

APRIL 7, 2022

The Board of Supervisors of Clinton County, Iowa, met. Present were Supervisors Determann, Irwin and Srp. Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

1:00 P.M. County Solar Project Discussion

The Board reviewed the applications for the solar project by doing a point-by-point consideration of the application process.

Purpose of the solar project was discussed. The Supervisors talked about the application being in line with the master plan with consideration to rural character and contributing to small communities. Supervisor Irwin said it does change the rural character and job opportunities are still trying to be considered. Supervisor Srp said it would benefit the County and two school districts. He said rural character could be addressed with buffering vegetation. With respect to Geographic Location, Permitted Uses and Rezoning Application the Board agreed the application met those specifications.

Purpose and Site Plan discussed concentrated solar power (CSP) systems. It was explained that a CSP is a mirror that concentrates toward one point to create heat. The Board agreed the site plan stipulations were met.

As for site plan requirements County consulting Attorney Bob McGee and County Planning and Zoning Director Thomas Barnes said it is detailed in the application and the Board agreed it was there. Sam O'Keefe, Ranger Power representative, said construction would not start until the fourth quarter of the calendar year. Supervisor Determann would like Ranger Power to address when work will be done during the day due to address potential loud noise. The decommissioning plan was reviewed. O'Keefe said typically a bond is used to provide the funds toward the decommissioning. He said they have offered three forms of providing funding for the decommissioning if bonding was not acceptable. McGee said they are interested in an option where the County would be able to access the funds for potential road issues caused by the construction. O'Keefe said there is a requirement they have to enter into an agreement for any damage done to the roads. Barnes said he worked with County Engineer Todd Kinney to make sure the roads agreements were in place while reviewing the ordinance. O'Keefe reviewed the decommissioning plan which includes reviewing and adjusting the amount every five years. Srp asked about how drainage tile may be affected by this project. Srp said he didn't see anything in the application about drainage tile. O'Keefe said there is language in the ordinance that the solar firm is responsible for drainage issues and provisions are included in the application.

Site and Structure Requirements were reviewed including setback. Irwin said the ordinance says 50 ft setback, but noted it is 250 ft from the residence in the application. He said that is from the residence to the panels. Determann asked about Highway 30 and getting that expanded into a four-lane. He would hope the DOT could not use this project against them and would like to see more setback on Highway 30. Srp asked if rows could be removed to accommodate an expanded US 30. Irwin wanted to see more setback, but was worried that too much more would not be realistic for any project. Irwin encouraged the solar power company to work with county residents on the setback because that would make the Board's decision better. O'Keefe said the setbacks included in the application were developed by speaking with the neighbors to the project.

Operations and Maintenance plan was reviewed. County Attorney Mike Wolf suggested soil samples be done around the site and then be tested again after five years. The Board agreed with the County Attorney's suggestion and Ranger Power said that wouldn't be a problem to conduct those tests. Issues were brought up by county residents about erosion, rain water runoff and ground cover.

Decommissioning and Site Reclamation Plan was reviewed. Wolf said there should be consideration about what happens if the ownership changes. McGee said that could be addressed. McGee suggested at the five-year review an arbitration process be included if an agreement on a change to the decommissioning amount can't be made. Srp suggested there could also be an automatic percentage increase in costs. There was discussion about beams breaking at 3 feet below the surface when decommissioning and being left in the ground. Concern was raised from the audience about galvanized steel containing certain poisonous gasses and believes the land should be returned back to farming conditions. It was also brought up from the audience that the zinc in the galvanized could hurt the ground over time.

Impact on public infrastructure was reviewed. The road inspections were discussed earlier in the meeting. Drainage districts were also discussed earlier in the meeting. Kinney said an agreement with the County would allow the County to hire a third-party inspector to watch work in the right-of-way. Questions were asked about a fire inside the project area. O'Keefe said he spoke with Grand Mound fire about their capacities and that the power company would provide training. One member of the public said he spoke with a firefighter in DeWitt who said they aren't going in fire for a solar field for various safety reasons.

A member of the audience asked about the first section of the application about providing more job opportunities. He doesn't believe that was really considered. He said Wisconsin had done more work on studying the impacts of these projects. He asked about the commitment to local workers on this project. He said the impact of using local

workers could realize almost \$6 million dollars in the community. Determann said the County can't make that deal and the member of the public said the County can encourage what is good for the community. Another member of the audience said if Clinton County is the top county for loss of population then using local labor will help remedy that.

Srp said he would like a response on where the buffering plants should be located, an issue Irwin asked earlier. Srp said the solar ordinance has been in place for six years. He said no one showed up to any of those public meetings except the developer. Audience member said the County master plan stated this is not allowed on land with a 65 CSR and above. He said the County should follow the master plan and doesn't have a problem with changing it. Srp said there is a provision for an overlay. The audience said that is spot zoning and illegal in Iowa and there would be a class action lawsuit filed. The audience member said the solar farm farmers are able to pay more to lease farm ground which is killing the young farmer.

Srp said he would like to get responses from the solar company to review before the Board meets again. Ranger Power said it could provide responses by Monday. Determann said the Board will continue the discussion Tuesday at 9 a.m.

The Board of Supervisors adjourned to meet on Monday, April 11, 2022.

Eric Van Lancker, County Auditor

Tom Determann, Chairperson

-APPROVED-

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County Auditor

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Chairperson