**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP LAND USE BOARD**

 **MINUTES**

**FEBRUARY 8, 2023**

**7:30 PM**

**202 SIDNEY ROAD, PITTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY 08867**

**This meeting will be held remotely on Zoom**

**Zoom Meeting Information is below**

**David Dallas called the meeting to order and read the Open Public Meeting Statement**

Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act in that a Notice was published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Express Times and the notice of this meeting was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building.

**Pledge of Allegiance: David Dallas led the flag salute**

**Roll Call**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Roger Soltys  | 7:50  | Mike Chabra  | present | James Witkowski |  present |
| Ken Weiss  | present | Dave Dallas  | present | Deanna Seiple |  absent |
| Philip Koury  | present | John Thonet  | present | John Benscoter | present |
| Stephen Willis  | absent | Jennifer Fisher |  absent |   |   |

**Approval of minutes:** Motion to approve John Benscoter Seconded by Ken Weiss

 All members present voted yes in favor

 John Thonet abstained

**Approval of Bills:** Motion to approve John Thonet Seconded by Ken Weiss

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Roger Soltys  | 7:50 | Mike Chabra  | yes | James Witkowski |  yes |
| Ken Weiss  | yes | Dave Dallas  | yes | Deanna Seiple |  absent |
| Philip Koury  | yes | John Thonet  | yes | John Benscoter | yes |
| Stephen Willis  | absent | Jennifer Fisher |  absent |   |   |

**New Business**

Phil Koury stated that we need to work with the planner Darlene Green to review our solar ordinance and possibly create an amendment. It seems that the solar ordinance has made it more difficult to install ground mount solar on residential properties. This was an unintended consequence. The Board Secretary will reach out to Darlene Green about coming to our next work session.

Ken Weiss stated he felt this really needed to be explored. Are the issues strictly with the zones or are there also issues with the structures themselves? It may be beneficial to get feedback from the residents.

James Witkowski suggested we place this item on our agenda for the next work session and possibly get resident feedback.

Dave Dallas felt we should look at the old solar ordinance prior to the re-exam, make some changes if necessary, and then publish this and hold the public hearing. This would allow the public to make comments. Dave Dallas suggested that we look at surrounding town ordinances.

It was suggested that the Board holds a work session in March to discuss this.

John Thonet asked if the Quakertown Solar Farm has provisions to do a hybrid meeting. The Board Secretary advised that we do not have the ability to conduct hybrid meetings at this time.

John Benscoter asked if the town was receiving any rateables from the current solar farm. Phil Koury advised that this is a question for the Tax Assessor. The Board Secretary will email the tax assessor. John Benscoter asked if any attention was paid to making this a commercial property. Dave Dallas stated that the Board paid attention to every detail of the application. The Board does not have the ability to levy taxes on a property. Ken Weiss recommended that John go speak with the assessor personally.

Ken Weiss asked if the Board could discuss at an upcoming work session, limiting accessory structures. He would like to understand the intent of some of our ordinances as they relate to accessory structures. Review of the C variance as it relates to square footage of accessory structures.

**Public Comment**

Bruce DeRites, 119 Locust Grove Road asked if ground mount solar are considered permanent structures. Dave Dallas stated he didn’t know. Mr. DeRites asked if they are, should they be taxed as such. He also asked if they are considered impervious coverage. John Thonet answered that they are not.

Elizabeth Basile asked if there are more than one resolution for an applicant how do they work? Are items from the first resolution referenced in the last? Dave Dallas stated that he believes every effort is made to tie all of the resolutions together so there are no holes and conflict.

Elizabeth Basile asked if the resolutions could be numbered moving forward. The Board Secretary stated that she is beginning that process this year.

Elizabeth Basile asked who approves requested waivers. Dave Dallas stated that the engineer and planner decide if waivers are accepted. The waivers are listed in the engineer’s report.

Elizabeth Basile stated that since Cannabis was tabled at the beginning of 2022 can it be removed from the Master Plan. John Benscoter stated that the Master Plan states that the Township may consider Cannabis. At this point the Township has opted out however we may not forever. This is an item that could be placed on the ballot to see how the Township feels about Cannabis.

Christina Faragalla, 205 Sidney Road suggested that the Board look at the Master Plan Reexamination. Look at rational which planner gives for amendment as this is inconsistent with regards to water restriction.

Aly Taft, 41 Upper Kingtown Road asked about ratables and how they apply to solar. Phil Koury stated that this is a question for the professionals. Ken Weiss stated that it is discouraged in the Land Use Classes for the members to discuss taxes and rateables due to the fact that the decisions of the cases should not be based on taxes.

Sandie, resident, asked about the feed store at center of Pittstown, she heard that it is for sale and asked if this has been discussed by the Board as a possible opportunity for development. Dave Dallas stated that nothing had been discussed by this Board and would be more of a question for the Township Committee.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by John Benscoter, Seconded by John Thonet

**Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.**

No new business after 10:00PM unless agreed to by the Board. Any remaining items will be placed on the agenda for the next available meeting. Information pertaining to any item on the agenda is available for public review at the Municipal Building during normal business hours.

**Zoom meeting info.**

Topic: Franklin Township Land Use Board

Time: Feb 8, 2023 07:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87546816363?pwd=NFZuTU9KWXd3NEhURVlzTnNwRXBvdz09>

Meeting ID: 875 4681 6363

Passcode: 562272

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Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kd6sb9YcOH>

Prepared by Catherine Innella, Board Secretary

Approved February 22, 2023