

**Mt. Pleasant Planning Commission  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
January 2, 2014**

**I.** Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Present: Brockman, Cotter, Hoenig, Kostrzewa, Smith (Chair).

Absent: Dailey, Holtgreive (Vice-Chair), Lents, Dailey.

Staff: Staff, Mrdeza, Murphy.

**II. Approval of Agenda:**

Motion by Kostrzewa, support by Brockman to approve agenda.

Motion approved.

**III. Approval of Minutes:**

**A.** December 5, 2013 Regular Meeting

**B.** December 5, 2013 Work Session

Motion by Kostrzewa, support by Cotter to approve both sets of minutes as written.

Motion approved.

**IV. Zoning Board of Appeals Report for November.**

The Zoning Board of Appeals did not meet in December.

**V. Public Hearings:**

None Scheduled.

**VI. Public Comments:**

Chairman Smith opened the floor for public comments. There being no one who wished to speak, the public comments section was closed.

**VII. Site Plan Reviews:**

**A. SPR-14-01 1993 & 1955 Gover Parkway.**

Staff introduced Case SPR-14-01 submitted by Ranck Properties LLC, noting the location at the corner of Broomfield and Gover Parkway. Staff shared an aerial view of the site, noting that it is zoned I-1, with I-1 to the north and east and bordered by Union Township to the south and west.

Staff reported that the request is for the installation of two solar arrays for energy production. A ground mounted unit will be installed on the southernmost portion of the site and will include a 484-module array providing 147.62 KW of energy output. On the northern portion of the site, a roof-mounted array will be installed and will involve 132 modules producing 40.26 kW of energy output.

Staff reported that based on the changes to the landscaped area and the fact that the solar arrays are considered an accessory structure in an Industrial zoned area, the request is subject to Site Plan Review.

Staff shared the proposed site plan and the proposed solar array layout, noting that the project is well within the setback requirements for accessory structures. Staff reported that the applicant will need to remove several trees, but will re-seed the affected area as noted on the site plan.

No new signage has been proposed at this time.

Staff commented that the applicant will need to assure that there will be adequate stabilization for the proposed ground-mounted arrays.

Staff noted that the applicant will also need to ensure that there is no harmful glare from the roof and ground-mounted solar arrays. Based on the area being primarily industrial, with no nearby residential properties, this is not anticipated to cause any problems.

Staff referred to the comments submitted by the Department of Public Works, noting that any approval should be contingent on the applicant meeting their requirements.

Staff concluded his report noting that overall the proposed plan is being recommended for approval with conditions listed in the staff report.

Commissioner Kostrzewa asked the applicant if there were any security concerns/issues and if the arrays were sensitive to jarring or if they were dangerous.

Scott Walker, representing the applicant, stated that there are no security concerns. There will be screening on the back of the solar panels to protect them. He further stated that they were not dangerous and are designed and tested to withstand the elements.

Mr. Walker spoke about the stabilization, noting that they are pile driven foundations. He also noted that they will provide sealed documents from a structural engineer when they submit a building permit application.

Commissioner Kostrzewa asked about the reason for the solar arrays. Mr. Walker noted there are several reason, noting that it makes good financial sense. He also noted that contrary to what people may think, the amount of sunshine we receive here in Michigan is similar to the southern states. He noted that the reason the trees have to come down is because of the shade, but also noted that they will be able to leave the trees located at the southwest corner. He also

commented that they expect the panels to provide 80-95% of the energy costs. Mr. Walker noted that the solar arrays are becoming more economical as the cost is dropping and the installation is becoming more efficient.

Commissioner Kostrzewa asked how often they anticipate having to change out the panels as technology evolves and if the units are American made. Mr. Walker noted that they panels are warranted for 25 years, however, they expect they will actually last 40-50 years. Mr. Walker noted that the panels are made in China as the Chinese companies have proven to be more bankable. The racking and some of the other components are made in the USA.

Mr. Walker reported that the roof-mounted panels will be well under the 75' maximum height allowance for accessory structures.

Mr. Walker noted that they feel this will be a show case for the City and noted they would be interested in hosting an event to bring the public in to show them.

Commissioner Kostrzewa questioned whether they would be feasible for residential properties. Mr. Walker stated they could be used for residential properties; however, indicated that they are a better deal for businesses, and they have a 5 year depreciation cycle.

Chairman Smith noted that the Commission would need to determine whether to grant a sidewalk waiver.

Motion by Kostrzewa, support by Brockman that pursuant to the requirements of Section 154.022(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission grant a waiver to the requirement to install sidewalks in the public rights-of-way on a finding that the property is not located on a street designated as a school walking route and there are no existing intermittent public sidewalks on the streets within the block where the property is located.

Motion approved.

Motion by Kostrzewa, support by Brockman that the Planning Commission approves the request for SPR-14-01 for the property located at 1993 and 1955 Gover Parkway, based on the site plan dated December 4, 2013 and prepared by Inovateus Solar for J. Ranck, Inc., with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall comply with the requirements of the Division of Public Works (DPW), Division of Public Safety (DPS), and the Fire Department (MPFD).
2. The applicant shall provide elevation drawings clarifying that the height of the building at 1955 Gover Parkway, on the north edge of the site, to ensure that these buildings do not exceed 75 feet in height with the roof-mounted solar array attached.
3. The applicant shall display any existing berms on a revised site plan.

4. The applicant shall facilitate a structural analysis to ensure that the roof of the building at 1955 Gover Parkway can withstand load bearing requirements for the weight of the proposed solar panels.
5. The applicant shall work with the utility provider (Consumers Energy) to ensure that proper electrical permits have been processed with the City.

Motion approved.

**VIII. Unfinished Business:**

**A. Z-13-02 1027 S. Franklin.** Chairman Smith reported that Case Z-13-02 will remain postponed.

**IX. New Business:** None

**X. Other Business:**

**A. Staff Report.**

Staff reported that there are no applications at this time for the February meeting; however, the deadline for submittal isn't until January 13, 2014.

**B. Recognition of Service: Jeff Smith and Tim Brockman**

Staff recognized outgoing Board members Jeff Smith and Tim Brockman for their service on the Planning Commission, and presented them each with an engraved plaque.

**C. Proposed 2014 Meeting Schedule.**

Staff asked the Commission to consider the 2014 proposed meeting schedule.

Chairman Smith noted that the April meeting falls within the Mt. Pleasant Public Schools spring break and also noted that the July meeting date is currently listed as July 3rd, suggesting the Commission may want to consider moving these dates back a week.

Motion by Kostrzewa, support by Hoenig to move the April 3 meeting date to April 10 and the July 3 meeting to July 10.

Motion approved.

**XI. Adjournment:** Motion by Brockman, support by Kostrzewa to adjourn to work session.

Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned 7:35 p.m.