the south of the Public Works Building (Siewert) have inquired about the possibility of having the property hooked up to water and sewer services in preparation for development.

This property lies on the Empire Township side of the Orderly Annexation Agreement.

It was indicated that the property should have access to water services through the line that crosses the Vermillion River to the Public Works Building.

Discussion was held on sewer service. A new line would need to be extended from the north and go down Biscayne Ave. This line may possibly serve future developments further to the south in the City of Farmington and on the east side of Biscayne. Development east of Biscayne may be difficult with the solar fields there. Eric Hanson asked about future road alignment of Biscayne and if it could be aligned further to the west as there are homes just to the east of the existing ROW. Brian Hilgardner stated that that would be possible. The future alignment of Highway 66 and Biscayne may be an issue for this property. The Township should check with Dakota County on plans for future realignment of this intersection. Bolton & Menk will get a draft estimate on sewer extension costs. This should be placed on the agenda for the next Planning Commission Meeting.

It was reported that the proposed City of Farmington water tower was discussed at tonight's EFPAC Meeting. The City is moving forward with construction of the tower and will be located west of Highway 3 and north of 190th Street. The tower will serve the existing portions of the city and future development along Highway 3. The Township was asked to decide if they would like an emergency connection to the tower and if they would like to participate in future connection for residential developments that might occur north of 190th Street. There is not enough pressure from the existing water tower to serve development to the north. The Township would need to determine how a special water rate would be structured for future residents served by the tower. Cost sharing for the construction of the tower is not being discussed at this point. Concerns regarding future development and what this connection might mean for the Township was discussed.

The Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM. The Town Board Meeting recessed until the DCTOA Spring Meeting at 9:00 AM on Saturday, March 20th at the Empire Public Works Building.