

**Chairperson**

Margaret Sayles, PC Rep.

**Members**

Jan Motz, PC Rep.  
Eric Silm, Bingham Twp. Rep.  
Dawn Levey, Duplain Twp. Rep.  
Dennis Strahle, Eagle Twp. Rep.  
Kathleen George, Essex Twp. Rep.  
Lee Thelen, Greenbush Twp. Rep.  
Ken Wieber, Lebanon Twp. Rep.  
Eric Voisinet, Olive Twp. Rep.  
Jennings West, Ovid Twp. Rep.  
Kevin Garvey, Riley Twp. Rep.  
Jim Conklin, Victor Twp. Rep.  
Troy Thelen, Westphalia Twp. Rep.  
Donald Lowell, General Rep.  
David Smith, General Rep.  
Mike Halfman, General Rep.  
Melany Mack, General Rep.  
Rene Rosenbaum, General Rep.  
Russell Braun, General Rep.



**Clinton County**

**Planning Commission**

**Advisory Committee**

**Utility Scale  
Solar and Wind  
Zoning Regulations**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**JULY 20, 2023**

**Facilitator**

Val Vail-Shirey, PC / BOC Rep.

**Community Development Staff**

Jessica Bolt, Planning/Permit Tech.  
Joel Haviland, Building Official/  
Zoning/SESC Admin.

**County Administrators**

John Fuentes, Admin.  
Todd Campbell, Dep. Admin.

**County Legal Counsel**

*Foster Swift Collins & Smith*  
Michael Homier  
Leslie Abdo

Clinton County Courthouse  
100 East State Street, Suite 1300  
St. Johns, Michigan 48879-1571  
(989) 224-5180

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Clinton County Utility Scale Solar and Wind Zoning Regulations Advisory Committee (Committee) met on Thursday, July 20, 2023 at 6:02 p.m. with Chairperson Sayles calling the meeting to order.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Margaret Sayles  
Jan Motz  
Eric Harger, Bingham Township Alternate  
Dawn Levey  
Jim Conklin  
Kathleen George  
Lee Thelen  
Ken Wieber  
Claudia Barrett Pluger, Ovid Township Alternate  
Donald Lowell  
David Smith  
Melany Mack  
Rene Rosenbaum  
Russell Braun  
Troy Thelen

**Members Absent:**

Dennis Strahle  
Eric Voisinet  
Kevin Garvey  
Mike Halfman

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Val Vail-Shirey (Committee Facilitator), Planning Commission/Board of County Commissioners Rep.  
Jessica Bolt, Planning & Permit Technician  
Joel Haviland, Building Official/Zoning/SESC Administrator  
Todd Campbell, Deputy County Administrator  
Leslie Abdo, Foster Swift Collins & Smith (County Legal Counsel)

## VISITORS

Alannah Woodring, ESA  
Bob Craig, St. Johns  
David D'Onofrio, ESA  
Grace Lacke, ESA  
Joe Lawson, Consumers Energy  
Kevin Cole, RWE  
Matt Drennan, ESA  
Ryan Carrigan, Consumers Energy  
Theresa Hubbard, 1124 E. Alward Road  
Thomas Banks, ESA

## ROLL CALL

- *Each present member identified themselves.*

## APPROVAL OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

- Lee Thelen requested revision of a comment that he made on page 3, line 1:
  - Strike “(homes)” from his statement.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACTION:** Dawn Levey moved, supported by Russell Braun to approve the July 6, 2023 Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes as amended. Voting on the motion by roll call vote, motion carried unanimously. [Vote of 14-0, all in favor, none opposed.]

## PRESENTATIONS

*(A) CHARLES GOULD,  
MSU EXTENSION*

- Facilitator Vail-Shirey introduced Charles Gould, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension, as the first presenter.
- Charles Gould, Extension Bioenergy Educator of MSU Extension, introduced himself and provided information regarding his background.
  - *Presented information to the Committee via PowerPoint presentation.*
- *The Committee discussed agrivoltaics (food, fiber, and fuel); carbon credits; toxicity studies; vertical bifacial solar arrays; decommissioning rates; development of the utility scale solar market; brownfield sites; State regulation; and consistency of policy (similar uses) as they relate to utility scale wind and solar projects with Mr. Gould.*

*(B) MATT DRENNAN,  
ESA SOLAR*

- Val Vail-Shirey introduced ESA Solar, as the next presenter.
- Matt Drennan, Senior Project Development Manager of ESA Solar, introduced himself and provided information regarding his background.
  - Introduced his co-presenter, Rick Wilson, RWE Energy.
- Rick Wilson, RWE Energy, introduced himself and provided information regarding his background.
  - *Presented information to the Committee via PowerPoint presentation.*
- *The Committee discussed access to transmission systems in Clinton County; transmission analysis; project development; project design (increased efficiency to decrease use of land); Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA-116); agrivoltaics; vegetative screening; tile management plans; dispatch of power; tax credits to the operator; “behind the meter” projects/PPAs (Power Purchase Agreement); economic impacts; operations and jobs; decommissioning; consistency of policy; and recycling as they relate to utility scale wind and solar projects with Mr. Drennan.*

## REVIEW / WRAP-UP

- Val Vail-Shirey addressed the Committee's desire to review other types of energy sources as well.

- The charge of this Committee is to address the types of renewable energy that the County currently has ordinances for, specifically, utility scale solar farms and wind energy systems.
  - The others will be taken to the Planning Commission (PC) for review.
- Public comment is scheduled for the August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.
- Jason Hayes, Director of Energy and Environmental Policy of the Mackinac Center, will be presenting on August 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Ed Rivet is working on arranging a solar facility tour sometime between August 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Donald Lowell discussed the wind facility tour:
  - Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.
  - Safety orientation and presentation at the Consumers Energy Operations Office followed by a tour at Gratiot Farms.
  - RSVP to Donald Lowell.
- Leslie Abdoo explained the task to be completed by the Committee:
  - Documents dispersed are copies of the text from the two ordinance sections this Committee has been charged with reviewing –
    - Section 4.43, 4.43 Utility-scale wind energy systems and facilities
    - Section 4.48, Solar farms
  - Documents include space for suggested revisions/comments.
  - Legal counsel will incorporate the feedback to create a “red-lined” version of the existing ordinance as a starting point for the upcoming workshop sessions.
  - Comments on existing ordinance language is due to Todd Campbell, Deputy County Administrator, by next Wednesday (July 26<sup>th</sup>) by 5 p.m.
    - The Deputy Administrator will forward all comments received to legal counsel (Leslie Abdoo).
- Margaret Sayles indicated that she and Jan Motz will be working on forming an agenda to guide the first workshop session.
  - Proposed not having Consumers Energy and DTE back for a Question and Answer (Q&A) session, but rather invite them to attend as part of the audience.
  - In order to stay on track with the timeline, adding August 24<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. as an additional Committee meeting date.
- *The Committee discussed the expected output and presentation to the PC (on September 14<sup>th</sup>).*

ADJOURNMENT

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACTION:** With no further business to come before the Committee, Chairperson Sayles adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.




---

Jessica Bolt, Planning & Permit Technician

NOTE: These minutes were approved by the Advisory Committee on August 3, 2023.