

MEETING MINUTES
POPE COUNTY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Thursday February 22, 2024

The Planning Advisory Commission convened in regular session on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at the Pope County Courthouse, 3rd floor Meeting Room.

Members Present: John Messenger, Ted Kannegiesser, Russell Barkeim, Mark Halls, and Paul Gerde (County Commissioner)

Other Officials Present: Land & Resource Management staff, David Green (Director), Shelley Retrum (Sr Administrative Associate) and Jessica Hill (Deputy Director)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Messenger at 6:19 p.m.

Acceptance of Agenda

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda noted. On motion by Gerde with second by Barkeim a unanimous vote by all members present was made to approve the agenda.

Review minutes of January 25, 2024

The minutes of the Planning Advisory Commission meeting held on Thursday; January 25, 2024 were submitted for approval. Motion by Halls to accept the minutes as written. Motion seconded by Gerde. Motion carried with no dissenting votes noted.

Tabled/Old Business/Other Business:

Director Green comments that the proposed amendments to the By-Laws are still incomplete so they will not need to be considered by the Planning Advisory Commission at this time.

Public Hearings and Other Matters for Discussion

C.U.P. #24005 Construct/locate a non-farm residence in the Agriculture Protection (A-2) zoning district.

Application by Jami Knoblauch (PID #14-0131-002)

Applicant is seeking the right to construct/locate a non-farm residence in the Agriculture Protection (A-2) zoning district. This vacant parcel is located on the west side of State Highway 29 in the Northeast quarter of the Southeast quarter of Section 21 in Blue Mounds Township. Chairman Messenger introduces the item followed by staff report as presented by Director Green which included the following statement: *Based on the findings of fact presented in this report, staff does not object to a recommendation of approval of the application to the County Board conditioned upon:*

1. That the Agriculture Zone (Right-to-Farm) Acknowledgment form be signed and returned to the Land & Resource Management office prior to the application being considered by the County Board.

2. That the property owner is responsible for reaching out to the Township to assure compliance with any Township standards.
3. That prior to any construction activities, all necessary permits are secured from County and State agencies.

After the delivery of the staff report, there was brief discussion on the nearest residences with staff indicating there are no residences in the entire ¼ section. Jami Knoblauch was in attendance and offered an opportunity to defend the application. Knoblauch comments *I think staff covered it quite well and I am here to answer any questions you may have.* Barkeim asks the applicant *do you have plans to build or sell the property?* Knoblauch comments *I am thinking of possibly selling the property and would want them to be able to build if they chose.* Chairman Messenger opens a public hearing and seeks comments. There were no comments offered from the public in attendance, for or against the proposal at this time. Chairman Messenger closes the public hearing. The public hearing was followed by a site visit report as presented by Messenger, Kannegiesser and Barkeim. The site team comments *It is a remote area and rolling hills in nature. The land is fairly close to a grove of trees and looks like a logical spot to build. It looks more like recreational or hunting land than farm land.* At the conclusion of the site visit report the following motion to approve of the C.U.P. by Kannegiesser *Based upon the information as presented in the staff report and facts as gathered this evening, I move to offer a recommendation of approval of the Conditional Use Permit provided that the conditions as identified in the staff report are complied with.* Motion is seconded by Gerde. Motion passes unanimously.

C.U.P. #24004 Construct a Community Solar Garden with a nameplate capacity of 830 kilowatts.

Application by Viking Community Solar 27 LLC (PID #09-0314-001)

The specific proposal is to construct a Community Solar Garden with a nameplate capacity of 830 kilowatts (kw) on lands that have most recently been impacted by gravel extraction enterprises. Previous to mineral extraction, and as recent as 2009, the land was in agricultural production. Chairman Messenger introduces the item followed by staff report as presented by Director Green which included the following statement: *After a review of the materials in support of the application, staff concurs that the applicant has met the standard for submittals as prescribed in Section 10.12.2.D. Therefore, staff does not offer any objections to a recommendation of approval provided that the Planning Advisory Commission considers the following conditions:*

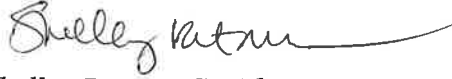
1. That a contact name and number be provided in the event of emergencies and weed management issues.
2. That assurance/guarantee related to the decommissioning plan be arranged with Pope County prior to issuance of a Land Use permit. Such assurance will be in accordance with section 10.12.2.D.12. Pope County will hold the assurance until such time as all structures relating to this project have been removed and the property returned to its previous undeveloped state.

3. That all aspects of the design be in compliance with the local land use ordinance including the setback from property lines and all performance standards listed in section 10.12.2.C.
4. That prior to any construction activities, all necessary permits are secured from County and State agencies.
5. That any deviations from the submitted Narrative relating to design, construction plans or location must be approved by the Director.
6. Applicant is responsible for compliance with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency stormwater and erosion control permitting and for maintaining any installed best management practices (BMPs) throughout the project.
7. That the installation and ongoing maintenance shall conform to applicable industry standards, such as those of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Underwriters Laboratories (UL), the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), or other similar certifying organizations, and shall comply with all other applicable fire and life safety requirements.
8. Upon completion of installation, all components of the solar garden shall be maintained in good working order in accordance with standards of the codes under which it was constructed. Failure of the property owner to maintain the solar garden in good working order is grounds for appropriate enforcement.
9. Failure to meet any of the conditions listed above may result in revocation of this permit following procedures established by and listed in the Pope County Land Use Controls Ordinance.
10. That the Interim Use Permit be valid for a period of twenty-five (25) years.

After the delivery of the staff report, there was brief discussion with the Board indicating the importance for the applicant providing a contact name and number for weed management issues. The applicant was not in attendance due to illness. Chairman Messenger opens a public hearing and seeks comments. There were no comments offered from the public in attendance, for or against the proposal at this time. Chairman Messenger closes the public hearing. The public hearing was followed by a site visit report as presented by Messenger, Kannegiesser and Barkeim. The site team comments *It is a perfect spot for a solar garden and reclaim its use for energy. You would have to look hard to view it from the road and it seems like a perfect use of a reclaimed gravel pit.* At the conclusion of the site visit report the following motion to approve of the C.U.P. by Halls *Based upon the information as presented in the staff report and facts as gathered this evening, I move to offer a recommendation of approval of the Conditional Use Permit provided that the conditions as identified in the staff report are complied with.* Motion is seconded by Barkeim. Motion passes unanimously.

Adjournment 6:58 p.m. Motion by Barkeim to adjourn the Planning Advisory Commission meeting. Motion seconded by Kannegiesser. Motion carried with no dissenting votes noted.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Shelley Retrum", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shelley Retrum, Sr Administrative Associate
Pope County Land & Resource Management