

December 23, 2024

The board met in regular session at 8:30 a.m. Members present Jason Roudabush, Diana Dawley and Jeff Tindle. Also present: Jacki Bolen & Mark Kriegel.

Moved by Roudabush, 2nd by Tindle to approve agenda. 3 ayes. Motion carried.

Moved by Tindle, 2nd by Roudabush to approve December 19, 2024 board minutes. 3 ayes. Motion carried.

9:00 a.m. Moved by Roudabush, 2nd by Tindle to enter into public hearing for first reading on proposed Ordinance #33 – Solar Regulations. 3 ayes. Motion carried. Present: Jason Roudabush, Diana Dawley, Jeff Tindle, Supervisors; Missy Eilander, Auditor; JD Griffith, Sanitarian/Zoning; Dan Nieland, Pow I-80 Director; Mark Kriegel; Jon Morton, Field Works Power; Robin Young; Jacki Bolen.

Dawley opened the meeting by obtaining comments from those present. Jon Morton stated Field Works Power is a solar development company focusing on 25 to 35-acre developments. He stated his company is in support of good ordinances and wanted to point out a couple of things with the proposed ordinance. He has a concern about the 1,250-foot setback and stated that generally, a typical setback is around 250 feet. He would like to see the ordinance revised to state a 250-foot setback. He further brought up the half-mile separation and would like to see this distance reconsidered as he usually doesn't see a separation amount set forth in an ordinance. With his developments being of a smaller nature, it would hinder their ability to have more projects within that half mile. Morton also stated they need changes to state legislation passed in order for them to connect to a local power grid. Right now the utility company has full rights to that and it will take legislation to force them to allow solar on the grid.

Dawley inquired about how his company works with solar processes. Morton stated his company obtains lease agreements with landowners, obtains permits, and works with utility companies to obtain permission to hook to the local grid. Once the project is completed, it may be sold to a third party. Once the solar development is connected to the utility grid, it stays on that utility grid and benefits the customers on that utility grid.

Griffith stated there is a 500-foot setback from residences and when the zoning commission met to discuss this proposed ordinance, they were thinking more about projects larger than 40 acres. Griffith feels maybe this ordinance needs to go back to the zoning board for some revisions to maybe define smaller-scale projects from larger-scale projects.

Nieland inquired if this ordinance would affect the solar fields like the ones around Grinnell and Griffith stated those types of fields go through zoning/board of adjustment. Those are solar fields installed by an entity for use only for that entity and are not hooked into the local utility power grid. Griffith stated this is another area that may need clarification in the proposed ordinance.

Bolen inquired about possible legislation from the state and if they would maybe limit the local authority and Morton stated his company lobbies for counties to have local control relating to solar projects.

Bolen inquired about the maintenance and repair of the solar panels and who is responsible for that and Morton replied that the company maintains, repairs & replaces panels, etc. There is no cost to the landowner for the upkeep of the solar panels.

Robin Young stated she wants to do a solar project on her land and the current setback and separation distance set forth in the proposed ordinance may hinder her ability to do the project. She feels a lot of individuals are misinformed on information about the solar projects.

With no further comments, it was moved at 9:44 a.m. by Tindle, 2nd by Roudabush to close public hearing. 3 ayes. Motion carried.

Moved by Roudabush, 2nd by Tindle to table the process of passing proposed Ordinance #33 and to bring the ordinance draft back to the zoning/board of adjustment for further discussion on the topics discussed today at the public hearing and to further cancel any future hearing scheduled on this ordinance reading. 3 ayes. Motion carried.

9:45 a.m. Chris Nolte, Veteran Affairs Director met with the board for a monthly meeting. Nolte stated his move to a new office location within Lincoln Savings Bank is underway. Also attending were Scott Marcum and his grandchildren, Nora & Beth. Scott Marcum was a recipient of the Home Base Iowa grant toward the purchase of a home in Poweshiek County. Nolte requested Auditor Eilander to take a photo of the Supervisors, Nolte, Marcum, and his grandchildren.

10:11 a.m. Moved by Tindle, 2nd by Roudabush to adjourn. 3 ayes. Motion carried.

Melissa Eilander, Poweshiek County Auditor

Diana Dawley, Chairman