

## DAKOTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION: October 15, 2024 MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Dakota County Planning Commission was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by Vice-Chairman and the Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

Roll Call: Present were: Ron Collins, Tim Decker, Ron Gill, Gordon Hegge, Steven Lieber, Dick McCabe, Harold Moes. Absent: Scott Bousquet, and Martin Rohde. Also, present: Planning and Zoning Administrator Joe O'Neill and Dakota County Commissioner Troy Launsby. Public present: See attached list

Notice was made regarding the Open Meeting Act posted on the wall.

Moved by Tim Decker, second by Ron Gill to excuse absent members Scott Bousquet & Martin Rohde. Consent unanimous. Motion Carried.

Moved by Steven Lieber, second by Gordon Hegge, to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2024 meeting minutes. Consent unanimous. Motion carried.

Commission reviewed final plat of BRACHT COMMERCIAL PARK Phase 2 in South Sioux City's extraterritorial jurisdiction located in the Atokad Park area. This consists of a commercial 1 lot subdivision in the 1500 block of Gateway Dr. Motion made by Ron Gill, second by Ron Collins to approve final plat of the Bracht Commercial Park Phase 2. Roll Call Vote. Unanimous. Motion Carried.

Commission reviewed final plat for Harves Meadows First Addition. This is a residential single-family subdivision located on the west side of the city, lying northwest of the intersection of Old Hwy 20 and Lake Ave. Motion made by Ron Collins, second by Steven Lieber. Roll Call Vote. Unanimous. Motion Carried.

The Commission reviewed solar regulations. Joe O'Neill met with Christy Abts, the county assessor. She stated that the solar farm will not affect taxes any homes or farm ground around it. The board reviewed some information sent Ethan Frazier with Mission Energy. The commission agreed to leave the setbacks at 50' from public ROW and boundary lines and 250' from non-participating residential structures. The fence could be 6' tall around outside of farm. The agreed to require an approved SWPPP and a dust mitigation in place before starting the project. As far as district overlay, the State will handle all of the assessments. With an overlay, you can specify as commercial to be taxed differently. The overlay could be removed down the road if the land reverted back to AG. Joe will take the wording from other counties for an overlay district to the assessor and see if she has a preference on what we use.

Harold opened up the floor for public comment. There was a concerned citizen asking questions about this project being partially owned by a foreign country. Joe explained that the State of Nebraska is ok with this but they will have to set up an LLC to have a business in Nebraska and that Kuwait is considered a friendly country to the United States. A question was asked where the energy would go. Joe explained that it would go into the grid tied in with NPPD hopefully. Mr. Frazier from Mission Energy stated the NNPD could take over and own the project, may buy the power generated from the project or another entity could get involved. Mission Energy is exploring all options. There was a question about what benefit there would be to the people in the area and Joe explained that it would create more power for the needs of the people in the community and tax revenue. Another concern was brought up regarding increased heat. Ron Collins stated from what he has learned that the solar panels absorb the heat not reflect it so the temperature in the area would not go up. Mr. Frazier stated that about 10-15 feet above and below the panels the temp might increase 2-3 degrees during the course of the day right in that isolated area. That degree shift would not be enough to change weather even with a wind current. The temp would dissipate once mixed with rest of the air molecules.

The total project will generate 250 megawatts. When asked how much that was Mr. Frazier stated that you see can see 40,000 homes per 100 megawatts. Could be 20,000 homes depending on the temperature in the area creating needs and commercial users can take up a lot. It would be a significant amount of power for the area. Some asked about snow drifts with the 6' fence. Mr. Frazier said they don't have a lot of information on that. Some of the residents were discussing their opposition to the project. The Planning Commission explained to them that currently the county does not have any regulations for a solar farm this size and they are trying to establish some regulations. They are not the

ones who make the decision of whether a solar farm can come in or not. That decision would be made by the Board of Commissioners and that they will have an opportunity to voice their concerns to them as well. Mission Energy is helping the county get regulations in place and even some that have been restrictive on them. They are not trying to push their way into the county but help the county through the process. A concern was brought up about fire. Mission Energy would work with local fire departments and set up an emergency response plan in place. There is nothing in the panels that would release a gas that would affect the environment. The panels are connected underground so if one would have an electrical fire, it would be contained to that area. A question was brought up about the 250-foot setback. The Commission explained that there would be nothing in that 250' area next to the property line of the neighboring landowner. A question was brought up about reflection and Mr. Frazier said that they are now designed to limit reflection. A question was asked if a building would go up to monitor the air. Mr. Frazier stated that a weather tower could be an option. Another question was asked about the effects on wildlife and birds in the area. Mr. Frazier stated that the panels aren't mirrored so they don't see birds diving into them. With the fence up it can limit wildlife in the area from getting in there and the area around the panels is mowed to keep down the fire hazards which would limit ground cover for smaller animals. If there was concern about not letting wildlife traveling through, they can make openings in the fence to allow for that. All wires are underground so animals can't chew on them.

Miscellaneous and old business. Tabled item regarding the 66 Conditional Use Permits from Summit Carbon Solutions will remain tables. Zoning permits issued to Doug Nelson – screened in porch- Jackson, Jim Nelson – grain bin- Willis, Gerald Bousquet- storage shed- Hubbard, William Fitzgerald- storage shed- Willis- granted by a variance, Dave Hecht – storage shed- Hubbard.

Harold opened up the floor to public comment. No comments were made.

Moved by Ron Gill, second by Tim Decker to adjourn. Consent unanimous. Motion carried

Meeting was duly adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jolene Gubbels