

LIVINGSTON COUNTY BOARD
AGRICULTURE, ZONING AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE JULY 10, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

Committee Chair Gerald Earing called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Present: Joel Barickman, Mike Haag, Paul Ritter, Gerald Earing, Rebekah Fehr, Steven Lovell, and Jack Vietti

Absent: None

Other Board Members Present: Mark Runyon, Linda Ambrose, Seth Welch, Marty Fannin, Bob Weller

Also Present: Zoning & Planning Administrator Jesse King, Administrative Assistant Patricia Merlino, Alina Hartley, Frank Pulliam, Brenda Morris, Attorney Seth Uphoff, Kiersten Sheets (Trajectory Energy Partners), Victor Derbenev, Julie Russow, and Julie Fosdick

Earing called for any additions or corrections to the agenda with none requested. Motion by Lovell, second by Ritter to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the June 5, 2023 meeting with corrections to add Welch and Ambrose to those present. Motion by Ritter, second by Barickman to approve the minutes as amended. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Business:

Case ZM-1-23 – Pulliam

This zoning case pertained to the review of a proposed zoning map amendment to change the zoning of a portion of a parcel located in Cayuga from a zoning classification of R2, Low Density Multiple Family Residence to AG, Agricultural.

King gave an overview of the case to committee members.

Pulliam was present as a representative of the case and described his IT business operation to committee members.

Vietti made a motion, seconded by Ritter to recommend approval of this zoning case to the county board.

Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Ayes: Vietti, Fehr, Lovell, Haag, Barickman, Ritter, Earing
Nays: None

Case ZM-2-23 – Morris

This zoning case pertained to the review of a proposed zoning map amendment to change the zoning of a 1.7 acre parcel located near Long Point from a classification of AG, Agricultural to a classification of I2, General Industrial.

King gave an overview of the case to committee members.

Morris was present as a representative of the case and explained her business operation to committee members and the reasoning for the need of a zoning change. Morris also discussed her disagreement with the county ordinance's definition of a junk yard and that she didn't believe her property to be a junk yard.

There was then discussion between the committee and Morris about other locations they have hosted a junk yard in the county.

Earing then made a motion, second by Barickman to recommend denial of this zoning case to the county board.

Before voting, Barickman noted the large amount of opposition that showed up in opposition to this case by neighbors who live in the area.

Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Ayes: Vietti, Fehr, Lovell, Haag, Barickman, Ritter, Earing
Nays: None

Case SU-5-23 – Junegrass Solar

This zoning case pertained to the review of a proposed 2 MW solar farm on approximately 19 acres of land in an AG, Agricultural, District near McDowell.

Uphoff gave an introduction of the project to committee members.

Uphoff and Sheets then gave a presentation of the project.

A question was raised as to whether or not Trajectory Energy partners would own & operate both of the projects on the agenda for tonight after they are constructed. Sheets did not know that information.

Concerns raised by neighbors were then discussed and Sheets noted that neighbors brought up concerns about their property values along with concerns about chemicals leaching into their wells.

A question then came up about savings on energy bills that the project would generate for residents. Sheets stated that the project would provide around \$48,000 worth of savings annually for ComEd customers who subscribe to the project.

There was then discussion about Sheets's upcoming meeting with the Fairbury Fire Department.

Earing then made a motion, second by Ritter to recommend approval of this project to the county board.

Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes: Vietti, Lovell, Haag, Barickman, Ritter, Earing
Nays: Fehr

Case SU-6-23 – Granite Solar

This zoning case pertained to the review of a proposed 5 MW solar farm on approximately 40 acres of land in an AG, Agricultural, District near Pontiac.

Uphoff gave an introduction of the project to committee members.

Uphoff and sheets then gave a presentation of the project.

During the presentation, it was mentioned that a neighbor signed a letter of support for the project. A committee member asked which neighbor it was on the map. Sheets explained that they were not an immediate neighbor, but were in the area and explained where their house was.

Earing made a motion, second by Lovell to recommend approval of this project to the county board. **Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes:** Vietti, Lovell, Haag, Barickman, Ritter, Earing **Nays:** Fehr

Review of Comprehensive Decommissioning Plans of Previously Approved Solar Farms

King explained that this company, Melink Solar, was ready to apply for a building permit for a solar farm project that was approved in 2018 and that one of the conditions of the special use approval was that a comprehensive decommissioning plan has to be approved by the county board prior to issuance of building permits. King handed out a copy of Pontiac Solar I & II's decommissioning plan to committee members prior to the start of the meeting.

Derbenev was present as a representative of the project and gave committee members an overview of the project.

Haag made a motion, second by Vietti to recommend approval of the project's comprehensive decommissioning plan. **Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Ayes:** Vietti, Fehr, Lovell, Haag, Barickman, Ritter, Earing **Nays:** None

Solid Waste Update

King gave a solid waste update to committee members and noted that there wasn't much new information to present, but that Gary Deigan did an inspection of the Streator Landfill site and noted a couple of issues. The main concern noted by Gary was the leachate tank that was nearly overflowing with leachate. Earing asked where the excess leachate goes if the tank overflows. King stated that there is a concrete containment around the tank to catch overflow if it does occur. Ritter mentioned previous issues regarding erosion at the Streator Landfill and wanted to know if that remains an issue. King stated that Gary noted in his report that the vegetation at the site appears to be doing well and he did not note in his report or to King personally that there are any erosion concerns.

King noted to committee members that it has been noticed by Gary that the management of the landfills has slipped a little bit since the retirement of Bill Janes. It was recommended by Gary to be a little tougher on quality control with Republic and King stated to committee members that he told Gary that he would fully support him on that.

Other Issues to Come Before the Committee

Hartley noted upcoming training on August 21st and 22nd with Attorney Andrew Keyt for Regional Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and County Board members to refresh them on the purpose and roles of their individual bodies.

Earing mentioned that committee members needed to begin thinking about available dates for the Fall 2023 E-Recycle event. Ritter then stated that the health department will be collecting tires for recycling soon and suggested thinking of ways to increase the funding for that program due to the fact that the demand has been greater than what can be accommodated.

Review and Approval of Bills

Discussion took place regarding a bill from Deigan & Associates in the amount of \$1,578.25. Motion by Ritter, second by Vietti to approve the bills as submitted. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Public Comment:

The floor was open for public comment.

Review and Approval of Bills:

King noted abnormally high expenditures in two budget lines in the Regional Planning budget. King explained that the amount of money spent on postage is significantly higher due to the increase of solar farms and that the amount of money spent on legal notices is higher due to the two text amendments the county did for the new wind and solar ordinances that were nearly \$1,000 each.

Vietti made a motion, second by Ritter to approve the bills. **Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Adjournment:

Motion by Vietti, second by Ritter to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Jesse J. King, Administrator
Livingston County Regional
Planning Commission