

*Pulaski County Board of Zoning Appeals
Special Exception Hearing for Mammoth Solar*
Pulaski County Highway Garage
Monday, March 15, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Present: Derrick Stalbaum, Abby Dickey, Matt Kelsey (zoom), Darrin Gudeman, Bob Keller, Kevin Tankersley, Doug Hoover, Karla Redweik, Nathan Origer

Call to Order: 6:15pm-President Stalbaum calls meeting to order

Pledge

Approval of Agenda: Darin motions to approve, Bob 2nd. All approve. Motion carried

Approval of Minutes: N/A

New Business: **Bob motions that the special exception application is complete. Darin 2nd. All approved. Motion carried.**

1.45 Doug Hoover regarding speaking clearly

Nick- Describe experts that are with them for what topic they speak. Describing GEG/Mammoth and what they specialize in. States Mammoth Solar is also Starke Solar. 10-15 years in solar development experience.

Over 2 gigawatts of power presently in 2 billion dollars of investments. Presently have over 30,000 acres in their various projects. People ask them, why this area? Interstate transmission lines with upgrades gave opportunity to produce more power. Indiana utilities are buying solar power and flat lands. We are wanting to expand lands, but not the project. We will not go into forests or wet lands and focusing on setbacks and aesthetics. The project is the same size; we just have more land to meet everyone's needs. 500 million dollar project with 200 million go into the community for jobs and vendors. 40 full time jobs such as vegetation management, security, electrical, etc.

Chris Shellman- land use advisor- You'll hear facts and fear. Focus on the facts. Listen to experts. Specific items- is it compatible with the comprehensive plan? Yes- provide added income stream. It's an investment in infrastructure and doesn't require additional county spending. Long term & short term job base offered. Land can be returned to agriculture use when the project is complete.

Is it compatible to current character of the vicinity? Yes-project will meet UDO requirements. Similar to what is installed on residential homes. Makes it

Is this land most desirable for this use? Yes-location of the interstate transmission lines that run through the county. Less than 2% of tilled acres of the county with combined less than 4% used.

Location next to the lines is all that matters. It's the equivalent of building a truck stop on an interstate as opposed to a random road. This use has higher investment in tax base than agriculture. Higher revenue per acre than what is presently used for that ground.

Property value-this project will have no negative impact on property values. Setbacks, in addition to the screening, makes sure there is no negative impact on the residential properties. The residential structures are setback more than 150'. Vegetation we install will go beyond anybody's expectations. RES will do specific residential screening. GEG is agreeing to a property value guarantee to prove this. Does it allow for responsible development and growth? Yes, because it is near transmission lines. It will be a 500 million in investments which offers renewable energy and no additional county resources are required. There will be a decommissioning plan.

15.52 Nick introduces Kevin.

Kevin Parzyck-Project manager- tracker layout description to the layout of the panels visual impact to a minimum. Ground cover ratio of .3 which means the grass between the panel 1/3 is panel and 2/3 is grass.

17.58 Darin asked if slides will be proved

18.03 Karla confirmed w/ board they received documents that were shown by current presenter

Abby Dickey- Sound decibels

Justin-Sound expert- Study was mainly done in Starke County and a portion in Pulaski County and none were above limits.

Abby-we set our limit at 50 at the property line.

Justin- The solar inverters don't make a lot of noise and they're the primary noise producer of the project.

Kevin P-from design standpoint, they go inside the project so they aren't on the edge, for limited noise.

What makes noise are inverters that convert DC to AC. AC power gets delivered to the grid. Panels themselves don't make noise except slowing moving of the tracker.

20.09 Chris asked Justin to explain what makes noise

Kevin-What makes noise are inverters that covert DC power at certain project locations turning it into AC for the grid. The panels themselves don't make any noise. Invert has fans that have to keep it cool.

21.16 Chris asks Justin about levels research

Justin Bower-noise levels are 40-50 dba during the day. Project won't make noise during the night. Panels don't make noise, themselves. Most residents won't be able to hear them at night. Loudest part was 45 dba at the inverters that have to generate and collect the power, which is still below the 5 db.

Derrick- You have several people with you, would you introduce your speakers and what their credentials are?

Michael Marous- President of Marous & Company, certified licensed appraiser in the state of Indiana

Jeremy w/ Group Research and coordinate. Indiana based company

Erin w/ RES- Vegetation installation 10 years of experience with wildlife issues

Ryan Templeton w/ RES- Project manager Landscape architect for large scale

Chris w/ Terra Base- Zoom participant

Pierre w/ Terra Base-Zoom participant

Derrick-What does each professional speaker believe the project will do for Pulaski county based on your education and professional backgrounds.

Jeremy-Wildlife expert-Started review a year ago & believes it will be a good thing. We're helping avoid high quality wet land areas. It will compliment area more than hurt.

Erin w/ RES- far & away highest commitment I've seen to a community on setbacks & good neighbor.

Ryan w/ RES- In addition to Erin's, it will incorporate screening & native vegetation and help with water quality.

Michael Marous-appraiser- revenue and land rent to put money back into the community. No traffic. Economic benefits. Provides stability for the school district & positive economic factors. Based on my opinion, will have no negative impact.

Justin Bower- if designed right, noise impact is low to none. Noise levels in 40 db range when placed in the center. 99% predict db of 40 or lower.

Chris w/ TeraBase- adjacent to high voltage transmission lines so making use of existing lines. Flat ground.

Derrick-Fire dept and EMS contact?

Kevin P- Yes some early stages with emergency service personnel and a template plan has been created.

No plans for batteries. We are only submitted through PJM for tracking solar panels w/out battery storage on site. PJM does not approve for batteries because the size. We will have to go through the board again for approval, if we do anything with batteries.

Derrick- Is the project the same size with this extra ground?

Kevin-YES, it is the same. Application is for 500-1,000 megawatts. Energy size has not changed. What has changed is size of ground to allow setbacks and watch environmentally sensitive areas.

Derrick asked if someone would motion to put all documents received to be documents records.

Bob motions/Darin 2nd. All approved.

Start of the public hearing- Derrick describes hearing process & asks for motion to accept rules & procedures

Darrin Motion to accept procedures into hearing Bob 2nd. All approved. Motion carries.

Brandon Delarenzo EMS director- Mammoth solar did reach out to us in October and presented us with a safety plan which is very detailed which is well drawn out.

23-Don Tiede- You've spoken to a few fire departments but not us at Star City, and Francesville said you didn't talk to them. You said the panels aren't going to burn but everything burns. We know they burn. I saw a video from a Logansport guy of burning.

Kevin Parznyk-I agree with you on potential of burning. We will have plans to work with you so you can control fire within the facility. We coordinate even the length of a hose if you are to control a brush fire.

Jason Kuchmay-13,14,24-represent opposition- solar isn't allowed in A1. 2.3.b. Stating a lot of the comprehensive plan and application process wasn't complete to satisfy the UDO requirements for application.

Chris S- Application process is complete. Comprehensive plan rebuttal in response to Mr. Kuchmay statements. Discuss habitat, lake effect, etc.

Jeremy-wildlife expert-discusses lake effect viewing

Chris Shelman- It's not going to look like a big glass lake

Kevin P- Posts to support tracker will be galvanized steel driven into the ground and will be pulled out at completion and will not be surround by concrete. Working w/ the landowners to relocate drainage tiles to make sure there aren't any changes to water flow.

Derrick-Wants to verify accusation of inaccurate application process.

Karla-Confirms documentation that was accused of not being complete is included in the application packet and shows documents such as: topography map, signature pages, panel data. Confirms board has received all required documents pertaining to application.

2-Doug Podell-Support—Discussion of corn production decrease.

4-Rich Bender-Support-Gaylor Electric-safety and study. I believe in this project for Pulaski Co.

5-Connie Neininger-43,31,42,44-Support-Renewable energy projects and economy...housing, utilities, farms, jobs, lower real estate taxes, fewer emissions, multi-use of the ground solar panels are placed on, etc.

6-Margarita Bope-Support-Schools struggle financially. We need more jobs in Pulaski Co. Farming is expensive. I see this job as income and if they won't go here they will go elsewhere.

7-Dennis Bope 8-Support-So many things I see have been opposed, such as pipelines, cell towers (with blinking lights), powerlines (with blinking lights), trains, barbed wire and I hear guns shooting as well as roaring of cars from my house. All these things were protested. Solar is a good thing for our family and our community.

9-Billy Bope-generational farming, all his children will farm, and support solar

11-Barb Stotler-Support-spread out tax base

12-Eric Stotler-Support-personal opinions on generating energy somehow

15-Dean Cervenka-32-Opposed-Zoom-Personal opinions of reduce of jobs and tillable ground. Panels to be demanded to be made in the US. This is an experimental project that is too large & risky.

Chris Shellman-no farmer is being forced to participate in the project. Misconception clarifications of previous speaker. Ag ground is only ground that can practically support solar projects.

16-Gail Lambert-17,19,33-Opposed-radiation, toxic metals if panels damaged, safety standards to china production, heavy metals are dispensed into ground water. Batteries are a hazard. Fire foam contaminates water supplies in military sites. PFAS chemicals. Arizona sued the air force. Do ground water tests and solar companies aren't paying for this. Insurance rates rising. Hailstorm caused millions of dollars of damage. Damage from birds, tornado, fire, hail, etc means leaking contaminants. Electromagnetic waves, battery storage and our drinking water and health.

Chris Shellman-supply chain, most things are made in China. There are some parts that may be made in the US also. Radiation is so low that CDC & NIOSHA do not have concerns about radiation concerns.

Pierre w/ Terrabase-Solar array would emit low radiation and a reader would not move at all due to low energy EMF. EMF produced by electricity is not ionizing radiation, which means wouldn't remove molecule and damage DNA. Made with glass, silicon, aluminum, so low chance of leakage. Statistically panels have lifespan of the project lifetime. There should be no radiation within 100 feet or even basically if you're standing next to it, it would be non-existent.

Derrick- Would there be no radiation 100' or what about 300' away?

Pierre- it would not be a concern at 300'

Chris-This includes xrays, cat scans, gamma rays. Low radiation, such as electric lines in this building, power lines and solar panels.

Darin-what is used to put out the electrical fires?

Kevin P-Some of the components could burn but the grasses would catch fire and that would be procured by local fire department. Not sure what chemicals they use beyond if there's a fire in a barn somewhere in the community. Similar type of application as with a hog barn. Cut the circuit remotely to deter fire.

18-Bob Barger-Opposed-There is not a lot of farm ground made available in the US

Chris Shellman-Net positive for the neighboring farmers. Green space vegetation will remove erosion.

Ryan T-RES-Site has a vegetation growth plan.

Erin -RES-This project will be holding water, habitat for birds, bees & butterflies, sheep, blueberries & other crops that can be grown among panels. End of the solar life, the soil will be in great shape & ready for farming again.

Darin-BZA-For sheep, how will fencing go?

Nick Cohen-we're working with the farmers on a plan for that.

Derrick-BZA-Can you still use some ground as crop land with the setbacks and between solar panel areas?

Kevin Parznyk-Yes- non corn or soybean application. Low growth like blueberries or hay.

20-Denise Spooner-21,26,27-Relator-Opposed- personal opinions stating they will see panels out every window and door, seeing barbed wire, and 15' solar sites. Property value decreased up to 30%. Sharing real estate sales & process data in Madison County statistics.

Derrick- asked about the value difference from her studies based on what she shared as areas she discussed don't coordinate with housing in Pulaski County. PVG in other areas she shared data on.

Chris S-Response to Denise Spooner data.

Michael Marous-Appraiser-Home value concerns responding to Denise comments.

22-Riley T-Opposed- personal opinions on solar

50-Jim Jordan-25-Opposed-personal opinions on solar, water table, Indiana law says he can sue each board member and property owner if water goes bad.

Derrick-Do you have proof of your accusations

Jim Jordan- my son works in California

Chris S-none of that is true. Experts have already discussed what was being stated to prove it is not true.

Derrick-DO you have proof of stating none of them are hazardous.

Chris-yes, our experts have already testified none of those things are true. Waterpanel, recycle, ground use.

Derrick-Are solar panels different from different areas? How are they different?

Kevin P-panel discussion about changes in types. No hazardous materials. Recycling for end of life.

35-Gery Welker-28, 30-Support-Power lines hum. Soil improvement after 30 years idle. Personal opinion & work study on solar.

36-Scott Leman-Support-Personal opinion on solar

45-Andrew Fritz-Support-Corn isn't guaranteed for the future. Change is coming fast. Personal opinions on solar.

54-David Fields-Opposed- personal opinion on solar panels

52-Aaron Reedy-Opposed-personal opinion on solar panels. Quoted something Nathan said in the Journal.

Nathan-confirmed the quote from the Journal.

Darin- asked about the PVG portion. It's agreed to discuss during condition & commitments portion of hearing.

53-Deb Rogers-Opposed-Personal opinions on solar panels.

Chris S-Gery and RES already testified to her statements.

Brian Young-Economic Impact for the county. We haven't met with anyone. We need to know the impact it will have on the county. Battery storage. Who's going to enforce regulations.

Chris S-There are no batteries

Karla- There was battery storage added to the potential changes to the ordinance by APC. Fee schedule will help cover costs incurred beyond what building dept. is capable of.

Richard Dicks-zoom-Works for commercial water proofing and sealing company-Opposed-When government funding is available there would be solar.

Derrick-Anyone like to speak who we have missed? Seeing none, I'd like to close the public portion of the hearing.

Darin motion to close, Abby 2nd. All approved.

Derrick-Board, please open finding of facts in your folder. Does any board member have any discussion before we go over the FofF?

Darin-What is the road use agreement?

Nathan-that is in the ordinance with parameters dictating construction permitting process.

Derrick-Reading the finding of facts & discussion with board members.

Board members discuss F of F. Derrick reads the Staff Report.

1 yes 2 yes 3 yes positive/neutral 4 yes review portions of the finding of facts 5 yes 6 yes

Review conditions & commitments, but was not read, and stated that the conditions & commitments are the same as the first special exception hearing reads that all board members have seen prior to the hearing.

Karla-Reading an addition to the condition and commitments that reads, only adjustments can be done that are not less than what is already in the current UDO and still will be approved by the BZA and Building & Zoning office.

Board reviews conditions & commitments questions to review.

Motion to approve- Abby motion Matt 2nd all approved. Motion carried.

Old Business: No one requested discussion regarding the CSES hearing and pending lawsuit/litigation.

Other Business: N/A

Public Comment: During hearing

Adjournment: Darin motion to adjourn Bob 2nd. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:21pm


BZA Secretary Karla Redweik, Pulaski County Board of Zoning Appeals


BZA President Derrick Stalbaum


BZA Executive Secretary Abby Dickey