

**Meeting of the Planning Commission
City of Tuscola**

Date: July 19, 2018

Agenda: Consider a request for a Special Use Permit for Southline Solar LLC, 1298 Egyptian Trail. The request is for an 2MW community Solar Facility. The property is zoned T, Transitional.

Minutes: The meeting was called to order by **Chairman Steve Hilgendorf**, at 7:30 PM. Roll call was taken and six members were present. **Chairman Hilgendorf** declared a quorum, and continued by informing the applicant that the Planning Commission's findings would be forwarded to the city council, who makes the final decision. About 30 people present in the audience.

Roll Call for Special Use Permit July 19th

Name	Present	Absent	Yea	Nay
Brad Bennett	X			
Alan Hettinger	X			
Steve Hilgendorf	X			
Brett Adkisson	X			
Terry Poindexter		X		
Gerald Reynolds	X			
Randy Hastings	X			

Chairman Hilgendorf asked if anyone with the applicant would like to address the commission.

David Streicker counsel for the applicant Cypress Creek Renewables who are heading the Southline Solar LLC, project. He thanked everyone for being here and gave a description of the project as being a two-megawatt community solar project designed to fit with the Illinois state future energy jobs act. He stated the project was a small-scale, compact site and would be very low impact. He talked about the others that are with him and their role with the applicant. He stated that local vegetation would be planted around the project and the whole facility would go dark at night. He stated seven reasons for the request and gave a brief outline as detailed in the application. **(application is available to review)**

Matt Kauffman from Cypress Creek Renewables. He stated his company was one of the largest solar energy developers in the United States and have approximately 2.2 gigawatts of solar constructed or in development throughout the United States. He talked more about the solar industry and job creation. Solar prices have fallen 62 percent over the last 5 years which has allowed solar plants to compete with other traditional energy sources. He talked more about the 2017 Illinois future energy jobs act enabled solar to become a real part of the grid in Illinois. He showed some photos of different solar projects, spoke of the fence and vegetation around the facility, described how the panels track the sun, and how they would work around and field tiles on the property and replace or repair anything damaged. He showed more photos of solar arrays and the construction of the facility including that this site would have 9000 to 10000 panels and could service 321 homes. Total investment is approximately 3.9 million with local spending during construction around 2.3 million, he showed the site plan for the area.

(His Power Point presentation and site plan are available for review)

Pat McGarr National Director for the Valuation practice for Cohn Reznick. She gave all her qualifications to conduct this impact study, she stated Illinois does not have a lot of solar so she used Northwest Indiana as they have 5 times more solar than we have right now. 9 farms were used to study the effects on residential properties next to solar. She stated that the results of her impact study in her

professional opinion is that there would be no negative property value influence. **(power point presentation is available for review)**

Bryan Whitson Licensed civil engineer for Kimley Horn in the state of Illinois. He stated that they are meeting and/or exceeding all the setback requirements for the city and that they will stay away from the pipeline to the North. He listed off all the licensed professionals involved to make sure everything is meeting codes and nationwide standards.

Matt Kauffman again addressed questions about the site plan and discussed where each piece of equipment will be located and entrance to the site. He also spoke again that no noise from the site and no glare from the panels because of anti-reflective coating.

David Streicker gave closing comments for the applicants where he noted the decommissioning plan in the application states that after they are gone they would replace everything just as it was before they arrived. He stated the law limits them to two mega-watt size so this site will not be added on to. He then asked for the application, Matt and Pat's presentation to be formally added to the record.

Randy Hastings asked about why they picked to buy this location and why not move further South on the parcel.

Matt Kauffman informed him that they do not buy the land but lease it from the owner and they are as far south on the parcel as can be, the area asked about was not offered for lease and they did no study work for any other parcel at this time.

Brad Bennett asked if the Fire department was affected, and how vegetation was managed

Matt Kauffman stated the facility will work with the local fire department with compliance and that a lawn service will take care of the grounds.

Brett Adkisson Asked if corn would still be planted to the North and if fires were common to solar farms

Matt Kauffman said the area plans to be farmed and fires were not common to his knowledge.

Randy Hastings asked about property values being affected.

Matt Kauffman stated again that they have seen no impact to property sales

Chairman Hilgendorf acknowledged that they received the reports and asked if anyone else would like to comment.

Richard Lamb was concerned that this solar facility would not allow Washington street to continue and that water runoff would be affected.

Angie Hawkins stated she has a petition with 95 percent of the homeowner's signatures against the project and stated they are concerned with the location and impact on their investments.

Chairman Hilgendorf asked if she wanted the petition to be entered into record. She did **(petition is available for review)**

Randy Brown asked why the project would ever be decommissioned, if it catches on fire is it toxic and can they redesign to allow a view.

Chairman Hilgendorf asked for any other comments, then asked the applicants if they wanted to respond to public comment.

David Streicker Decommission happens because of the lease agreement with the landowner ends.

Bryan Whitson stated that they will plant native seed mix and that will reduce runoff.

Washington street was discussed about being an existing dead-end road because of the pipeline.

Randy Brown asked about snow drifting issues

Matt Kauffman stated they don't think the area will be affected due to the fencing and vegetation they are providing.

Randy Hastings said the trees along Egyptian trail would cause many problems with snow.

Matt Kauffman said they were willing to work with everyone to find a solution even moving the facility back off the road further

Owen Tucker asked more questions about connection to Ameren and why they can't move south.

David Streicker again informed that they do the study for location based on the property offered for lease and to move south would be to find another landowner who wants to lease the land then do a study on connection.

Kevin Cruzan asked why they were taking farm land out of production when there were plenty other places to put solar.

Matt Kauffman stated they are not taking farm ground out production permanently and since they are improving the site the soil will be even better when they decommission

David Streicker added that the if they extended Washington road and built houses the Subdivision would be permanent.

Brett Adkisson asked **Angie Hawkins** if the petition was 95 percent of the homeowners and what was the main concerns.

Angie Hawkins said it was 95% of the ones she spoke to out of 140 homes in both subdivisions and the concerns were farm ground removal, the area getting hotter, property values and the location.

Gerald Reynolds stated that there were 29 addresses on the petition and a few were from Southland acres, He also stated that Washington street ends due to the pipeline and has for the last 40 years. He stated he owns houses in both subdivisions and with a screen of trees you would not know it was there unless you drove by it.

Brett Adkisson asked how residents of our community would be able to take advantage with Ameren

Matt Kauffman explained how the future jobs act establishes a subscription-based system for solar that anyone can subscribe to.

Chairman Hilgendorf asked for anymore comments, he then reiterated that they were only able to recommend and the City council has final say.

Brad Bennett made a motion to deny the special use permit.

Randy Hastings seconded the motion.

Roll Call for Special Use Permit July 19th

Name	Present	Absent	Yea	Nay
Brad Bennett	X		X	
Alan Hettinger	X		X	
Steve Hilgendorf	X		X	
Brett Adkisson	X		X	
Terry Poindextor		X		
Gerald Reynolds	X			X
Randy Hastings	X		X	

Chairman Hilgendorf declared the motion to deny passed and stated the need for findings. Findings are that it was not approved because the operation has to be harmonious in appearance in the existing location.

Chairman Hilgendorf asked for any other questions or comments and as there were none the meeting is adjourned.

Prepared by Secretary Gerald Reynolds and Building Inspector Mike Salmon

Gerald Reynolds

Mike Salmon