

Meeting Minutes

Augusta Charter Township

Regular Planning Commission Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Wednesday December 16, 2020

6:30 PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Yurk at 6:30 PM

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair led Pledge through zoom meeting.

3. Roll Call and Recognition of Visitors

In Attendance: Bennett, Yurk, Woolf, Hall, Newsome. Absent: Green. Planner Kreps and Engineer Bayley were present. There were 52 Zoom visitor sites in attendance.

4. Approval of Agenda

Bennett made motion to approve, Support by Newsome. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes

Woolf made motion to approve, Support by Bennett. Yes: Woolf, Bennett, Newsome, Yurk. No: Hall Motion carried.

6. Public Hearings

Bennett made motion to open the public hearing, Support by Hall. Motion carried by Bennett, Yurk, Woolf, Hall. Repeated calls were made for Newsome who no longer was in attendance. Motion passed.

- a. **SLU 20-01, White Tail Solar, LLC**, for special land use approval of a Large Solar Energy Facility located north of Willow Road, east of Sanford Road, south of Willis Road, and west of Pittman Road encompassing approximately 664 acres or 13 properties (T-20-07-400-001; T-20-18-100-001; T-20-18-100-003; T-20-18-300-016; T-20-18-300-019; T-20-18-400-001; T-20-18-400-006; T-20-18-400-008; T-20-19-100-014; T-20-19-100-018; T20-18-200-007; T-20-18-300-004; T-20-19-200-003)

Public Hearing began at 6:42 PM, chaired by Vice Chair Yurk. There were with 52 zoom meeting attendee addresses in attendance with many more persons sharing the same zoom address.

1) The applicant shared the proposal to develop a 130 Million Dollar solar panel generation facility on 664 acres comprising 13 properties connecting to main electric transmission lines. At the request of Vice Chair Yurk, Drew Vielbis and Sergio Trevino from Ranger Power presented an overview of the project to the public with Paul Harris and Sean Harris, Carol McCoy with StanTec and Tim Stoecker from Dickenson/Wright also in attendance. The panels would be installed in rows on steel pilings driven in the ground with room for a pickup truck to service between. Base vegetation would be planted that might be mowed twice per year.

2) The floor was then opened to public questions and comments. Approximately 16 residents raised questions and voiced comments multiple times.

Douglas Cohen – Willis Road
Deborah Fuqua Frey – McKeon Road
Amy & Dave Novess – Talladay Road
Matthew Spence – McCrone Road
Bryan Pinson – McCrone Road
Douglas Lewis – Talladay Road
Richard & Paula Hamill – McCrone Road
Brian Shelby – Bunton Road
Christine Guage – McCrone Road
David Frey – McKeon Road
Hilda Fair – McCrone Road
Jesse Carpenter – McCrone Road
Jay Talladay – Judd Road
Carol Kovalak – Willow Road

Hand notes were taken of the questions by Vice Chair Yurk.

An additional 4 non-residents then added their comments after the residents completed.

Phil Santer Ann Arbor Spark
Dave Snyder – Milan
Justin Horvath – Shiawassee Economic Development
Chuck Lippstreu – Michigan Agri-Business Association - Lansing

Vice Chair Yurk then called three times if there were any more comments and there were none.

Vice Chair Yurk then took up the matter at 8:25 PM of SLU-20-01, White Tail Solar's request by asking them to answer the public's questions individually. The questions and their answers follow:

- 1) Q – Will the project contain hazardous wastes? A – No. The panels they propose use material unlike what was from the first generations and are EPA accepted. In fact the waste could be disposed in a land fill, but because of residual value most likely would be sold or recycled.
- 2) Q – Explain the Leases. A – The leases are being made with landholders for up to 40 years and could include actual purchases.
- 3) Q- What would be the exit plan for end of life materials? A- There would be value left at end of life including recycling or resale. Was not clear if there would be an actual bond provided.
- 4) Q – The project could kill birds and other wildlife. A. – There system does not beam the energy to a central collector but is a passive collection.
- 5) Q – Heat generation of panels. The panels while hot to the touch are not excessive
- 6) Q- Ownership. A- Ranger Power is the developer. They do all the work of permits and installation. When all is finished they would turn over the project to DTE.
- 7) Q- Why this Location? A- The site meets Ranger Power need of flat and level, dry and close to the end uses and transmission lines.
- 8) Q – Grass Maintenance. A – They plan to mow twice per year including fence line. The grass also helps to reflect energy to the panels.
- 9) Q- Noise. A- the only noise from the panels are motors that help follow the sun. This dissipates quickly within a short distance. The main converters that change the electric from DC to AC are louder and would be located in the middle of the project.
- 10) Q – Use of the maintenance building. A – Used for serving the units and not manned. A bathroom would be necessary using well water and septic per County codes.

- 11) Q – Property Values would suffer. A- In rural areas they have not found this to be the case. In more urban areas they find a loss of 3-5%.
- 12) Q – No notice of meetings were given timely. A – The recent Town Hall meeting was sponsored by Ranger Power and not by the Township in an attempt to give more information to the community.
- 13) Q – The project may have costs to the Township. A – No costs to Township. This is a private development. Ranger Power is not requesting any abatements or assistance.
- 14) Q – The taxes on the 130 Million Dollar project may revert to the state. A – There is proposed Michigan Legislation that might change where the tax dollars would go but there is no current law. Taxes would still be paid within Michigan
- 15) Q – Fencing how much and style. A – They propose a 7' high Deer fence over 76,000 lineal feet. Laura Kreps, Township Planner stated that the Planning Commission has the right to decide if it's required to 6' with barbed wire 1 foot higher or other.

7. Business Items

- a. **SLU 20-01, White Tail Solar, LLC**, for special land use approval of a Large Solar Energy Facility located north of Willow Road, east of Sanford Road, south of Willis Road, and west of Pittman Road encompassing approximately 664 acres or 13 properties (T-20-07-400-001; T-20-18-100-001; T-20-18-100-003; T-20-18-300-016; T-20-18-300-019; T-20-18-400-001; T-20-18-400-006; T-20-18-400-008; T-20-19-100-014; T-20-19-100-018; T-20-18-200-007; T-20-18-300-004; T-20-19-200-003)

The business meeting was then opened up to the Commissioners for discussion at 9:23 PM. Laura Kreps, Township Planner reviewed four options we could consider, vote approve, approve with conditions, deny or to postpone. Hall moved that we postpone until the March Meeting with Bennett Supporting. Discussion was then questioned by Woolf if required to pertain to the motion or to the request in general. Vice Chair Yurk allowed either. Woolf then said the project would isolate 8 homes on multiple sides and would create grave hindrances to their enjoyment of their properties. And additional 5 homes board the project on at least one side and are also affected. Vice Chair Yurk then asked if the motion could be amended to ask to review for residents. Laura Kreps, Township Planner then suggested that we further place the burden on a solution for these residents who were being aggrieved upon Ranger Power. Both Bennett and Hall agreed to change the Motion.

Motion made by Hall: That we postpone the applicant's application until additional information is provided as requested. Supported by Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Public Comment

Was opened at 9:46 with two comments

10. Communications

There was none presented

11. Adjournment

Motion made by Bennett, Support by Hall. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting was closed at 9:49 PM