

Cato Township Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2023

The Cato Township Planning Commission met for a regular meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2023, at the Lakeview Community Center.

Meeting called to order:

Chairman Morrow called the meeting to order at 6:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present:

Phil Morrow, Chairman	3-year term ending December 2024
Brandi Clark-Hubbard, Secretary	3-year term ending December 2023
Quannah Striker, Vice Chairman	3-year term ending December 2023
Joe Main, Commissioner	3-year term ending December 2025
David Behrenwald, Cato Board Liaison	Board term ending November 2024

Others present:

9 members of public (7 from Cato)

Approval of Agenda:

Morrow noted a discussion on the current solar moratorium will be part of the Solar Ordinance new business. Behrenwald motioned and Striker supported to approve the meeting agenda as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

December 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes:

Striker motioned and Behrenwald supported to approve the December meeting minutes as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

Public Comment:

Morrow opened public comment at 6:01pm. The commission heard from the following:

- Ben Stout (Cato Township) has concerns with solar panels such as their disposal in landfills, decommissioning, and chemical leaching into groundwater. He's concerned with potential ramifications 10-25 years down the road.
- Matt Hubbard (Cato Township) supports residential solar but prefers to see preservation of farmland instead of large scale solar farms.
- Jamie Snyder (Cato Township) supports setting a percentage limit on how much farmland can be used for large scale solar farms. She supports residential solar but wants to see farmland preserved.

Morrow closed public comment at 6:04pm.

Zoning Administrator Update:

None – Dave Kelsey unable to attend. Will follow up with him at March meeting.

Board Liaison Update:

Behrenwald reported on the following:

- The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) hearing for 10182 Tamarack Rd went forward because the variance request for pole barn height was for 21ft, not 18ft.
- The township board approved the contract proposal from McKenna for updating the township's master plan.
- The township board is accepting applications for 1 regular and 2 alternate positions on the ZBA.

Old Business:

McKenna (land use planning firm)

Chairman Morrow asked Behrenwald to confirm that a copy of the McKenna contract for master plan services has been provided to both Supervisor Gilbert and Clerk Lincoln. Once signed, the goal is to invite McKenna to the March planning commission meeting.

New Business:

Annual Election of Officers

Motion by Clark-Hubbard supported by Striker to elect Phil Morrow as Chairperson. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Behrenwald supported by Clark-Hubbard to elect Quanah Striker as Vice Chairperson. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Striker supported by Morrow to elect Brandi Clark-Hubbard as Secretary. All in favor, motion carried.

Annual Review of Bylaws

Article VII – Order of Business, Section 1: Motion by Morrow supported by Clark-Hubbard to add a second public comment between New Business and Adjournment with the first public comment specified as being for agenda items only. All in favor, motion carried.

Page 1 Title and Article III – Membership, Section 2 – Motion by Clark-Hubbard supported by Morrow to correct a typo in the adoption date to read “January 11, 2011” and to add a sentence at the end of Section 2 to read “Vacancies are filled for the remainder of the vacant position’s term”. All in favor, motion carried.

Solar Ordinance

Commissioners commenced a work session to review the solar ordinance template provided by Attorney Abdo. Clark-Hubbard recused herself from discussion stating she is running for a township elective office in the May 2023 special election, and as an abundance of caution regarding conflict of interest, she prefers to recuse herself from the solar discussion until after the election is decided. She will still take discussion notes as Secretary. The four remaining commissioners then commenced a line-by-line review of the template starting with Section 1. Definitions and working through Section 2. Solar Energy Systems, Item 3 Ground Mounted Private Solar Energy Systems, Letter k. Remedies. Commissioners agreed to several modifications which will be provided in an updated draft at the next meeting. Commissioners also agreed to follow up with Attorney Abdo about possibly restricting commercial solar to commercial or industrial-zoned areas. Commissioners agreed that the township’s zoning map needs to be updated in order to determine areas where commercial solar may be appropriate in the township. Solar ordinance

discussion will resume at the May meeting in order to reserve March for master plan work which includes the process of updating the zoning map.

Solar Moratorium – Current solar moratorium expires in March 2023. Motion by Striker, supported by Morrow to recommend that the township board extend the moratorium until March 2024. It is the commission's goal to get a draft finalized prior to this date. All in favor, motion carried. Morrow will provide Clark-Hubbard with the original moratorium template from Attorney Abdoo in order to update for the board to consider and vote on at their next meeting.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the commission is a regular meeting scheduled for March 8, 2023.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the commission, a motion was made by Morrow and supported by Striker to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:17pm. Motion carried.

Recorded by:

Brandi Clark-Hubbard
Secretary, Cato Township Planning Commission