**SPECIAL MEETING**

**April 29, 2024**

The special meeting of the Reading Township Board of Supervisors was held at the Hampton Fire Hall and called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman Wes Thomason. Vice Chairman Jason Phillips and Mike Weigand were also present with Chairman Thomason presiding over the meeting.

Others in attendance included Kevin Holtzinger, Rodney Hollabaugh, Kim Weigand, Julie & Chuck Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Ruppert, Beth Thomason, Barbara Mitchell, Gary Myers, George Wolf, Roger and Joann Ritler, Glen Sauble, Emmert Hartzell Jr., Monica Schryver, Christine Holtzinger, Jeff and Luanne Megonnell, and John and Pat Biese, Chris Phillips, Donald Godfrey, Kim Dillion, Linda McCreary, and Edward Carson. From the Planning Commission, Gerald Shank, Alicia Wooters, William Bowen, Donald Godfrey, and Dana Shuman.

Pledge of Allegiance

**Announcements**

Please do not overload the recycle trailer and use containers provided. Empty Plastic containers, cans and cardboard are the only items accepted. If overloading of trailer and items not accepted continue the service will not be provided in the future.

Chairman Thomason thanked the Hartzell’s for setting up the tables and chairs for the meeting.

**ZONING ORDINANCE**

**Draft amendments to Zoning Ordinance for utility scale solar facility-Discussion**

Attorney Smith reviewed the draft Zoning Ordinance for utility scale solar facility that was drafted over a year ago for consideration. No permits have been submitted. It will need to be decided where to allow the use and in what manner the use is permitted. Also, will it be a conditional use or special exception? There cannot be an Ordinance that excludes solar facilities, it is unlawful. Straban Township has two solar facilities permitted use by right and is handled by the zoning officer. There were blanks in certain areas that the Board must decide how to complete the draft.

**COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS**

Alicia Wooters-What would happen if an application came in before the Ordinance is established.

Attorney Smith-There are no standards. There is no use in the Ordinance. They could put them anywhere.

Monica Schryver-The township discussed this ordinance a year ago what happened? She also questioned Attorney Smith as to what a stay means.

Attorney Smith-Stay is a legal term applied when someone has been issued a violation and the court issues a stay to allow them to gather information.

John Biese-Is there a map of agricultural land anywhere?

Chairman Thomason-There is a map hanging in the meeting room at the Township Building.

Gerald Shank-We should have access to a map that shows the districts.

Trey-You can get that from the County.

Glen Sauble-Does this affect people that have their land in ag conservation.

Attorney Smith-You are talking conservation agreements and that might change. There is a big push at the Federal and State level to allow for some solar development on those properties but right now there is not. The properties are in ag security area, there are no limitations on what you can do in clean and green, there is a problem when you start converting you will be subject to rollback of your taxes.

Rodney Hollabaugh-He is not for the Government sticking their noses in property owner’s land. What happens in fifteen years when the solar farms are falling apart? He does not want the taxpayers to be stuck paying for cleaning up the solar farms.

Attorney Smith-You cannot exclude them. The decommissioning in the ordinance will take care of that. She stated there is no civil engineer that has experience with the cost to remove the panels.

Rodney-There should be a performance bond in place.

Trey-that is what Attorney was speaking about.

Attorney Smith-You cannot just pick a number.

Monica Schryver-Mt. Joy Township determined an amount of $100,000.00 per megawatt. The residents should not have to foot the bill. Get everything in writing, get the maps out to residents. People want to see rural areas. Get a group together to start working on this to determine where land use is permitted. The township should have two solicitors so there are two sets of eyes on it. She spoke with Rusty Ryan, Adams County Conservation District, and he said the contaminates could leak into the water system. Ms. Schryver stated the township is always looking out for new people coming into the township but what about the residents that have been here?

Chairman Thomason-stated they are not just here for show. They want to get the Ordinance in place.

Gerald-There was an article in the Gettysburg times on April 24,25 and the 26th about Mt. Joy and Butler Townships. In their Ordinance they have a bond set for decommissioning of farms. It also says the time limit to install is four years. Butler Township increased their setback to 50 feet.

These farms are going to cause pollution, noise, and blinking lights at night.

Chairman Thomason-Do the facilities have to notify the township when they go online.

Attorney Smith-yes.

Attorney Smith-There will also be milestones updates mentioned in the Ordinance. They will have to update their progress.

Chairman Thomason-The Board of Supervisors can give an extension but no more than three times.

John Biese-He remembers reading an article about having 100 acres and putting 50% into solar panels.

Attorney Smith-Some municipalities have tried this but there are no exceptions from the development, so it is the whole sight then they do the percentage. This draft proposes they must take out from that their developable area.’ They must carve out their wetlands, floodplains, their steep slopes and then meet a certain number. This draft focuses on a piece of property that cannot be developed and then what is left is what you can do your developing on.

Don Godfrey-He would like to see them in commercial zones. Solar farms are commercial.

Chairman Thomason-With Reading Township’s commercial area they would be under big restrictions because of what we have.

Attorney Smith-If they assume all the commercial land there will not be any commercial land. The size and location may not be acceptable.

Herrold Ruppert-In the future how are the residents going to make out. Are the taxes going to go down?

Chairman Thomason-No the only person makes out are the landowners that sell or lease their land. Do we allow trucking companies and put a, more developments, or solar farms to come it. Two out of Three cannot be decommissioned. He is not advocating solar. We need to make it hard for it to happen.

Monica- How many years. They say it will take ten years to get the soil back from being ripped from its nutrients. What impact will it have on the Chesapeake water shed?

Trey-they would have to comply with DEP and the county.

Glen Sauble-Didn’t you say it had nothing to do with zoning?

Trey-We must allow them.

Monica-We need to get involved, have a voice. Get together and work on a comprehensive plan.

Chairman Thomason-The county tried to work on a comprehensive plan, but all the other townships backed out.

Attorney Smith-You should request a proposal of water testing provided to the township and owners.

Chairman Thomason-Protect yourself. Know what is in the water. Get your water tested before the solar farms begin.

Barbara Mitchell-Can we make them have the water tested periodically?

Chairman Thomason-That is something we can add to the ordinance.

Kim Dillion-Representative Mastriano was working on a Bill to have Industries rate and test their soils. Can the Township do it?

Attorney Smith-That bill failed. Testing soil is difficult.

Roger Miller-Can you put in the Ordinance to have the solar companies pay royalties for using the land.

Attorney Smith-You cannot do that. It is regulated by the Public Utility Commission.

Dana Shuman-Would the well water tests be high in contaminates?

Attorney Smith-If it is determined it was caused by the solar panels, they would have to pay to get you clean water.

Monica-Where would the transformers be located?

Trey-The nearest sub-station.

Attorney Smith-You will see sub-stations developed in the future by utility companies.

Attorney Smith-Would like to add a noise that demonstrates they are generating noise measured at zero at the property line. Also, a provision to repeat well testing periodically.

Chairman Thomason-We are going to look at it and come back at a public meeting. The next meeting will be a joint meeting with the Planning Commission on June 3rd at the Hampton Community Center at 6:30.

**business matters**

**Authorize Trey Elrod, Gordon Brown, and Associates, to act as our traffic engineer as additional duties.**

Supervisor Phillips made a motion to approve Trey Elrod with Gordon Brown and Associates to represent the township and to participate in Penn DOTT scoping and highway occupancy matters, second by Supervisor Weigand; motion carried unanimously.

**Hampton Fire Company Roof Repair Estimates**

Chairman Thomason made a motion to table until another part of a quote is submitted, second by Supervisor Weigand; motion carried unanimously.

**Closure of Possum Hollow Rd. for Private Engagement on May 11, 2024**

Supervisor Phillips made a motion to approve the closure of Possum Hollow Road on May 11 for a private engagement, second by Supervisor Weigand; motion carried unanimously.

# ADJOURN

Mr. Phillips made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm into executive session, second by Mr. Weigand; motion carried unanimously.