

PLANNING COMMISSION  
AUGUST 3, 2021

SUBJECT: CONTINUED SOLAR ORDINANCE DISCUSSION

Present: Dave Francis, Stu Scholl, Charlie Hoglund, Randy Wackernagel, Tracy Korthase

Visitors Present: Brooke and Ross Cudney

Opened up with short re-cap of previous meetings.

Korthase presented some thoughts. The purpose of zoning is to keep "like" usage together; uniformity; accepted practices; all in fitting with the Master Plan. Master Plan states that "great rationale must be used in developing zoning, fitting it with geographic context." Zoning looks at 1. the kind of development and 2. the patterns of development. One of the goals stated in our Master Plan regarding Ag land, was to preserve and protect existing conservation of land and open spaces, and to conserve existing Ag lands by protecting the soils and "strongly discourage" land fragmentation. Korthase handed out some of these thoughts she typed up earlier.

The consensus was that a land owner should be able to do with his/her property what they want, but within zoning parameters. It is our role to set those parameters. Looking at personal use vs commercial use.

Question: what is "efficient" amount of wattage to their square footage?

Question – what is the total Ag land in acres in our township? Active? Inactive?

Francis reminded us that the State recognizes that solar IS compatible with PA116, so it is considered "farming". How does a Township justify limiting solar then?

Perhaps, giving the soil 30 years of rest is good for the soil?

Francis read comments from recent survey on general solar questions. About 20 people answered. The results were mixed, about 50/50 as to being for it or against it (in certain locations).

Francis says there is information out there that says commercial solar farms does NOT diminish property values. Audience member Brooke Cudney said perhaps it does reduce the size of the pool of people who are interested.

Hoglund – need to be able to justify any rules. We already work off criteria.

Much of remaining Ag land in Township is considered Prime Ag land, according to the mapping in the Master Plan.

Scholl pointed out that biodiversity may be a positive thing under the solar arrays – bee farms, lambs, etc.

Francis – have to have reasons when developing wording

Suggested assignment: Each Board member take the next few weeks to write down suggested wording, concepts, ideas, for both commercial arrays in Ag property and against the same, perhaps putting it elsewhere. We are not attorneys, but we can make lists of items we think we should cover in future solar ordinance wording.

Next meeting Tuesday August 31, 7pm

Adjourned 8:30pm