

FRENCHTOWN CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING  
September 16, 2021

The workshop meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Roll call: Paul Thoma Hillary Venier Don Abrams  
Chris Collins Brian Dotson Dennis Staelgraeve

Absent: Fred Calkins

Also present: Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, Township Planning Consultant  
Mark Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group, Township Engineer Representative  
Natalie Askar, Planning Commission Recording Secretary

2 interested citizens in person

1 interested citizen via Zoom

A quorum being present, Chairman Paul Thoma called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. This meeting was held under the Open Meetings Act.

All those present were requested by Chairperson Thoma to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item No. 1 Agenda Approval.**

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve Supported By: Brian Dotson

A motion was made to approve the agenda amending Item No. 4 to include the word Revision.

MUC

**Item No. 2 Minutes of August 19, 2021 Meeting.**

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier Supported By: Dennis Staelgraeve

A motion was made to approve the minutes for the August 19, 2021 Planning Commission meeting as presented.

MUC

**Item No. 3 Public Hearing: Zoning Ordinance Article 200 Section 4.46 Solar Energy Systems**

Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, Township Planner, presented the changes for on-site use and utility level energy generation in Zoning Ordinance 200 Section 4.46 on Solar Energy Systems.

The Commission discussed the items brought up by Mr. Ortega.

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve

Supported By: Don Abrams

A motion was made to open the public hearing at 7:16 pm.

MUC

Paul Thoma, Planning Commission Chairperson, asked three times if there were any citizens who wished to address the Commission on the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments regarding solar energy systems. There were no residents who wished to address the Commission as to the proposed amendments.

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve

Supported By: Brian Dotson

A motion was made to close the public hearing at 7:17 pm.

MUC

The Commission further discussed.

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Don Abrams

A motion was made to recommend to the Township Board the revisions to Frenchtown Township Zoning Ordinance Article 200, Section 4.46 which establishes new solar energy systems regulations for on-site use and utility level energy generation including the following revisions:

1. Referencing the Fee Schedule.
2. Adding abandonment wording.
3. Adding definition of Solar Energy Device.

Roll Call:	Thoma – Yes,	Staelgraeve – Yes,	Collins – Yes
	Abrams – Yes,	Dotson– Yes,	Venier – Yes.

MUC

6 - Yes votes, 0 - No votes

**Chair opened and allowed Public Comment:**

Two residents wanted to address the Commission on specific issues. To not keep them unnecessarily for a couple more hours while the Commission works on discussing and reviewing the new draft Zoning Ordinance, the Commission decided to hear their issues at this time.

Mr. Bill Connor addressed the Commission regarding campgrounds, wanting to know what’s right and wrong, length of stay and the regulations on campgrounds.

Mr. Anthony Panza addressed the Commission regarding his concept of bringing organic foods and fish farming to Frenchtown.

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Don Abrams

MUC

A motion was made to accept and place on file the following correspondence regarding Solar Energy Systems:

- Fred Calkins, Planning Commission Board Member, received September 15, 2021

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Don Abrams

MUC

A motion was made to reconsider the draft solar energy systems amendment in light of new information brought up in the letter from Commissioner Fred Calkins.

Mrs. Hillary Venier read the letter to the Commission.

The Commission further discussed.

**Amend Solar Energy Motion:**

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Don Abrams

The previous motion on Solar Energy is amended to recommend to the Township Board the revisions to the Frenchtown Township Zoning Ordinance Article 200, Section 4.46 which establishes new solar energy systems regulations for on-site use and utility level energy generation including the following revisions:

1. Referencing the Fee Schedule.
2. Adding abandonment wording.
3. Adding definition of Solar Energy Device.
4. Change setback to 25 feet **or three (3) times** the height of the solar array in section 4.46.3(d) whichever is greater.

Roll Call:	Thoma – Yes,	Staelgraeve – Yes,	Collins – Yes
	Abrams – Yes,	Dotson– Yes,	Venier – Yes.

MUC

6 - Yes votes, 0 - No votes

**Item No. 4 Review and Discussion: Frenchtown Zoning Ordinance Articles 3 through 4.33 Revision**

Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, Township Planner, presented the proposed changes to Article 3 and the start of Article 4.

The Commission finished discussing Article 3 - Schedule of Dimensional Regulations

The Commission started to discuss Article 4 – Use Standards. The sections reviewed are as follows:

- 4.01 Adult Uses
- 4.02 Agri-Tourism
- 4.03 Airports
- 4.04 Alcohol & Drug Rehab Facilities
- 4.05 Animals

**Item No. 5 Old Business.**

The Commission discussed lighting and light pollution at the InSite Logistics Center.

**Item No. 6 New Business.**

There were no citizens present or via Zoom to open the floor for questions, comments, or concerns to the Planning Commission.

**Item No. 7 Administrative Reviews Update/Chairperson.**

- Township Board Report from Chris Collins, Township Trustee.
- Planning Commission October Agenda and report from Paul Thoma, Planning Commission Chair
  1. Monroe Storage Units (old Sears) – Special Use
  2. Chick-Fil-A – Special Use
  3. Chick-Fil-A – Tentative Site Plan
  4. Frenchtown Harbor Condos – **Final Site Plan**
  5. Project Second Chance – Special Use
  6. Project Second Chance – Tentative Site Plan
  7. The Sports Garden – **Final Site Plan**

Mr. Thoma asked the Commission if it would be alright, since we have 7 items on the October Agenda, that we request the two Final Site Plan applicants to come the September 30, 2021 Special Meeting provided that the applicant can make it.

**Item No. 8 Adjournment.**

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve

Supported By: Hillary Venier

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 10 p.m.

MUC