

PERKINS TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

Held By: Perkins Township Zoning Commission
Place: Perkins Township Service Facility, Meeting Room, 2610 Columbus Avenue
Date: December 11, 2023
Time: 4:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Mrs. Cheryl Best-Wilke
Mr. John Lippus
Mr. Les Wilson

Board Members Absent & Excused: Mr. Criscione, Mrs. Hoty-Lynch, Mr. Schmid

Staff in Attendance: Mr. Adam Panas, Planner/Zoning Inspector
Mrs. Jessica Gladwell, Administrative Assistant

I. Call To Order

Mrs. Best-Wilke called the meeting to order and welcomed the audience and the Commission. Mrs. Best-Wilke led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Roll Call

Ms. Gladwell took Roll Call: Mrs. Best-Wilke, here; Mr. Lippus; here; Mr. Wilson, here.

Mrs. Gladwell swore everyone in.

III. Chairperson's Welcome and Explanation of Public Hearing & Public Meeting

Mrs. Cheryl Best-Wilke welcomed everyone to the meeting. She stated that the purpose of the meeting is to consider a request to change an item in the zoning code. The responsibility of this commission was given to us by a zoning resolution to conduct this meeting. First, we will read the request then we will open a public hearing during which we will hear comments, questions, and any concerns from members of the audience. Then the public hearing will be closed, and the public meeting will open. During the public meeting commission members will discuss the request and vote on a recommendation to present to the trustees, whether to accept, decline or table. Then our recommendation will be forwarded to the trustees who will consider the request at a future trustee meeting.

IV. Reading of the Application

The Perkins Township Zoning Commission will conduct a public working session to consider amendments to the text of the Perkins Township Zoning Resolution for wind and solar alternative energy regulations.

V. Staff Report

Mr. Panas stated he's going to go through the discussion points. Then communications after.

WIND REGULATIONS

1. Small Wind Energy Conversion Systems

- a. Remove roof-mounted wind energy conversion systems as an allowable use in all districts.
- b. Restrict small wind energy conversion systems from platted subdivisions, regardless of lot size.
- c. Increase minimum lot size requirement for a small wind energy conversion system from one (1) acre to five (5) acres.
- d. Change maximum total height from a scale up to 100 feet based on property size to a uniform standard of 15 feet above the maximum height for a main structure in the applicable zoning district.
- e. Monopole design only.

2. Commercial Wind Energy Conversion Systems

- a. Limit commercial wind farms to industrial zoning districts only.
- b. Limit commercial wind farms to properties of at least one hundred (100) acres in size.
- c. Allow vertical shaft roof mounted in commercial or industrial.

Mrs. Best-Wilke asked if the current ones that are existing, are they the 100 acres?

Mr. Panas stated that no, there aren't requirements for lot size.

Mr. Lippus stated that so as of right now that guy on Campbell who wanted to re-zone that property, it could be a wind farm?

Mr. Panas stated well I guess it depends, its only regulated by setbacks and for any wind turbine or wind energy conversion system We measure the height from the base at the ground to the tip tallest point at the blade when its fully extended, so it must be set back at least that distance from any inhabitable structure or property line. It doesn't require it for the property it is on. That's what it is now, and for the commercial systems it doesn't have any standards for acreage, if so, its maybe one acre. We thought it might be a good way to limit that and preserve agricultural land in the Township.

Mr. Lippus asked if that was the motive.

Mr. Panas stated that was correct that was the initial motive was partially that our trustees didn't want especially commercial farms in the Township, same with solar. From there since researching, we wanted to add more stuff that had been good practice in other places.

Mr. Wilson asked why mono poles?

Mr. Panas stated that we thought it would be, with this if a resident wants to put in one wind turbine in their yard and they're allowed too because they're on bogart road and not in a subdivision and they meet all setbacks and everything, this would allow the wind turbine to be above the house which has a limit of 35ft out there so it would be up to 50ft tall, so you're going to see it. The whole purpose is to catch the wind, the higher you go the more wind you catch. Our thought was if were going to allow it, if were going to allow it, allow it within reason, because the setback that a really big wind turbine would create would not really be possible to be met, but we didn't want to make it super easy. It just looks better in our opinion. Our thought was that has a lot more surface area on it because of the grid design for rust, I guess for the metal to oxidize and rust to appear to make it an eye sore.

Mr. Wilson stated that there are vertical shaft turbines that don't have to be way up in the air. That doesn't have to be big, why aren't they going to be allowed?

Mr. Panas asked what he meant by vertical shaft?

Mr. Wilson stated that they are like a squirrel cage, the turbine and shaft is this way, and the blades go like this. The vertical shaft is like this, and they build a squirrel cage to go around it. It doesn't have to be big; they can be skinny. They use them in big cities and urban areas.

Mr. Panas stated that the purpose wasn't to remove that, but just the supporting structure under it.

Mr. Best-Wilke stated that right here you have removed the roof mounting system.

Mr. Wilson stated that they mount them on the top of buildings in cities, they don't stick high up in the air, so no one can do that here. I could see that some of these hotels could pop some of those up around here and we wouldn't really notice anything.

Mr. Panas asked if anyone knew how loud those were?

Mr. Wilson stated he didn't know how loud they were. He said I doubt people would be knocking on the door to put them in because the other ones are far more efficient.

Mr. Lippus stated that his thoughts are that he wants to do the regulations for the future, not for today. We don't know what technological advances are going to do, I have seen these on top of stadiums and buildings, and they don't make 1/100th of the full blades make. I would be in favor of researching and putting them in there.

Mr. Panas stated that the way we can do that, I have a working draft of wording that we don't need to go into today, but I can word it like roof top mounted applications are only allowed if they have a vertical shaft design and are in a commercial or industrial district, something like that. So, we don't see them popping up in the neighborhoods if we're not ready for that. I'm with your personal John and want to do it for the future, I'm seeing it through the lens the same as Angie, we are here now.

Mr. Lippus asked if the Township is within the law allowed to say in so many terms, based on the proposal, based on design and review. If someone is going to put them in an area where the sun is going to be directly behind it to something, where it may be different than one that isn't.

Mr. Panas stated that you could regulate that by putting a list of performance standards in the subsection, then that becomes a part of every application that we review. Keep in mind, because of the falls on setbacks it is unlikely that we see too many of these norths of Bogart Rd.

Mr. Lippus stated that the only reason he asks is because you've seen in building large, tall building are allowed to have large glass facades and then they build it and the glass is positioned where it reflects the sun and melts a park lane and kills the grass and everything below it. I don't want to put more work and review on you guys, but I think reviewing each application as submitted.

Mr. Panas stated that it doesn't, personally he doesn't mind it because he knows it's not his wheelhouse to perform their calculations.

Mr. Panas asked if anyone had any thoughts good or bad for platted subdivision piece? Keeping wind turbines out of there, that's a lot of our neighborhoods that's why I'm asking.

Mrs. Best-Wilke stated that she thinks a lot of people wouldn't want them in the subdivisions.

Mr. Wilson stated that in the platted neighborhoods it'd be a pretty short turbine, you cant have them too short, it because an issue for people on the ground.

Mr. Panas stated that there are some other regulations, livestock isn't allowed in platted subdivisions. Bullet point d. about changing max total height, what we have now is 5 acres or greater for the wind turbine to be up to 100ft granted that it meets the setbacks for the fall zone, our thought was to make it instead of the scale that it was to just do 15ft above the max building height, and if we have an influx of variances because that's not possible, we adjust that. That way the height is more catered.

Mr. Wilson stated that if I had a ranch house and 5 acres, I could only build this thing 30 ft tall?

Mr. Panas said it would probably be 50ft but yes. Our thought with this only doing 15ft above the district was as we go from agricultural to heavy industrial, the use gets more interest of the land and the height could reflect that use.

Mrs. Best-Wilke asked if its industrial and you have residents close by it could affect those residents, couldn't it?

Mr. Panas stated that yes, it could.

Mrs. Best-Wilke stated that having to have the 100 acres for commercial that would help decrease the noise bothering.

Mr. Lippus asked if Aligned data had any plans on putting wind turbines on the property?

Mr. Panas stated not to our knowledge.

SOLAR REGULATIONS

1. Add definitions.

2. For Roof-Mounted Solar Energy Conversion System Requirements.

a. When and What kinds of permit? Conditional use or just building permits?

- i. Slated for general building permit application only.

b. Design standards?

i. Height

1. Our thought was no taller than the maximum building height of the applicable zoning district.

ii. Electrical Interconnections

1. Wires are currently only allowed to be underground.
2. We were thinking of allowing either (1) utilizing the existing electrical/telephone pole wiring scheme, or (2) locating electrical wires underground.

iii. Visual Appearance

~~1. Colors.~~

- ~~a. We think the color of the panels and grid should match the background or trim color of the building it is installed on.~~

~~2. Materials.~~

- ~~a. We think whatever materials are used should be compatible with the architecture of the building and character of the district.~~

3. Cannot exceed roofline (no overhang)

iv. Signage

1. We think that we should prohibit any signage except safety signage, such as **high voltage stickers, height clearance signs and directional signs.**

v. Glare

1. We think that panels should always be made of materials and placed such that any glare produced is not directed at neighboring properties.

c. When are roof-mounted solar energy conversion systems prohibited?

- i. When they are not on the roof of a structure.
- ii. Do we need to establish a maximum roof coverage percentage?
- iii. Do we need to only allow solar panels that are in-line with the grade of the roof, as opposed to ones that are installed on slightly elevated racks?

Mr. Wilson stated that he thinks a normal building permit would be fine. If the rack is still in line with the roof line, I don't know the pros and cons of the two systems. I don't see we need to only have one instead of the other if they are still in line with all the regulations.

Mr. Lippus stated that he thinks these are fine regulations, I think the biggest thing we don't want to hamper anyone on is color, because what if someone changes the color of their roof. So if someone has a certain color match the current roof and they want to change it, it's out of compliance. How about we put a complementary color.

Mr. Panas stated that he could take out color all together. I think we would have to get rid of it because this standard applies to the panels and the grid throughout the life of it.

Mrs. Best-Wilke stated that you could just put that the visual appearance must be aesthetically pleasing.

Mr. Panas stated that just because it's something subjective doesn't mean we can't put it in the zoning resolution there is plenty of that, but it should be limited. What about materials?

Mr. Lippus asked if there was a code based on, does a panel have to be mounted on aluminum metal or could it be mounted on wood. Does wood meet code for an electrical panel?

Mr. Panas stated that even if it's not stated in a sub section, whatever the solar section is about, everything still has to meet building and electrical code anyways.

Mr. Lippus asked if Adam had spoken to someone who installs or knows about solar panels.

Mr. Panas said no, but I have thought about it. The slope comment about the panels is not covered in here, I guess they could do it as a straight-out extension. Is that something we would not want to allow? It doesn't say it has to be with the slope of the roof, that could be code but as long as it's not higher than the peak of the roof. It might be a non-issue and we just leave it alone.

Mr. Wilson stated I see a lot of reasons why people wouldn't do that, so I don't see it happening.

Conversations continued regarding if we should regulate how much of the roof is allowed to be covered and so on. Group discussions all agreed on there shouldn't be a restriction on how many solar panels can be installed but must be contained in the area of the roof not over hanging.

3. For Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Conversion System Requirements.

a. When and What kinds of permit? Conditional use or just building permits?

- i. Slated for general building permit application only.
- ii. We also thought it would be wise to regulate ground-mounted solar energy conversion systems as accessory structures, so that people cannot convert their entire backyard into a miniature solar farm.

- iii. We do recognize that special provisions may also need to be included to limit where commercial solar farms can be installed. We would like your feedback on this, too.

b. Design standards?

i. Location

1. Rear yard only.

ii. Lot Size

1. Our thought was to require a minimum of one (1) acre for ground-mounted so that people didn't try to cram these in densely populated areas and cause more damage if it were to catch on fire.

iii. Height

1. Our thought was no taller than the maximum accessory building height of the applicable zoning district.

iv. Setbacks

1. Same as accessory buildings. 3 ft from rear and side property lines and 10 feet from the primary structure.

v. Electrical Interconnections

1. We were thinking of allowing either (1) utilize the existing electrical/telephone pole wiring scheme, or (2) be located underground. Wires are currently only allowed to be underground.

vi. Visual Appearance

1. Colors.
 - a. We think the color of the panels and mount should match the background or trim color of the building it is installed on.
2. Materials.
 - a. We think whatever materials are used should be compatible with the architecture of the building and character of the district.

vii. Signage

1. We think that we should prohibit any signage except safety signage, such as high voltage stickers.

viii. Glare

1. We think that panels should always be made of materials and placed such that any glare produced is not directed at neighboring properties.

c. When are ground-mounted solar energy conversion systems prohibited?

- i. When they would cause a property to exceed their maximum of two (2) accessory structures.
- ii. When they would cause a property to exceed the maximum of 35% rear yard coverage by accessory structures.
- iii. Do we need to establish a maximum roof coverage percentage?
- iv. Do we need to only allow solar panels that are in-line with the grade of the roof, as opposed to ones that are installed on slightly elevated racks?

VI. Old Business

VII. New Business

VIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Cheryl Best-Wilke entertained the motion to adjourn.

Mr. Lippus made the motion; Mr. Wilson seconded. Roll Call: Mr. Lippus, yes; Mr. Wilson, Yes; Mrs. Best-Wilke, yes.

Cheryl Best-Wilke
Chairperson
2/12/2024