

**Planning Commission Meeting Sunrise Township
Royal Wilcox Community Center, Sunrise
Tuesday, June 9, 2015**

The Sunrise Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Chairperson Greg Strom at 7:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Planning Commission Members Present:

Greg Strom Clerk: Wendy Kowalke
Tom Chaklos Ex-officio: Eric Leivian (absent)
Charlotte Wilcox
Delano Olson

Planning Commission Member Absent:

Charles (Chuck) Sinn

Others Present:

Rick Ramberg Paul and Miesha Carpenter
Dick Daniels Bob Zangs
Lori Glen
Tina Kerry Fred Kerry
Tina Rytel, Geronimo
Kara Bakke, Geronimo
Andy Catania, Geronimo

Ring Bell: Bell was rung by Rick Ramberg.

Officer Oath: Charlotte Wilcox took and signed officer oath.

Adopt Meeting Agenda: Motion by Tom Chaklos, second by Delano Olson to adopt the June 2015 meeting Agenda. Motion carried.

Meeting Minutes approval of October 2014: Motion by Tom Chaklos, second by Delano Olson to accept the October 2014 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Geronimo Solar: Tina Rytel, Geronimo Energy, was present to present the Sunrise Community Solar Gardens Project which is an Excel Energy project. Ms. Rytel said that they are going to send a notification to neighboring home owners regardless of what Chisago County does. BHE will own and operate the project in the long term. It is a solar facility and the difference is how the power is sold. The whole facility is proposing up to 6 gardens, each community garden is 1 megawatt. This area is 40 acres. Each garden can give enough energy for approximately 200 homes which will be a total of about 1,200 homes. Solar fields are federally mandated. It will be maintained and operated professionally and contract life is approximately 25 years. The Community Garden will be proposed to have seed under it and will have a stable habitat. There is also a landscape plan in place. Houses have approximately 600 feet to the array. This project is estimated to run approximately \$7 million. There will be only 1 full time job because solar gardens tend to take care of themselves once they are built. Panels can be up to 12 feet tall. Perimeter fence is approximately 6 foot chain link with 1 foot barbed wire. There is nothing within the panels for environmental concerns. Pilings are done during daytime hours which are estimated to be 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. which will also have truck traffic. Citizens are concerned that the housing is going to be unsalable because of the solar field.

Mr. Ramberg wants to know what is going to be done about lower property values. Dick Daniels asked if Aurora is part of this project. Ms. Rytel said it was not. The remaining acreage of 130 additional acres will be a phase 2 development (all together will be additional 360 acres.) Mr. Daniels said that Balsam and Black Hill spruce would be a better tree and will need to be maintained for 3 years and they need to be at least 8 to 10 feet tall when planted. Mr. Daniels also said that Ponderosa Pines will not work.

Home owners are concerned about the traffic this is going to cost and do not want to be assessed to pay for a blacktop road. Bob Zangs said he is not in favor of this project and does not want it constructed. Mr. Zangs is on the north side (middle).

There will need to be another CUP for the additional 170 acres.

Gregg Strom explained jurisdiction of Township. Health issues and home owners land values. BHE only has legal rights to Phase 1 and does not have legal rights to the remaining acreage. Loss of cropland is an issue. Mr. Strom also stated that “when the adjoining landowners to the north built their properties 20+ years ago, it reasonable for them to expect to only have more houses on 5-acre lots or cropland as neighbors – NOT 360 acres of solar panels.”

(Tina Krytel said that they do not use prime farm land which is denoted by the state). Gregg Strom said who makes the determination of what is and isn't farm land.

Paul Carpenter said the value loss is well over 500,000 just with a few property owners due to the homes will be unsalable.

Charlotte Wilcox: How do subscriptions work. None of this is localized. No increase or decrease. Broader benefit. Develop a clean energy resource which has a driving demand and providing the opportunity to be a part of solar. If you subscribe you will get a certain percentage off your bill, but costs more than coal. BHE needs to have all the kilowatts sold.

There is 2 taxes: production tax and property tax which 80% goes to Chisago County and 20 % to Sunrise Township.

Motion by Charlotte Wilcox, second by Delano Olson to deny the CUP on the basis of the adverse affect that it would have on the property for the home owners adjacent to it and in the general vicinity; based on the county condition section 8.04, section C #8. Motion carried.

Chisago County Ordinance as follows:

[8.04: Conditional Use Permit (CUP). C: The Planning Commission shall consider possible effects of the proposed conditional use based upon (but not limited to) the following general factors and any other requirements set forth in this or deemed otherwise relevant. # 8.: Existing nearby properties shall not be adversely affected by intrusion of noise, glare or general unsightliness.]

Tina Krytel wants to know about any solutions. One suggestion was to put the solar field on the south end of the property. The solution is to buyout the property owners. Go back to State Legislature and stop the 1.5% mandate. You are asking for business at the expense of everybody else's misery.

Motion by Tom Chaklos, second by Charlotte Wilcox to adjourn at 8:23 p.m. Motion carried.

Attest: Wendy Kowalke, Clerk

Chairman, Greg Strom