

# Corwith Township Planning Commission Minutes -Draft

December 08, 2025 Meeting, Township Hall 6:00 PM

Meeting Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance: Vice Chair Jim Neeley called the meeting to order at 6:16 PM

Roll Call: Jim Neeley ✓  
Judi Jarecki -ab  
Tom Kellogg ✓

Maureen Charbonneau ✓  
Richard Millington ✓

Others present:  
None

Correspondence: Land Use Services, regarding Battery-Energy Storage System Ordinance language

Public Comment: None

Planning Commission Items:

## 1. Township Planning Commission (TPC):

### a) Review Otsego County Land Use Services document: PROPOSED NEW LANGUAGE FOR BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS.

The following points were raised from individual TPC members' review, a previous review by an independent knowledgeable observer, and a discussion among the TPC members:

- 1) It was asked where the document originated (a consultant? or an industry attorney? or an ordinance from another community?). The document has ambiguous qualities in that "energy storage system(s)" intended to fall under Ordinance review is/are difficult to visualize.
- 2) What would such a (device? or building? or outdoor electrical infrastructure?) look like, when placed in a community? Is there consideration of whether a development enhances or detracts from the character of the community?
- 3) There is mention of chemicals, chemical reactions and chemical containment, along with "a good faith effort to consult..." with local fire department representatives and local first responders. What chemicals and hazards are we to anticipate with these developments, and do our local emergency management personnel have training in handling incidents with these variables? Does the Planning Commission, which is tasked with placing conditions on these developments have the expertise and training to approve its construction and maintenance regimen?
  - A) "good faith effort" may be too subjective, depending on the persons or expertise necessary for a consultation.
  - B) "avoiding adverse impacts" may be too subjective when considering potential impacts to such diverse areas as agriculture, residences and species' habitats.
- 4) Noise decibel values are "average" values. Thus, on page I-2, the limit of 55 db as measured on an adjacent lot line (fairly high) may be less at times, but may be more than 55 db at other times. It has long been established that prolonged noise exposure has the effect of producing sustained stress in the human body, which can result in mental or physical health problems. Further, there is not mention of a noise suppression system.
- 5) It may be assumed that there could be cooling systems for equipment. Will ground water be used for this purpose, and will used "grey water" be expended back into the ground water?
- 6) There could be more detail in defining the difference between "large" and "small" Energy Storage Systems. Are they to be handled differently? Would multiple small systems equal one large system or would they be subjected to different operational requirements?
- 7) Page I-3, B, may require a 3<sup>rd</sup>-party architect/landscaper; Page I-3, C, is subjective: for example anticipating chemicals at spill point. Who will determine where spill points may occur, and where there should be added precautions?; Page I-4, 10, This may not be clear enough- can more units be put into the original footprint, after it has been constructed and is operating?
- 8) Page I-4, 11, there may be a continual argument regarding costs of decommissioning items. Also, what is the general life expectancy of these types of facilities?
- 9) Page I-5, M, not sure why there is reference to military defense radar and exemption to FOIA disclosures (?) Is the facility or are all the facilities, once approved, going to be operated in secret? And not subjected to any further disclosures or inspections?

**Recommendation:** There were many issues, as illustrated above, and questions raised as to the nature and extent or scale of the developments which this proposed language seeks to address. It is therefore recommended that the Land Use Services Department arrange for a meeting with townships within Otsego County. It would be essential to present an overview, including visual examples (in other communities) of the types of development alluded to in the proposed Battery Energy Storage Systems language. It would also be most helpful to have a panel of experts there to field questions about the developments described: representatives of the industry, government, planning, power utilities, and legal.

Comment: none

Adjourn: 7:20 PM. The next scheduled meeting is at 6 pm on 01/26/2026