

Johnstown Township Minutes

13641 South M-37 Highway. Battle Creek, Michigan 49017

Special Board Meeting – June 12, 2024 – 5:00 p.m.

Review of Barry County DRAFT Solar Energy Ordinance

Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of allegiance was recited.

Present: Supervisor Barb Earl, Clerk Sheri Babcock, Treasurer Karmen Nickerson, Trustee Deana Powell, and Trustee Jeff Warren.

Absent: none

Visitors: 13

Agenda: Motion by Powell to approve the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comments (3 minutes per person):

- Guest suggested to include “or leasee” to page 4, paragraph J “the property owner”
- Resident asked that setbacks related to water on page 6 be increased from 100’
- Resident commented that the draft ordinance does not address wind turbines or battery storage.
- Resident handed out copies of Michigan Constitution to Board referencing Local Government’s Constitutional authority over utilities.

New Business:

- Barry County DRAFT Solar Ordinance was reviewed. Commissioner Dave Jackson shared some of the decision making and concerns that have shaped the draft ordinance thus far, and work completed with the County Attorney. Treasurer Nickerson and Trustee Warren expressed desire for Johnstown Township attorney input. County deadline of June 14 for comments in order to keep the process on track for the July Planning Commission meeting, and proposed Public Hearing in August. Board expressed desire to see maps of the prime farmland and the proposed Consumers Energy project.
- Additional discussion about:
 - Percentage of Prime Farmland
 - Scope of project specifically in Johnstown Township
 - Overall acreage limits for Barry County
 - Solar panel height; fencing; screening; glare; decommissioning
 - Setbacks
 - EGLE oversight of water-related setbacks.
 - Protecting Barry County interests for current and future projects.
 - Minimum project acres, suggestion that 80-acre minimum be put in place.
 - Fire-fighting equipment requirements
 - Battery storage

Additional Public Comments (3 minutes per person):

- The ballot initiative to regain local control is still gathering signatures. It will not be on the November 2024 ballot.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Warren to adjourn. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Next Regular Board Meeting: June 12, 2024.

Next Quarterly Board/Fire Meeting: July 1, 2024.

**Attested to by:
Barbara Earl
Supervisor**



Sheri Babcock, Clerk

APPROVED