

**NORTH EAST TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

April 7, 2025

Minutes

Call to Order: Vern called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. In attendance: Vern, Char, Dennis, Matt, LeAnn and Jay.

Minutes: Minutes of the March 3, 2025 meeting were reviewed. Char motioned for approval, Matt seconded, approved.

New Business: Vicki Stetson and Howard Riefstahl discussed 4NINE's proposal for the development of a nature trail and park located on the Mellon Heritage Foundation property, near Sunset Drive and North Pearl Street. Vicki discussed that 4NINE has saved and invested money and decided to undertake a park within walking distance of NE Borough residents.

Entrance would be from N. Pearl Street into existing parking lot. Path would lead to the pond, which is now a wetland. Plans include adding an observation deck and reopening the road to the pond for emergency vehicles and ADA access. The trail would continue north to Sunset Drive.

4NINE plans to purchase 10 acres of Howard Riefstahl's property to add to the trail. This would become part of the Mellon property (NET PC review and approval required). College hill would be a sled riding hill. A children's playground, pavilion and restrooms would be added near College Hill apartments where existing utilities are located. There will be no lighting on the trail. Open from dawn to dusk only. Trail is designed to be low maintenance and simple.

Currently NEB has a 50-year lease (note: it was confirmed that it is 50 not 90) with Mellon for this property. Pasheck is doing the planning for the trail. A surveyor is being retained and should be available within the next two weeks. 4NINE has also retained an attorney to represent them.

Mellon has agreements in place with various sports groups and the Boy Scouts to use portions of the property. These groups may help with maintenance.

Planning Commission suggested that the zoning on the Riefstahl property be rezoned to Mixed Use to be consistent with the rest of the Mellon property, although that is not a requirement. All uses in the Mixed-Use District are conditional. Howard should start the process to subdivide his property and transfer ownership to Mellon.

There will be executed agreements between Mellon Foundation and NE Borough regarding insurance, maintenance, etc. 4NINE is only paying the bill.

Variance: None

Discussions:

Crow Holdings Renewables' representatives, Riean Norman and Laurence Pelosi presented a potential plan for a solar farm on property north of Townline Road and east of SR 89.

Crow Holdings has 75 years of development experience in solar projects, generally 10 to 30 acres in size. They currently have 25 in process in PA that are under lease and 5 more that are planned. They have 3 in Erie County.

Currently, plans are to use only family funds, although investors may be included in the future. Because of the status of legislation in PA, they are planning a "net energy metering" project (currently permitted in PA) as opposed to a "community solar" project (not currently permitted in PA). The net energy metering project would be 3 megawatts and energy would be sold to the grid and used locally. The grid is old and must be updated. They would ask for a conditional use for a 5-megawatt facility if/when PA approves the legislation. They have leases on the land to do this project and an expansion to the east.

They are leasing 15 acres of land from Novakowski's and could expand by 10 additional acres if/when they expand to a community solar project. They have access to SR 89, where they can connect to an existing 3-phase line. However, they would use vehicular access off Townline Road.

Although there are existing trees along the west border, they would add additional screening per our regulations. They are 150 ft' from the residential parcels along SR 89. They have reviewed our regulations in detail and plan to meet all requirements. Panels are anti-glare and no batteries are involved. They have an additional 3-6 months of studies before they can present to the PC. They plan on spending \$10-11 million dollars.

Steps include: Signing leases on the property, entering into an interconnection agreement with Penelec, and then presenting to Planning Commission for conditional use approval.

Walk-ins/Other Items: None

Adjournment: Char motioned to adjourn.

Charlene M. Kue