

DELTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Delta County Service Center
Monday October 4, 2021

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Williams.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. Roll Call. Member(s) present: Christine Williams, John Denholm, Renee Barron and Randy Scott and Dave Moyle. Gary Plante – excused. John Malnar came in at 6:55 p.m.
- IV. Approval of the September 15, 2021 minutes.
Motion to approve, w/ correction, made by Randy Scott and seconded by Dave Moyle. Vote: Yes-5 No-0. Motion carried.
- V. Approval of agenda.
Motion to approve made by John Denholm and seconded by Randy Scott. Vote: Yes-5 No-0. Motion carried.
- VI. Public Comment.
 1. Bob VanDamme – Invenergy lease on property for 3 years. Life time generational farmer and has 600 acres. Farm the sun. Commodity prices, fertilizer and fuel costs up and will only continue to increase. Continue to be a good steward of land. Solar project uses no chemicals or fertilizer. Helps stores, brings money into community and county, keeps jobs and tax dollars. It's a win-win.
 2. Eric VanDamme – superintendent at Mid Pen School. Solar will affect schools and take care of students. Field trips to Boney Falls Dams to see Hydro Electric. Funding for schools, tax base generating, significant for children and future children. Renewable resource and increases opportunities.
 3. Cooper Johnson – last 10 years built solar panels, installing on homes and businesses. Clean power, hundreds of millions to townships. Ground cover prairie grass and vegetation. Listen to communities. Thank PC for working on draft ordinance. Maximum benefits and jobs during construction.
 4. Dan Hall, farmer from St. Nicholas – implement fact and not emotion. Electricity has to start coming from clean energy. Governor attempting stop Line 5. Electric vehicles expanding in future, like it or not, and hope that you take this opportunity to be the leader in this. Group of farmers in area are not so young and likely have no one to take over farms and would rather a solar field.

5. Don Matthys, St. Nicholas land owner – spent 17 years working with renewable energy for M&J Electric. Youngest son picked up on electrical side of this. What we could do here, learn and pick up trades, Green is the way of the future. Turn your back on it and it'll go somewhere else. Get on board of the positive side and move forward and not backwards.
6. Jay Barron, family farm in St. Nicholas – worked for a number of farms in the area. Younger generation not taking over farms and don't want the struggle. Allow families to provide for retirement, they deserve a little rest in their retirement. Younger generations need help.

VII. Declaration of Conflict of Interest. Renee Barron has solar easement agreement with potential project. Motion to allow Renee to participate made by Dave Moyle. No second, motion dies. Motion to accept and recognize made by Dave Moyle and seconded by John Denholm. Vote: Yes-5 No-0. Motion carried.

VIII. New Business. Public Hearing.

- Chris went over presentation from previous meeting. Suggested to increase public speaking time from 3 minutes to 5 minutes based on feedback from previous meeting. By-Laws dictate 3 minutes. Motion to allow two additional minutes made by Dave Moyle and seconded by John Denholm. Vote: Yes-5 No-0. Motion carried.
- Another public hearing, revise draft, final draft for commissioners, final review, moves onto the Board with 45 days for public input and public hearing.
- Subcommittee consists of John Malnar, Randy Scott and Christine Williams.
- Four sizes of installations, our focus in on Utility Scale. Solar overlay is Utility Scale. Where they can develop. ATC border lines. Brownfield and capped landfills are exempt. Deforestation does not include plantations, "Mono Cultures".
- Solar development in regard to PA116. This is outside of our commission and is regulated by the State.

Open Public Hearing: Motion to open public hearing made by Dave Moyle and seconded by Randy Scott. Vote: Yes-5 No-0. Motion carried. Public hearing opened at 6:05 p.m.

1. Bob VanDamme – asked the commissioners to really look at red line that Invenergy sent you; especially the setbacks. It may work for more urban areas, but it takes out a lot of his property. Half of his neighbor's forty that adjoins his property is wooded and they can't see anything anyway. Solar produces energy and jobs and is great for the local area and schools. Panels are

made to absorb the sun. Decommissioning, mostly aluminum and there is nothing to decay or left in the ground. Field trips for schools. Clean energy.

2. Anne Okonek, Cornell – solar owner and proponent, in favor of. Profitable. Not trying to discourage solar development, just when and what terms. Anger boiling over for years with private land owners from what she thinks is a lack of direction. Bob VanDamme had good points, but to change ordinance language for his case is not right; exemptions and waivers could be available. Should plan for worst case scenario. Thanked PC, good start.
3. Dan Hall – look at possibilities and encourage expansions. My farmer neighbors are not happy and try to restrict clean energy. Lansing and Lake City, don't hear any complaints. Escanaba Township based on family and emotion, and not solar possibilities and facts.
4. Louise Nault, Escanaba Township – ATC lines across Carroll's Corner. Unique soil with solid rock that cracks when holes are punched into it. Water quality concern, who will monitor and regulate? There should be a section on monitoring and consequences. Forest, property owners have the right to clear cut and future generations also. Heard that there are hazardous materials in solar panels and that it's very expensive and hazardous to decommission and remove. Who pays?
5. Rory Mattson – thank you for extending to 5 minutes. His property maps the 1.5-mile overlay. Expand, change zoning, what's it going to do for the County and Townships? If you take 300' from each side you've taken potential land owners out of it. Sometimes doing nothing is the right thing to do. Only the townships that the County zones in in this and the other townships will be different. Some for and some not. Cut 1/4 -mile from roads with no road through woods there would be no mills, no industry, no jobs. Private property rights need to be considered and considerate of neighbors. What about the person who has to enforce zoning? What about the townships that do their own zoning?
6. Dan Menacher, Building & Zoning– lives off 100% solar and a back-up generator. I don't want my hamburger coming from California; I want local milk and local hamburger. Develop to split property, subdivide, and create urbanization. Green Bay has subdivisions cut into the middle of fields. This is the most work the Planning Commission has done since the Wind Turbines. “Why did the man climb the mountain? We all know what the answer is; because it was there? Why the need to immediate regulate? The spout on my gas can is regulated; my step ladder is regulated by pitch; my shower head water flow is regulated; install a furnace and it is regulated by the federal government. “What can we do to promote it... get the hell out of the way”.

Existing building code regulates any structure, wind, loads and soil. DEQ regulates and cannot put in a driveway or expand without DEQ. Draft ordinance, why? Regulate land use is to promote growth, safety and welfare of the public. What's being protected, dynamite sound? Only answer is, with all due respect, they don't want to look at it. Well, I look at structures that meet code, and it's butt ugly to look at. I live in the woods with State land on three sides and they clear-cut the east side adjoining my property last year and the west side this year and waiting to see when they cut the other side; that's what I get to look at. Wonderful presentation and draft, but should promote development.

7. Teresa Hall, St. Nicholas land owner – others concern over ground water? Solar will not do any more damage than drilling a well or digging for fence posts. There are homes every so many feet and they are drilling wells and excavating for septic systems and foundations. Paper mill stinks to high heaven. Solar has no smell. Neighbor can build 15' from her property line and she has no say. People don't like change, but it's coming. Need to expand in the future and not hold back our future. Need to allow for more leeway.
8. Warren, Gladstone via zoom – industrial solar and property values. Residents concerned with their property; farmers benefit and residents don't. Shouldn't be built in backyards of people's homes or residential area. Residential areas should have larger setbacks. Should be built in Brownfield and on abandoned property. Would you buy a home next to a solar farm or a farm field? You know the answer.
9. Joe Kaplan, Delta County resident – interesting to hear folks talk about future. He is one of three home owners on Escanaba grid. Ford River feeds grid at .06 cents and buy back is at .24 cents from UPPCO. If Delta County wants to be on the map then solar should be on every housetop, parking lot and everywhere. Wealth in the people's hands. Sun produces wealth. If you are mowing 5 acres you could be putting up panels and counting the money. Ordinance doesn't open this up. Industrial scale has 8% return on investment. Lobby too strong.
10. Cooper Johnson – riding the solar coaster for ten years in Wisconsin. Manitowoc project benefits local communities and school districts. Reflective of, and not Delta County, if ordinance doesn't allow. It's coming somewhere. More meaningful to local government. A hundred-megawatt project is \$22.9 million over life time of 35 years. Will not be Delta County if not supported; don't want to see that walking away. Thank you for your due diligence; great job listening to each other, careful and thoughtful language, and keeping emotion out of it. Take

away 1.5-mile overlay, it's too restrictive, and have opportunity for waivers. Am a full-time farmer in Greenville, WI.

11. Eric VanDamme – solar project going? Check out schools and money invested in schools. Besse, a private revenue, has done good things for the community and schools. Keep lines back from neighbors and provide waivers. Good for community and better school systems. Wish he had brought classroom to view both sides.

Motion to close public hearing by Dave Moyle and seconded by John Denholm. Vote: Yes-5 No-0.

Motion carried. Public hearing closed at 6:45 p.m.

- Chris – addressed setbacks from neighbors and is okay with solar closer than allowed. Ask commissioners to adjust changes or take back to subcommittee?
- Randy – as a member, he wants to take it back to subcommittee. He did not have time to read Cooper's comments. Issue with Garden, need data yet.

Motion to send draft back to the subcommittee made by Randy Scott and seconded by Dave Moyle.

Vote: Yes-5 No-0. Motion carried.

- Dave Moyle – similar instance with wind turbines in Garden, little know in beginning, but learned more. See how land is zoned. Hog farm 10' from property line, smell very intrusive, would rather a solar farm.
- John Denholm – several commercial hog farms, a lot of money, viable, very organic, and protected by Right to Farm. Abandoned farm land with scrub brush and is overgrown costs more to work than what you could take out of it. Solar is farming the sun, don't need to replant, viable 365 days a year; to restrict this is absurd. A lot of work to do.

IX. Unfinished Business: None.

X. Correspondence. Forwarded to you.

XI. Public Comment.

1. Louise Nault, Escanaba Township – ground water contamination; who's going to fix it? What about fires or other emergencies? Who's responsible, land owners or electric companies?
2. Rory Mattson – give a couple weeks to review new draft before meeting and give people time to get information to you. Dan came up today addressing the ones on the ground; works for a government agency; and someone who would be regulating speaks up. Draft is too restrictive.

3. Dan Hall – you must receive some form of payment for sitting here. Thanked Mr. Cooper.
4. Bob VanDamme – thanked Mr. Cooper, he’s a valuable resource. Can’t emphasize restrictions and whatever you put to the State will make it worse. Recommend a one-page ordinance like Marquette. Why do you care if over 3-mile overlay? Not viable. How does solar reduce values? Older farms in Maple Ridge cut into subdivisions and St Nicholas may be next if solar restricted.
5. Dan Menacher – heard through the grape-vine that a few people were concerned about his work load; thank you, not sure that’s the problem. Wish Benny and Julian were still here; small items in ordinance were addressed immediately such as: fence 30’ from property line and home business clarified. The 50th birthday coming up on an outdated, antiquated ordinance. He would have to enforce solar and would be embarrassed to do so. He has to tell people with a 100’ lot that they have 30’ setbacks and those who have a 5-acre parcel that they need a minimum of 20 acres to divide. I challenge every one of you to visit the Dollar General in Perkins. Like it or not; it received a parking variance to minimize the impact on wetlands and it doesn’t do it any justice until looking at it. Impressed and thrilled with the Planning Commissions’ enthusiasm, effort and detail.

XII. Board Member Comments. None.

XIII. Adjournment.

Motion to adjourn at 7:05 p.m. made by Dave Moyle and seconded by Randy Scott. Vote: Yes-6 No-0.

Motion carried.