

KEWEENAW COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
Public Hearing on Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance (CREO)  
Draft Minutes  
November 12, 2024, 4 pm

APPROVED DEC 28 2024

Roll call:                      John Parsons, present                      Steven Siira, present  
   Barry Koljonen, present                      Harvey Desnick, present  
   Daniel Yoder, present                      AJ Kern, present  
   Bob Pokorski, present                      County board representative, absent

Five member quorum **present**, meeting was properly posted.

Pledge of Allegiance **recited**

Approve Agenda

**Motion to approve (M) Pokorski / Second (S) Siira, motion carried**

**Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance (CREO) background (Parsons)**

*Parsons provided boilerplate CREO for members to review by email 11/7/2024. Parsons discussed how CREO issue has evolved so far, having been in discussions with county attorney Chuck Miller and consultant Pat Coleman. Parsons said that the law pertaining to CREO becomes effective at end of November, but that communities don't have to make decisions right away, only prior to an actual application by a developer.*

**Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance (CREO) slide show (Parsons)**

*Commission reviewed slide show by Michigan State University "Changes Ahead for Renewable Energy Permitting in Michigan: the knowns and unknowns" dated January 10, 2024. Members discussed the size and scope of projects that this applies to. Some members thought such development would be unlikely due to amount of land required, weather conditions, lack of supporting infrastructure.*

*Commission reviewed slide show by University of Michigan "What the New Renewable Energy Siting Legislation Means for Michigan Local Governments" dated October 17, 2024. Desnick stated opposition to adopting the boilerplate CREO, concerned that adopting a CREO would make it easier for developers to initiate large scale projects. Members discussed how impression of CREO has evolved. Consensus among members that the first impression of the benefits of adopting a CREO was that a CREO would enable the County to retain more local control of process; however, now CREO seems to be presented as "easiest path" for developers. Other options include project oversight by Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) or having an ordinance with more stringent guidelines than CREO, which could be appealed to MPSC by developer.*

**Guests: Acknowledged and invited to provide comment.**

**\*Public comment:**

*J. Kern – Stated he has worked for power companies siting projects. Stated that such projects are not economically unfeasible here, could be accomplished on 5 miles of ridgeline. Recommended adding "triggers" in current ordinance like a work plan requirement to increase transparency. Stated CREO "greases the skids" for developers. Stated that member AJ Kern has suggested language to add to current ordinance to increase requirements on developers.*

*\*A time for public comments, not intended to be a period of dialogue. Each person who wishes to speak shall state their name and place of residence. Comments shall be limited to three (3) minutes or less for those who wish to address the planning commissioners.*

**Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance (CREO) recommendation**

Kern distributed handout with recommended language that could be used as amendment to current zoning ordinance instead of adopting CREO. See “Kern Handout at 11-12-2024 meeting.” Members reviewed handout. Kern requested that handout be included in minutes.

Members discussed pros and cons of adopting CREO versus maintaining or amending current ordinance. Consensus among members that boilerplate CREO should not be adopted as is, and that additional work remains on addressing renewable energy projects in existing ordinance.

Motion by Pokorski to rescind the Planning Commission’s prior action of recommending adoption of CREO. Prior action occurred in September 30, 2024, meeting under agenda item “5. Alternative energy facilities ordinance.”

**M to approve Pokorski / S Siira, motion carried**

Discussion among members on forward path to address large scale renewable energy projects, including considering amendments suggested by Kern or other amendments based off best practices in sample CREO. Consensus among members that commission should continue to address topic as needed.

Final comments

*None*

Next regular meeting December 9, 2024, at 4pm.

**M to adjourn Pokorski / S Desnick, motion carried.**