

VEVAY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting/Public Hearing
Wednesday, May 4, 2016
Vevay Township Hall – 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Members present: Jack Cady, Richard Lacasse, John Lazet, Pattie McNeilly, Ilene Thayer, Wayne Uzzle, and Bruce Walker.

Members absent: None.

Other Persons present: Supervisor Jesse Ramey, Treasurer Shaun Sherwood, Clerk JoAnne Kean, Planning Consultant Mark Eidelson, and Legal Counsel David Revore.

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Thayer.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The audience joined the Commission in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Set/Amend Agenda

The agenda was accepted as submitted.

IV. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting April 6, 2016 & Special Meeting April 20, 2016

Regular Meeting April 6, 2016 – amend page 4, second paragraph: Strike the language after the comma so the sentence ends “...sign content in Sec. 20.04.”

Special Meeting April 20, 2016 – No amendments were offered.

**MOTION Walker, seconded by Cady, to approve the April 6, 2016, regular meeting minutes as amended, and the special meeting April 20, 2016 minutes as submitted.
CARRIED 7-0.**

V. Brief Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VI. Recess to Public Hearing

- A. Allen S. Frederick Farm LLC/Consumers Energy SLU application for a Large Solar Energy System – 780 Jewett Road, Mason

Mr. Eidelson – had submitted a memorandum dated March 15, 2016 (meant to be April 15, 2016), with his analysis of the proposal. Since that submission, Consumers Energy (CE) has responded to the issues he raised in a letter dated April 27, 2016.

Consumers Energy (CE) team members present - Dennis Marvin (Community Engagement Manager for this region of the state), Chris Thelen (Area Manager, Public Affairs), Mauricio Pinchiero (Senior Project Manager), Elody Samuelson (Program Manager for Renewable Energy), Brian Czubko of NOVA consultants (Senior Engineer, Program Manager – Solar, for technical aspects of the project), Lindsay Kosner (Permit Agent and real estate issues), and one other team member.

Mr. Marvin - CE presentation – CE serves about 6 million residents in Michigan, and their mission is to serve the people of Michigan. This location was chosen in part for being high visibility to motorists on US 127 as well as the Township. Other solar projects include one at Grand Valley State University (3 megawatts) that has just gone online, shortly after CE closed 7 coal-fired plants last month. CE also has a solar project being constructed at Western Michigan University.

The Vevay Township proposal is for 21,600 panels. Development is dependent on customer interest as determined by sufficient subscribers signing up for the energy produced.

Mr. Pincheira – detailed the site plan proposal:

- An easement of the eastern-most 40 acres of this roughly 72 acre parcel.
- Road access – they will use an existing easement on the northern side of the parcel to construct a gated gravel road, about the length of the parcel, along the northern side.
- Parking - as there will be no traffic other than maintenance and inspection, no parking area is planned. A 50' by 50' staging area is proposed near the concrete pad for the equipment.
- No major buildings or on-site personnel are planned.
- Setbacks – have been designed to comply with the Zoning Ordinance.
- Lot coverage – Based on 72 acres, coverage is calculated at 13% of the parcel.
- A green belt will be planted on the north side, pine trees every 20 feet, with low vegetation between the trees.
- Drainage – nothing proposed will significantly change any of the grading or require drainage. Some leveling at the southwest corner is proposed, but shouldn't change the existing drainage patterns.
- Panel Height - expected to be 9 to 12 feet to the top of the panels; under no circumstances would they exceed the 15' height limit in the Ordinance.
- Signage – two signs are proposed: on the western side of the parcel, a ground sign at the proposed road access from Jewett Road, designed to meet the requirements of the Ordinance; and on the eastern side of the parcel, adjacent to and perpendicular to US 127, a sign equivalent in size and design to signs permitted pursuant to Sec. 20.06 of the Ordinance (class 2 off-premises sign). If the large sign close to US 127 is not allowed by Ordinance (it currently is not as only one sign is allowed; additionally, this size sign is not allowed on -premises), CE will comply with the Ordinance requirements.
- Grass - will be planted, and maintained regularly. Weed control will be utilized. No underlying ground sheet is planned.
- Snow removal - the construction of the panels and the designed angle of the installation should minimize this need.
- Cleaning - is not anticipated as the panels are designed to bead and flow water off of the panels. Should it become necessary, soft clothes and primarily water would be used.

- Decommissioning – when the project is concluded, the panels, supporting structures, and equipment would be removed and the property re-seeded.
- Taxation – uncertain as to the amount, but the array should be taxed as personal property.
- Glare – comprehensive studies using simulation models were performed for US 127, the airport, and the golf course. Considerations included: topography; existing and proposed vegetation; angle of the sun; angle of sight by motorists, pilots, control tower personnel, and golfers; and using a southern facing of the panels. Results indicate low risk of glare and minimal impact if it does occur. The Jewett airport authority and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have been consulted, and they have no concerns with glare. The study went beyond simulation requirements, and found no hazards for pilots or airport personnel.
- Photovoltaic Cells - are designed to convert light energy to direct current electricity, which will be transmitted to converters for conversion to alternating current and then to transformers and switching equipment for feeding to the electric grid. Equipment used is built in Michigan. Wiring will be underground.
- Construction – should be straight forward, using little heavy equipment. There would be some grading of the SW corner due to the steepness of the existing grade. Posts to support the framework for the panels will be driven into the ground by a pounder to an anticipated depth of 8 to 10 feet. There will be no concrete foundations.
- Size of the project - (From their letter dated April 27, 2016, responding to questions by Mr. Eidelson) – the project description notes the size as a “one to six” megawatt project as “The construction of the solar project...is contingent on subscriptions in the Solar Gardens program...the maximum size of the project...would be six megawatts. The reference to ‘one to six’ megawatt range has been highlighted, because Consumers Energy may decide to build less than six megawatts on this site...”
- Racking assemblies – will resemble a table-like frame.
- Equipment – converters, transformers, and switching gear will be on a concrete pad on the NW corner of the easement, and will tie into the high voltage lines running across the northern edge of the property.
- For more information, including public interest: call 1-800-241-3368, or access their website at: www.ConsumersEnergy.com/solargardens

Mr. Brown - how much will this project reduce the cost of a kilowatt of power to the customer?

Ms. Samuelson – the project is funded by subscriptions by customers, and only charges those customers. **Mr. Marvin** – there would be no cost to the general customer, but the energy will be transmitted into the existing grid. Customers paying the subscription would also receive the benefits of any financial returns. The option of choosing solar-generated electricity is available to customers throughout the entire service area of Michigan; subscribers can be from anywhere, not only Vevay Township.

Mr. Brown – if someone subscribes, how many kilowatts would they receive? **Ms. Samuelson** – subscriptions are in blocks of 0.5 kilowatts. So \$10 per month for 25 years buys 0.5 kilowatts. Subscribers can pay up front or on a payment plan.

John Coy – had several questions: is the cost already half covered by subscriptions? How will the project work if there are not enough subscribers? Will CE maintain water drainage to the north? **Mr. Marvin** – for the GVSU project, roughly half of the panels have been subscribed. Costs are not rate-based across the consumer population, but based on firm commitments from

subscribers. If there are insufficient subscribers and the project is still built, CE would have to go to the Public Service Commission and attempt to convince that body to have the costs added to the rate base. Every other form of electricity generation has been in the rate base, but this project would be consumer driven. Financial returns to subscribers are possible. **Mr. Czubko** – used a topographical map to indicate the anticipated drainage. The topography would be validated before construction to ensure drainage is as anticipated.

Mr. Brown – what is happening with the state renewable energy requirement? Could it move from more than 10% to maybe 50%? **Mr. Marvin** – in 2008, Michigan adopted law requiring that 10% of all electricity provided be from renewable sources. CE achieved that 10% level as of last year, using a mixture of solar generation (both owned and purchased) and other sources. About 4% is from their hydro-electric generating dams, owned by CE for over a century. New discussions in Lansing are ongoing, but no firm decisions have yet been made. State energy policy is driven by rate payers looking for their electricity to be clean, renewable, and affordable. Recently there was a ballot proposal to require 25% renewable source generation by 2025. That proposal was soundly defeated, probably as it would have added that requirement to the Michigan Constitution. Any future amendment would be extremely difficult. While CE worked against the “25 by 25” proposal, they support sustainability. They are increasing the use of solar, wind, and natural gas generation; natural gas is desirable as its carbon footprint is about 50% smaller than that of coal. CE is also aiming for customer costs that are affordable for business so the economy can grow.

Chair Thayer – noted that the Township had received a letter from resident Susan Kosier in support of the proposal, with several questions raised. Some of the questions should be answered in the presentation and information gathered tonight.

VII. Adjournment of Public Hearing and Recommencement of Regular Meeting

There being no further public comment, the public hearing was ended at 7:51 pm, and the regular meeting recommenced.

VIII. Reports

A. April, 2016 AGS Building/Zoning Report

The written report indicated that there were eight building/zoning permit applications, involving construction of a new home, an addition to a home, two re-inspections, a re-roofing, adding a screened in porch, a bathroom remodel, and construction of a pole barn. Five authorizations to enforce the Zoning Ordinance are pending: a blight violation, though a court order has authorized the Township to clean up the property, which should be completed by the end of May; a dangerous building remains in violation though an agreement has been reached to demolish the building; a blight violation where cleaning up is progressing though trailers still need to be moved behind a barn; and Supervisor Ramey has sent letters to two property owners, one for a sign and trash violation (no progress), and another to an owner for a blight violation that has seen progress in cleaning up though there are still vehicles that need to be moved.

IX. Pending Business

X.

A. Allen S. Frederick Farm LLC/Consumers Energy SLU application for a Large Solar Energy System – 780 Jewett Road, Mason

The site plan is actually several pages in order to focus on the various provisions of the plan: a Cover page followed by pages GS-101 through GS-108, revision B or C, dated March 28, 2016. Supporting documentation and responses to questions are included in letters from CE dated:

December 30, 2015
February 2, 2016
March 29, 2016
April 27, 2016

Both AGS and Mr. Eidelson had submitted their analysis of the site plan.

In response to questions raised by Mr. Eidelson, CE's April 27, 2016 letter to the Township gave detailed commentary on:

- Glare – panel materials and the proposed manner of installation minimize glare, and should not present a hazard.
- Detergents - should not be needed based on the construction and composition of the panels, but if cleaning is needed for “stubborn soiling”, isopropyl alcohol would be utilized with a soft cloth
- Panel Height – is expected to not exceed 12 feet, well within the 15 foot limit in the Ordinance
- Signs – the proposed 250 square foot sign is based on the Ordinance requirements for Class 2 off-premises signs. While on-premises signs of this size are not allowed under the Ordinance, they would like to have such a sign. Regardless, CE will comply with the ordinance.
- Permits – CE listed the needed permits from the Township, the Ingham County Drain Commission, and the Ingham County Road Department.
- Connection to the grid – CE described the equipment and wiring that would be utilized.
- Generation capacity – CE explained that the size of the project would depend on the level of subscriptions received, and that a decision as to phased construction has not been decided.

During the meeting CE responded to Commission questions:

- The concrete pad for the equipment is proposed on the NW corner of the easement (versus the NE corner) for connection to the high voltage lines located there. Those transmission lines are on a separate, existing easement. The access easement is legally different in purpose from the power line easement.
- The proposed fencing will be 6 foot high galvanized chain link, grey and not green.
- The location of the trees relative to the fences has not yet been decided, but on other sites they have been planted outside the fence.
- The solar panel arrays will roll with the terrain.
- From an audience member - the shaded patch on page GS-103 is a stone pile/old tree.
- Start of construction depends on the level of subscription. They have an active marketing campaign that will continue at least through the summer.

- Some business entities have expressed a philosophical interest in obtaining electricity generated from renewable sources. A data mining firm based in Las Vegas that recently chose to locate near Grand Rapids wants 100% renewable energy from new sources.

COMMISSION – discussed Ordinance timing requirements for a SLU permit and site plan.

- Construction - pursuant to Sec. 14.04 of the Zoning Ordinance, “Each development subject to site plan review shall be substantially under construction within one (1) year after the date of approval of the site plan”, with some exceptions noted.
- Active use – pursuant to Sec. 16.04 of the Zoning Ordinance, “A Special Land Use must be initiated within two (2) years from the date of approval,” and “The Township Board may grant up to a one (1) year extension, with adequate explanation from the applicant”.

The Commission evaluated the revised site plan (dated March 28, 2016, cover page plus pages GS-101 through GS-108) to ensure it meets the requirements of the Ordinance as follows:

Section 3.27 – Large Solar Energy System requirements. AGS and Mr. Eidelson have conducted a review of the proposal and reported:

C. Location only in A-1 or M-1 district – Condition met. (The parcel is zoned A-1).

B. General Provisions

a. Location and setbacks for solar energy system equipment – Condition met. (Page GS-101 indicates the proposed installation and setbacks would be in conformance with all applicable requirements.)

b. Screening requirements – Condition met. (Given the topography of the parcel and the existing brush line.)

c. Glare minimization and documented evaluation – Condition met. (The glare simulation study submitted with the December 30, 2015 letter was explained in detail during the meeting; a simulated depiction of the panels as would be seen by north-bound drivers on US 127 was given to the Commission during the meeting. The CE letter dated April 27, 2016, includes further details of the study.)

d. Lot coverage and drainage issues – Condition met. (Calculations by CE and AGS indicate the proposed array would be less than the 15% limit on lot coverage. Drainage will not be affected by the proposed development.)

e. Use of detergents and groundwater protection – Condition met. (CE’s letter of April 27, 2016, indicates that cleaning of the panels is not needed, due to the materials and construction of the panels themselves. Details of the proposed cleaning methods, should they be needed, specify that water is the preferred cleanser, and only for “stubborn soiling” would isopropyl alcohol be used. This alcohol has a high rate of evaporation and would be applied with a soft cloth.)

D. Ground-Mounted Systems

a. Ground-mounted solar collection panels are prohibited in a front yard and shall be setback from all property lines the same distance as required for the principal building on the property. Such setback shall be a minimum of fifty (50) feet where the respective yard is adjacent to

property in a designated Agricultural or Residential District. – Condition met. (The yard requirement is not applicable, and page GS-101 indicates all setback requirements are met).

b. Ground-mounted solar collection panels shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height except that ground mounted solar collection panels shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height in the B-1, B-2, and M-1 Districts and any other commercial and industrial district. – Condition met. (CE both in writing and during the meeting confirmed that the height of the panels should not exceed 12 feet. While Diagrams A2 and B2 on page GS-106 include heights only to certain parts of the proposed array, the total clearly is significantly less than 15’).

c. Screening of ground-mounted panels that are part of a LSES shall be provided as required for SSES, according to Section 3.27(A). – Condition met. (The distance to surrounding parcels as well as the existing vegetative screening is adequate except for the north side; the proposed greenbelt on page GS-107 meets the requirements of the Ordinance.).

d. If a ground mounted LSES ceases to operate or is abandoned for six (6) months, or is deemed by the Building Inspector to be unsafe or not consistent with the building code, the applicant shall repair and restore the system to good working order within a reasonable time set by the Zoning Administrator or otherwise remove the system in its entirety including posts, equipment, panels, foundations and other features and restore the ground to its preconstruction state. – Commission to Determine. (In CE’s April 27, 2016, letter and as explained during the meeting, decommissioning would entail removal of all above ground structures, a regrading of the easement as necessary, and reseeded of the easement area).

Section 14.03 – Site Plan Review Requirements

A general location sketch showing at a minimum, properties, streets, and use of land within ½ mile of the area. – Condition met. Provided with the December 30, 2015 application, and detailed in the CE letter dated February 2, 2016.

Legal description of the subject property – Condition Met. Included with the April 4, 2016 SLU application, and also described on page GS-102 of the site plan.

Date, north arrow, and scale – Condition met. All are included in the revised site plan dated March 28, 2016, though the north arrow is actually a circle.

Name and address of the property owner or petitioner – Condition met. The April 4, 2016, SLU permit application lists the owner as Allen S. Frederick LLC, mailing address of 1813 Candlestick Lane, Midland, MI 48642.

Name and address of the professional individual responsible for the preparation of the site plan – Condition met. This information is noted on the cover sheet of the revised site plan as being Satya Baluja and Brian Czubko of NOVA Consultants, Inc.

Existing zoning and use of all properties abutting the subject property – Condition met. Listed in the comments section of page GS-102 of the site plan.

All buildings, parking, and driveways within 100’ of all property lines – Condition met. CE notes in their letter dated February 2, 2016, that there are no buildings or parking within 100’ of the property lines, and that there are two access highways within 100’ of the proposed CE access drive.

The overall objectives of the proposed development – Condition met. The CE letter dated February 2, 2016 describes the project: “As part of the Solar Garden program, Consumers Energy is planning to install a one to six megawatt ground-mounted Solar Photovoltaic electricity generating system in the east 40 acres of the property located at

801 Jewett Road, Mason, Michigan 48854.” Thus, the overall objective is the generation of electricity using photovoltaic cells as part of expanding their renewable source energy program.

Size (in acres) of the subject property and approximate number of acres allocated to each proposed use and gross area in building, structures, parking, public streets and drives, and open space – Conditions met. CE notes in their letter dated March 29, 2016, that the parcel is 71.7 acres. During the May 4, 2016, Commission meeting it was stated that the parcel is 72.28 acres. For ease of referral, the parcel is about 72 acres. No buildings are proposed. Structures include the solar arrays, for a maximum acreage of about 9.3 acres (405,000 square feet), to be located on a 40 acre easement on the east side of the parcel; and a staging area for vehicles of about 0.06 acres (2,000 square feet). No parking is proposed. No public streets or public access is proposed. No open space is proposed or required. A private and gated gravel access road of approximately 2,281 feet in length and 15 feet wide is proposed, totaling about 0.79 acres. The calculation in the CE letter dated February 2, 2016, changed with the new application for an easement.

Dwelling unit densities by type – Not applicable.

Proposed method of providing sewer and water service, as well as other public and private utilities – Not applicable.

Proposed method of providing storm drainage – Condition met. The site already naturally drains. Page GS-103 indicates the direction and pattern of water drainage. Mr. Eidelson advises in his analysis received on April 16, 2016, that “According to the National Resource Conservation Service, soils on the project site are principally comprised of loam and sandy loam, ranging from well drained to somewhat poorly drained, but none are subject to frequent flooding or ponding.” After hearing from CE and from a farmer during the public hearing who is familiar with the property, it was determined that no further storm drainage measures need to be taken.

Property lines and required setbacks shown and dimensioned – Condition met. As noted previously, the proposal meets all setback requirements for a LSES system in the Agricultural District. See pages GS-101 and GS-102.

Dimensions of all existing and proposed structures on the subject property – Condition met. There are no existing structures. Dimensions of the proposed structures are adequately detailed in total on page GS-101; the specific individual arrays on page GS-106; and the sign(s) on page GS-108. No dwelling units are proposed. Page GS-101 indicates a 2,500 square foot concrete pad for location of the electrical equipment needed to convert and transmit the generated electricity.

Size and location of existing and proposed utilities and connections – Conditions met. The only utility to be added is electricity, which tonight CE indicated will be generated on site. No sewer, water, or natural gas service is needed.

All existing and proposed drives, acceleration/deceleration lanes, sidewalks, signs, exterior lighting, curbing, parking areas, fire lanes, and unloading areas – Conditions met. The proposed single lane gravel access road is adequately delineated on page GS-102 (Diagram A1). No sidewalks, curbing, parking areas, or fire lanes are required or proposed. Two signs are proposed: a ground sign near Jewett Road, which meets the requirements of the Ordinance, and the equivalent of a Class 2 off-premises sign (250 square feet in size) that would be on site. The Ordinance limits the overall sign size to 32 square feet. The 250 square foot sign is thus prohibited. The larger sign, while meeting the dimensional requirements for an off-premises sign, is not permitted on site. CE has agreed in writing and verbally to be in conformity with the Ordinance requirements.

Pavement width and right-of-way width of all roads, streets, and access easements within 100 feet of the subject property – Conditions met. The right-of-ways for Jewett Road and US-127 are noted in the CE letter dated February 2, 2016. The existing CE access easement is detailed in the site plan.

Location and size of all surface water drainage facilities – Not applicable. After discussion with CE and as noted in the site plan, additional facilities are not needed.

Location of all solid waste disposal facilities, including recycling, and screening – No solid waste will be generated on site. CE stated in their letter dated April 27, 2016, that soft cloths could be used for cleaning the panels. If cloths are used for cleaning, they commented that they will be brought in and transported out by the maintenance truck.

Location for existing or proposed outside, above or below ground storage facilities for hazardous materials – Not applicable.

All existing vegetation and the location, type, and size of all proposed landscaping, and the location, height and type of existing and proposed fences and walls – Condition met. Existing vegetation is noted in the site plan. Proposed additional screening is indicated in the site plan, and meets Ordinance requirements.

Recreation areas, common use areas, flood plain areas and areas to be conveyed for public use and purpose – Not applicable.

Exterior lighting – Condition met. No exterior lighting is proposed, but if the Ordinance ever allows for an on-site Class 2 sign, CE will construct one on the east side of the easement for viewing by traffic on US-127. That sign would be lighted in accordance with whatever the Ordinance would require for such a sign.

Elevation drawings of proposed buildings – Condition met. No buildings are proposed. The elevation drawings of the proposed solar arrays are included on page GS-106. During the April 6, 2016, and the May 4, 2016, Commission meetings CE stated that the arrays would be no higher than an estimated twelve (12) feet. The CE letter dated April 27, 2016, also states that “The exact height of the solar panels will be determined during the engineering phase of the project, but will not exceed 15 feet.” CE commented during the May 4, 2016, Commission hearing that the arrays will be built to the topography, so that while some arrays will appear to be higher than others, the heights will reflect the ground level itself.

D. Additional Information

Given the submission of a revised site plan and materials, no additional graphics or written materials were requested. As there is no significant foreseeable traffic once construction is finished, no Traffic Impact Assessment or Traffic Impact Study is required of CE.

Section 14.04 – Application and Review: Supervisor Ramey commented that all required site plan review packets and all pertinent fees have been submitted.

Section 14.06– Review Standards

B. Site Development Standards

1. The uses proposed will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare – Condition met. No traffic except for maintenance would occur. No noise, odor, smoke, dust, fumes, hazardous waste, excessive traffic, or site drainage issues would occur. The only issue of concern would be glare, which was addressed in the CE letters dated December 30, 2015, and April 27, 2016, and also by comments and responses to questions during the meeting.

CE commented that glare in general is about 1/1000 of the light intensity of looking at the sun. For glare to be a problem, it has to be in the direct sight (not peripheral) of the viewer. The panels have an anti-reflective coating on the panels to lower the intensity of glare. The FAA has developed a solar glare analysis tool specifically for solar arrays near airports, the main objective being to protect pilots and control tower personnel from glare. The tool rating determines after-image scenes on the retinas well as direct glare. The tool also includes the duration of looking at glare. The analysis indicated no glare for the airport approach paths, and airport personnel stated they have no issues with the array being constructed.

CE indicated in their letter dated April 27, 2016, that “The glare simulations show no glare in the winter half of the year. The simulations show glare is possible in portions of the summer half of the year, in the evenings, when the sun is at a certain position in the sky, when the sky is mostly clear. The duration is anticipated to be between 20 to 45 minutes per day for a stationary observer. Drivers travelling southbound on US-127 would not see any glare. Northbound drivers would not see any glare unless they turn their heads to the west to see the glare directly. Any glare noticeable to drivers maintaining a forward view would only be in their far peripheral vision. Additionally, existing trees and brush along the property will also help block the view and the array is over 225 feet away from the northbound lanes of US-127. In summary, any peripheral glare would not present be a driving hazard.” CE also stated that their analysis indicated no glare for golfers to the south.

In summary, the proposed use would not adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare.

2. Consideration of topography and potential development of surrounding properties – Condition met. The SW corner of the easement has a steep grade, and some re-grading will be undertaken to reduce the slope. The arrays will be constructed to roll with the topography. As the neighboring parcels are either already developed or farmed, and as there are no anticipated impacts from the proposed use, development or improvement of surrounding property is not an issue.
3. Visual and sound privacy; fencing if needed to minimize or prevent trespassing or other adverse effects on adjacent lands – Condition met. The only applicable requirement is fencing. CE will be constructing a six foot high cyclone fence around the development, which is adequate for the project.
4. Create a pleasant, pedestrian paced atmosphere – Not applicable.
5. Emergency vehicle access – Not applicable.
6. Exterior lighting – Not applicable. Should the equivalent of a Class 2 on-premises sign be allowed in the future, CE has indicated in writing and verbally that any lighting of the sign would comply with the Ordinance.
7. Loading and unloading areas, need for screening them. Meet the requirements of Section. 15.02 – Not applicable.

8. Governmental approvals and permits – Condition met or in process. CE has indicated that it needs approval from the Township of a SLU permit and for the proposed ground sign; the SLU permit application is being considered by the Commission. The County Drain Commission office has indicated that no permits are required from their office. No state permits are required. The only Federal consideration was the FAA and Jewett Airport, both of whom expressed no concern with glare issues.
9. Purpose and spirit of the Ordinance and Master Plan - The existing use of farming has been there for many years and will be continued. The parcel is located in a portion of the Township that is designated by the Master Plan for mixed use, and the proposed solar array, while it could occupy as much as 40 acres, is proposed to be adjacent to US-127, and within this mixed-use area. Given the location and that there are no negative impacts expected from the development, the spirit of the Zoning Ordinance and the Master Plan are considered to have been met. Commissioners indicated they deemed the proposed development to be a very good fit to the Township.

C. Vehicular and Pedestrian Standards

Given the lack of public access and the limited company traffic anticipated, all of these requirements were found to be not applicable.

D. Environmental and Natural Features Standards

1. Removal or alteration of significant natural features; buffering of the proposed use – Condition met. CE has indicated the only alteration will be grading of the SW corner to reduce the slope. Significant trees will be retained, and a green belt planted on the north side of the easement.
2. Landmark trees or significant vegetation require protection – Condition met.
3. Appropriate measures to handle storm water drainage – Condition met. On site drainage is currently adequate and should not be affected by the proposed development. There is no recent experience of standing water on the property after rainfall. Drainage was deemed to be adequate and to not negatively impact any public storm drainage system.
4. Collection of surface water – Not applicable as current drainage patterns should handle all precipitation and snowmelt waters.
5. Retaining natural drainage patterns – Condition met. The proposed development is not expected to affect or to necessitate any change in drainage patterns.
6. Utilize existing natural drainage features – Condition met. The proposal should not affect any current natural drainage features.
7. Accommodate storm water on site – Not applicable.

SECTION 15.04 LIGHTING:

As no exterior lighting is proposed, this section was determined to not be applicable. Again, should the equivalent of a Class 2 on-premises sign be allowed in the future, CE has indicated in writing and verbally that any lighting of the sign would comply with the Ordinance.

SECTION 15.05 LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS

The site already has a significant number of larger trees and vegetation that shield and mitigate the view. The only provision found to be applicable was for a landscape buffer zone along the

north side of the easement. CE's proposal to plant evergreens with vegetation between the trees meets the requirements of this section.

MOTION McNeilly, seconded by Walker, that as the Commission has considered in detail the site plan for the Consumers Energy solar garden proposal, a motion for conditional approval of the site plan be prepared.

CARRIED 7-0.

B. Re-zoning Request to Change from B-2 to M-1, from J&J Properties – John Fischer,
2377 Kipp Road, Mason

MOTION Cady, seconded by Walker, to schedule a public hearing during the regular June meeting to consider Mr. Fischer's request to re-zone the property located at 2377 Kipp Road from B-2 to M-1.

CARRIED 7-0.

XI. Any Other Business

MOTION Cady, seconded by Lacasse, to schedule a special meeting on May 11, at 6:00 pm, to consider possible amendments to the Sign provisions of at least Chapter 20 of the Zoning Ordinance.

CARRIED 7-0.

XI. Additional Public Comment

There was no additional public comment.

XII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

John Lazet, Secretary