

Weare Township

Planning Commission

Public Hearing December 15th, 2025 6 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Duncan called the meeting order at 6:01pm

B. The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance

C. Roll Call

Board members present included: Mr. Duncan chair, Mr. Kokx, Mrs. Lauber, Mr. Stotler, Mrs. Green, Mr. Daly, Mrs. Anderson secretary. Absent : Mr. Broderick

D. Attendance

Audience members included: Marc Daneman, Lawyer, Larry Doran Township Supervisor, Richard Houtteman Consumers Energy, Joe Lawson Consumers Energy, Lindsey Starken Consumers Energy, Kristi Baker Consumers Energy, Jon Anderson Lawyer, Mark Timmer Oceana County Road Commission, Melanie Sayles Weare Township Clerk, Robert & Sharon Powers, D. Potter, Greg & Deb Greiner, Dave & Nora Kokx, Sara Bizon, Robert Green, Paul Erickson, Jennifer Copenhaver, Robert VanderZanden

E. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the addition of making #8 Public comments that are not on the agenda then # 9 Adjournment

F. Old Business

None

G. New Business

Introduction to the Public Hearing for Zoning Solar Ordinance Amendments was presented by Marc Daneman, Township lawyer. A power point presentation and brief overview was given of each section showing what the Planning Commission has been working on to ensure the Township's safety and security for this project or any others that may come to Weare.

H. Public Comments on the Zoning Ordinance Amendments

Larry Doran, 7499 N. Oceana Drive- wanted to Applaud the Planning Commission Board and Marc Daneman for all the long hours and hard work they have put into the Solar Ordinance to protect Weare Township and its residents.

Mark Timmer, Managing Director Oceana County Road Commission- Is here to support the Township with this project and is looking forward to having good communication with the Township Board and Consumers Energy during the project. He was assuring the public about having a good Road use agreement in place for the heavy trucks and gravel that would be traveling across the roads and was assuring people he was aware of all the use and possible damage that could happen during this project.

No written comments were received by email thru the address given in the Public Notice given in the Echo newspaper.

Joe Lawson, Consumers Energy, One Energy Plaza Jackson MI expressed appreciation in allowing Consumers to be a part of the process for the Zoning Ordinance as well and happy to provide any information that is needed but wanted to point out a few errors in the Solar Ordinance. He wanted to point out some typos and other wording that were not in alignment in the ordinance and will submit them in writing. Some definitions were inconsistent; they were defined in the definitions but not in the section. Page 2 what is permitted in Solar energy systems Large? Small? He advised the Board to take a step back and look at some of the inconsistencies. Take the public comments, and Consumers has received outside council on not necessarily as a Solar Ordinance but as a legal land use ordinance. Relook at the \$1,000 per megawatt development fee. Maybe holding off on the Public hearing and take another look at the ordinance. He is happy to provide their attorney's comments as well .

Jon Anderson, Land use attorney, helps with Zoning permits and siting- pointed out that the inconsistencies in the set-back requirements. Also noise requirements difference between a "one time" noise and a steady noise there are two different numbers 50 and 55. Also would like to see areas cleaned up like Landscaping and the berm. Consumers want hard and fast rules not open to the Townships' discretion. Consumers is Happy to provide a list so they can be reviewed in more detail.

Public Comments closed at 6: 34

I. Planning Commission Comments and Review:

Mrs. Green states that she is unsure if the Planning commission has deliberated enough on whether the Township should be allowing the Large-scale Solar plants

to be in the Neighborhood Commercial and the Highway service districts. She would like to pass on to the Weare Township board the information that more work needs to be done to include the Neighborhood Commercial, Highway Service and the Ag/residential areas.

Mr. Stotler supports not allowing these types of projects to be near the Neighborhood Commercial, Highway Service and the Ag/residential Zoned areas also.

Mr. Kokx agrees as well.

Mrs. Green also is concerned about a change in footprint or participating properties and setback lines. She would also like to include language in the Ordinance that could also effect a change in the screening. Parcels could be split that were once thought to be filled with solar arrays but now only have a portion of it covered with panels could affect the way it is screened. She would like this situation addressed. She asked for clarification on which section it could be addressed.

Mr. Daneman feels it would be best clarified in the Screening or Modifications section as well as the Repowering section. Any change would also be brought to the attention of the Zoning Administrator to review the changes which could require administrative approval and the information brought back to the Planning Commission.

Mrs. Green wondered about putting a CAP on the percentage of total projects coming into the Township.

Mr. Stotler wondered if a CAP would be viable if the state could override it if the project is referred to the state.

Mr. Duncan is not in favor of a Cap.

Mr. Stotler would like to see Consumer's Energy or any other future business that wants to put in a large project to hire the local businesses for some or all of its needs.

Mr. Kokx would like a list of the discrepancies that Consumer's Energy mentioned previously.

Mr. Daneman agreed, the sooner the better for the discrepancy list.

Mrs. Green mentioned a few typographical errors in the Ordinance and would also like to change the wording in Section 2.1A.a in (3) in the parenthesis to add the words after "is split" to "or planned to be split." Also, in Section 1. Intent and Purpose remove the word "make" and remove the words "the need for".

The sentence should read: The Township of Weare desires to revise the Weare Township Zoning ordinance regarding the regulations to permit large scale solar energy systems to accommodate large scale, utility scale and solar farm development, while protecting the general health, safety and welfare of the residents, property owners and other persons within the Township of Weare.

Mrs. Green asked Mr. Daneman if the Township board could still make changes to the ordinance if needed to include all the public/ feedback and Consumers list of discrepancies. His answer was yes.

Mr. Kokx is in favor of moving the Ordinance to the Township Board with all the public comments, along with Consumers list of discrepancies, and typo changes.

Mrs. Lauber has no further comments.

Mr. Duncan is in favor of a 10-day time frame for the public comments and list of Consumer's discrepancies.

Mr. Stotler had no further comments and added that he is satisfied with the work the board has put in for the protection and safety of the environment and waterways. Grammatical errors can be changed quickly and is in favor of turning the Ordinance over to the Township board. We had a good public hearing last time and were able to incorporate their concerns.

Mrs. Green had no further comments.

Mr. Daly agrees with fixing the grammatical errors and some of the language. Also wanted to include language for the districts that any future projects would be allowed to be built in or next to.

Mr. Daneman said that there is a process in place for them and it would be for a company to apply for a variance.

J. Public Comments not on Agenda

Doran Township Supervisor, 7499 N. Oceana Drive. This is an ordinance for everybody, not just Consumers. I want to thank Consumers for coming to some of the Planning commission meetings and pointing out a few things. If they have some comments that pertain to the language and clean some things up, that's very good. Also, the public has 10 days to make comments, if not tonight get them in writing and submit to the board. He also reiterated that this is not just an Ordinance that is for Consumers but also for any future projects that could come into the Township.

Joe Lawson Consumers Energy- One Energy Plaza. Encourages the board to take a half step back and look at all the copies and versions that you have out there. From a land use perspective, I would not want to move an item forward if you know there are items in there that you want to change even down to typo's I would suggest getting those cleaned up before giving over to the Board.

Mr. Daneman has reminded everyone that the Township Board extended the moratorium for 90 days, next Township meeting is January 12, 2026.

Mrs. Green and Mr. Stotler stated that the ordinance they were working from were not different versions but formatted differently and the wording is the same.

Mr. Duncan called for any other comments and closed 2nd round of public comments.

Mr. Stotler made a motion to refer the Weare Township Solar Ordinance draft as presented at the December 15, 2025 public hearing including Planning Commission recommended changes and public comments to the County Planning Commission followed by the Weare Township Board for final review.

Mrs. Green supported.

Mr. Daneman asked by what date?

Mrs. Green said that the comments can be received 10 days from today which is Christmas, so she believes it will be January to compile everything.

Mr. Daneman recommends getting all the comments in and responses to them and then the board makes a final decision to them. Otherwise, his comments are going to the County board and he does not know how they will respond to it. He feels the move is premature by not having a final document for the board to review.

Mrs. Green said there was a motion on the table with support and that it should move forward and the Planning commission is ready for another public body to take another look at it. She feels the County Planning commission knows what they are doing and can handle it.

Mr. Duncan chairman, states there is a motion on the table to pass the Solar Ordinance draft on with comments to the County planning commission and the Township board after the comments are received.

Roll call vote was Mr. Kokx- yes, Mrs. Lauber-yes, Mr. Duncan-Opposed, Mr. Stotler-yes, Mrs. Green -yes, Mr. Daly- yes.

Motion has passed

K. Adjournment

Mr. Duncan Thanked everyone for all the work they have done and appreciates the Public for showing up, appreciate Consumers for being here. It's been a long road almost a year.

Mrs. Lauber made a motion to Adjourn with Mr. Koxk 2nd.

All Ayes in favor of adjourning.

Motion passed.