

MINUTES OF THE LIVINGSTON COUNTY
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
HELD ON NOVEMBER 5, 2018, STARTING AT 7:00 PM
IN THE LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
112 W. MADISON ST. PONTIAC, ILLINOIS

Chairman Mike Haberkorn called the meeting to order and roll call was taken.

Those present were: Michael Haberkorn, Rudy Piskule, Eddie Hoerner, Verne Taylor, Keith Bahler, Dean Wahls, Dee Woodburn, Scott Cranford and John Slagel.

Those absent were: Jerry Gaspardo, Scott Sand and Shane Long.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Chairman Haberkorn mentioned the agenda to this meeting. With no recommendations for additions or amendments to the agenda for this November 5, 2018 meeting, Verne Taylor moved, seconded by Dee Woodburn, that the agenda for this meeting be approved as presented. This motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the August 27, 2018 meetings were mentioned by Chairman Haberkorn. Rudy Piskule then moved, seconded by John Slagel, that these minutes be approved as presented. This motion was unanimously approved by voice vote. The notes of the October 1, 2018 were also acknowledged, as a quorum was not present at this meeting.

BUSINESS:

Case SF-6-18 – Bounds – Proposed Two Lot Subdivision

This zoning case pertains to a proposed two lot subdivision of a 3.79 acres parcel of land located in the Southeast Quarter of Section 17 of Avoca Township, at 19682 E – 1250 North Rd. The zoning administrator reviewed his report for this proposed subdivision. After a brief consideration of this proposal by the regional planning commission members, during which clarification was made on the commission members points of interest for this proposed subdivision. No other interested parties presented were present to present testimony relative to this zoning case. John Slagel moved, seconded by Keith Bahler, to recommend the approval of Livingston County Zoning Case SF-6-18 – Bounds Subdivision as proposed. This motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

The Livingston County Regional Planning Commission members were informed that Case SU-4-18 had been filed several months back and had been put on hold, and that Borrego Solar is now moving forward with the review of this solar project along with their new proposed solar project SU-12-18 – referred to as Borrego Beckman.

Case SU-4-18 – Borrego – Weller – Proposed Solar Farm and
SU-12-18 – Borrego – Beckman - Proposed Solar Farm

The zoning administrator remarked that legal notices have been published for these zoning cases and that surround property owners have been notified of these proposed solar developments.

Brennan Downes and Kip Smith announced their presence at this meeting as representatives of Borrego Solar. Copies of power point presentations for both the Weller and Beckman proposed solar projects. Mr. Downes began his review of his power point presentation on the Weller project by giving an overview of their company, and about how they are excited in this market. Mr. Downes noted that Borrego Solar is the #2 commercial solar energy provider in the US. Mr. Downes then commented, using his power point presentation about their proposed solar development at 3200 N – 1800 East Rd, the Weller property site. Mr. Downes went over the project introduction, and their community outreach. Mr. Downes then reviewed the project overview power point slide copy. Planning Commission member Rudy Piskule mentioned that previous solar developed sites that had been proposed were 20 acres in size and that this proposal is for 12 acres. Mr. Downes related that the generally start with 15 acres and with site it was optimized at 12 acres. Mr. Downes commented that they do a lot work up front to know how much land they need. Kip Smith commented that with the earlier projects considered fixed panels and tracking panels, with tracking panels requiring less area, and that they have determined they are to use tracking panels. Mr. Downes related as to how they had discussed the proposed layout with the person that farms the land to conform with that farmers preferred way of farming the land. Planning Commission member Eddie Hoerner inquired about how dust has an effect on the solar panels. Mr. Downes agreed too much dust could affect the sites and that they may come out and wash the panels with water, if normal rain does not keep the panels clean enough. The potential effects of hail on the panels were then discussed; panels would be replaced if they are damaged by hail. Wind being a factor on the solar panels was then discussed. Mr. Downes noted that these panels are rated for 130 mph winds. Mr. Downes then reviewed the landscape plan power point slide copy. Mr. Downes then reviewed the Construction and Operations power point slide copy. Mr. Downes then reviewed the property values power point slide copy. Mr. Piskule noted that he was contacted by an area property owner several months ago; who expressed his concerns, but had not contacted him lately. His concern of glare is addressed with the use of anti-glare solar panels. The location of houses east this proposed site was also discussed. Kip Smith also noted that the in the power point copies they address the special use standards. The living landscaping fence along Route 17 will be ground level and it is proposed to include evergreen type of plantings. Planning commission members and Mr. Downes had a dialogue about any wetlands on the property. Mr. Downes and Mr. Smith noted that will not be within any potential wetlands on the property, if wetlands are determined to be on the property. The regional planning commission members were presented with the comprehensive plan check list pages. The comprehensive plan checklist was reviewed by the planning commission members. The planning commission members agreed with the previous comments made to these checklist questions. Scott Cranford moved, seconded by Dee Woodburn, to recommend the approval of Livingston County Zoning Case SU-4-18. This motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

SU-12-18 – Borrego – Streator Beckman - Proposed Solar Farm

Justin Hardt the developer from Borrego Solar handed out a power point presentation for this proposed solar energy development. Mr. Hardt then started his review of this proposal remarking about page 4 of his power point slide copies, about the location of this proposed solar development. Mr. Hardt then reviewed his project overview power point slide copy page number 5. Mr. Hardt noted that this site is proposed to be developed on 10 acres because of site restrictions. The inactive Streater Area Landfill north of the subject property was discussed. Mr. Hardt then reviewed the landscape plan power point slide copy, which notes that landscape screening will be provided along both roads on this property located at a corner of a road intersection. Mr. Hardt then reviewed his community outreach power point slide copy. Mr. Smith related to conversations had with the township road commissioner, and Mr. Hardt related to conversations had with area property owners. In reference to the construction and operations power point copy, the difference in the proposed tax base is higher than the previously reviewed solar project proposal because of a difference in the tax rate. Mr. Hardt further mentioned the construction and operations power point copy page, and he noted that this site has no wetlands. The old brick clay pit location was confirmed being north of the land in question. The location of the property was confirmed with the use of an aerial photo of the property up on the screen. The fence height issue was discussed; 8 foot fence could become a 7 foot fence if changed. They would do a fence even if it was not in the county regulations because, of national electric codes. Different fence construction needs were discussed and the intent of the fencing was mentioned. The comprehensive plan checklist was reviewed by the planning commission members. The planning commission members agreed with the previous comments made to these checklist questions. Rudy Piskule moved, seconded by Scott Cranford, to recommend the approval of Livingston County Zoning Case SU-12-18. This motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Review status of Cases SU-9-18 & Su-10-18 – Vermilion Solar I and Vermilion Solar II – to be reviewed at the upcoming zoning board of appeals meeting.

Review Status of SU-11-18 – DG Illinois Solar – Watson – to be reviewed at the upcoming zoning board of appeals meeting.

Review Status of ZT-1-18 – Livingston County Reginal Planning Commission

Case ZT-1-18 – This zoning case pertains to an amended proposed zoning text amendment to clarify in what zoning districts solar farms are considered as special uses. New definitions and a potential change in the fence height have been added, as noted when the zoning administrator presented his report relative to this zoning case, regarding limiting solar farms as special uses in AG, Agriculture, Districts and I2, General Industrial, Districts. Fencing type and height was discussed. To be further reviewed by the zoning board of appeals.

Solar Energy – Agricultural Land Importance to be further discussed at a future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

INFORMATIONAL UPDATE: None

The planning commission members present were informed that their next meeting is scheduled for Monday December 3rd. 2018 at 7:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT:

Rudy Piskule moved, seconded by Dean Wahls, that the meeting be adjourned. This motion was unanimously approved.

This meeting was then adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles T. Schopp, Secretary
Livingston County Regional
Planning Commission