



COHOCTAH PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
July 29, 2025 at 7:00 PM
Township Hall | Fowlerville, Michigan

The Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon 72 hour advance notice by contacting Barb Fear, Township Clerk, by email: bfearclerk@gmail.com, phone: (517) 546-0655, or mail: 10518 N Antcliff Rd Fowlerville MI 48836.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Order was called at 7pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

K.Engel was absent, all other planning commissioners were present

J.Buttermore

K.Carmack

P.Charette

M.Cican

S.Newton

C.Beach

also in attendance was S.Bronsberg Cohoctah Twp Zoning Administrator and M.Homier, of Foster and Swift, Cohoctah Twp Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda was made by Cican and 2nd by Newton

Motion passed

MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Chairperson Buttermore announced that Ranger Power/Headland Solar LLC has agreed to a 3 week extension to the finalization of the Special Use Permit Application. New deadline for final review determination will now be September 18th 2025

Because of the 3 week extension, the dates for the following PC review will be as follows

August 7 - regular pc meeting

August 19 - special pc meeting to review Headland Solar LLC Special Use Permit Application

September 4 - regular PC meeting

September 15 or 16 (TBA) - Special PC meeting for final review and determination before the September 18th deadline

all PC meetings will be held at the Cohoctah Twp Hall @ 7pm

1. Review Headland Solar Application

Representatives from Ranger Power/Headland Solar LLC were invited to answer questions regarding the proposed Special Use Permit application they submitted.

The Planning Commission then began asking questions of the Ranger Power representatives.

Commissioner Beach opened the questioning. Page 4. Section 2. Section 1, Second paragraph, he noted that Ranger puts great importance on community support. In order to be a good neighbor it , quoting from the application, " important for a project to start off on the right foot."

Commissioner Beach stated on page 35, Section 5 and 7, A 4.2 summary of community outreach , Did you do anything in Cohoctah Twp? He further commented that he did not see any outreach in the community. Mr. Vielbig replied by stating, I think our first meeting was in October of 2021. We have been here for nearly four years.

Commissioner Beach talked about Mr. Vielbig's interview of how he got started. Mr. Vielbig said his family was approached in 2017 about a potential solar project in Shiawassee County. (Assembly Solar). That Mr. Vielbig then interned with Ranger Power and moved into a full-time position with Ranger Power. Commissioner Beach asked if Mr. Veilbig's "Family" was the VanGilders Mr. Vielbig responded that we're here to discuss questions related to the application. Commissioner Beach pointed out that this interview was cited in the application, and a transcript was provided.

Commissioner Beach commented that over half of the parcels listed in Conway are owned by the Van Gilder family and his question was: Without the Van Gilders acreage as part of the application would the project still be viable? Mr. Vielbig responded that if the land wasn't included in the project, it would obviously be a different project.

Commissioner Beach asked would they be willing to scale back the project to fit the community wishes, guidelines and Re-Renewable Overlay?

Mr. Vielbig commented.

No!

Commissioner Beach asked about hours of operation and that you, (Mr. Vielbig) stated at a Conway Township meeting the hours of construction are from sun up to sundown, but in another project Ranger Power's hours of construction are from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Are there any reasons the hours of operation cannot be the same.? Mr. Vielbig stated that is a basic response we give for hours of operation, longer in the summer, shorter in the winter.

Commissioner Beach stated that the Accelerator Solar application indicates sound will be **inaudible outside the project site**, but Headland Solar has 202 homes with 46 decibels or higher at the outside wall of no-participating residence,

Can you explain why the sound quality cannot be met here as you're meeting in Accelerator Solar project? Mr. Vielbig stated we are following guidelines of Public Ace 233.

Commissioner Beach asked about the narrative, pages 26 to 50. The nearest invertor for non-participating residents is 416 feet, yet parcels 1000 feet and 700 feet are sitting at 55 decibels. Couldn't find the one parcel at 415 feet? in another example House #1 is sitting at 1011 feet from the inverter and is at 53 decibels at the outer wall of the house. House #2 is 992 feet and 53 decibels. House #3 at 758 feet is sitting at 55 decibels. It's a difference of 234 feet at 55 decibels, can you explain why the summary doesn't match the data? Mr.

Vielbig responded that we will follow up on this.

Commissioner Beach then asked about Cultural Significance. Two Cultural Resources of significance is mentioned in the summary, but not mentioned in the body of the application. What is it? Mr. Vielbig responded that we will need to get back on this.

In regard to wildlife, Commissioner Beach asked about bald eagles. The Planning Commission needs to look at direct and indirect impacts. What besides cut and paste best practices do you plan to assure sustainability of the eagle habit in Cohoctah? and #2. Have you done any research of inverters and power stations noise pollution disturbing eagles nesting, breeding, feeding, and habit? Mr. Vielbig responded that we plan to take steps to investigate the impact to eagles. If there are trees or nests, then the trees and nests won't be impacted. This was not contemplated in the application, so we need to follow up.

Commissioner Beach then stated, speaking of deer, I've heard reports of Assembly Solar trying to dispose of electrified deer carcasses at a processing plant and being turned away. What is your plan for removing animals and dead carcasses? Mr. Vielbig responded that he was not aware of this. The project is monitored by staff and if there was a dead carcass, it would be removed. Commissioner Beach then asked if Ranger Power has any plans to work with nonparticipating farmers on the loss to their crops due to the increased deer on their land? Mr. Vielbig responded that the concern of loss of crops is not one that we have seen.

Commissioner Beach then asked about decommissioning. Exhibit A-13.1, paragraph 5 provides that all above and below components will be removed, including buried cables, conduits, and foundations, it's also stated in your summary. Yet, testimony you gave in Conway Townships when asked a similar question, you stated that cables will only be removed at a depth of three feet, and anything below that would be left in the ground. Mr. Vielbig responded that the plan requires full removal. If we're granted leniency, it would come down to discussion with the land owners of whether they want it to remain or be removed.

Commissioner Beach asked about brownfields given the MPSC requirement for developers to first consider brownfields. Has any Ranger Power development ever been built on a brownfields or built on a percentage of brownfields? Mr. Vielbig responded that no Ranger Power development has been build on a brownfield.

Commissioner Beach asked about the pollinator score in the plan being a score of 76. The MSU Pollinator Chart would say a score of 75 doesn't meet the minimum requirements , a score of 90 or higher would be considered good. Do you plan to only do the bare minimum for this project? Mr. Vielbig responded that this is a requirement of M Dart.

Commissioner Beach asked Mr. Veilbig, having worked on the Ranger Assembly Solar Complex in Shiawassee County, if he knew what Pollinator Score was reached at the Assembly Solar Complex in Shiawassee County, and was it still maintained , what was the current Pollinator Score? Mr. Veilbig responded that he did not know what score was reached nor what the current score was.

Commissioner Beach asked if Ranger Power , considering that the Monarch Butterfly is being added higher on the Critical endangered species list, could Ranger Power add more pollinators to the project, and therefore increase the Pollinator Score of the project? Mr. Veilbig responded that they would not likely as it met the minimum standards of PA 233

Commissioner Beach asked if you were aware that Frito Lay and McDonald's will not buy potatoes that had ever had solar panels on the land? Have you considered how this might affect the viable use of land after decommissioning? Mr. Vielbig responded that we're obligated to fully decommission to make it for future agriculture.

Commissioner Beach asked how closely will Headland Solar look like to Assembly Solar project in Shiawassee County? Mr. Vielbig responded that the configuration is very similar. Commissioner Beach then commented that at the open house in February, many associates indicated that there were many mistakes at Assembler Solar. What are you changing for Headland Solar. Mr. Vielbig responded that one of the things was based on feedback we received was in regard to sound. We will incorporate setbacks so that sound is not impacted.

Commissioner Beach stated that I see that you've removed battery storage from the application. Is there a plan to add it back in? Mr. Vielbig responded we are not planning to add it back in at this time.

Commissioner Beach asked about drains, and what is the plan to mitigate drainage issues that won't show up until the spring? Mr. Vielbig responded that we've met with the Livingston County Drain Commission to coordinate with their office. And that we have met several times with the Drain Commission and preferred to coordinate with their office. The storm water management plan is not finalized at this time. With private drains, a lot will depend on the individual property owners within the project. Our coordination is with the private drain owners, not others.

Commissioner Carmack asked about the pitch of the land. Mr. Vielbig stated that the ground cover on the project is actually an improvement to the land. Commissioner Carmack stated you have compacted roads, 20 feet wide, 57,123 meters of compacted 21AA stone, it will not absorb water. Mr. Vielbig stated I'm not saying roads are change in runoff. It will be a component of our storm water management plan. Plans will not ultimately be submitted until later in the project.

Commissioner Cican stated there will be an arc from the panels and water runs off. Are you figuring a rain of two hours, do you know how it will runoff? Are you going to submit this. Mr. Vielbig replied "yes." Commissioner Cican said that needs to be in the plan. Mr. Vielbig added that the review of drains are not done yet and will come at a later date. This is the first permit required. All the others will come after this.

Commissioner Cican stated that there are a lot of people out there who are worried about the drainage if this goes in. If someone's house is flooded are you going to take care of it.

Mr. Vielbig responded, of course. Commissioner Cican stated, will you put that in writing.

Commissioner Beach asked how long will you own the project, once you start construction? Mr. Vielbig responded that Rangers involvement stops short of construction. Commissioner Beach. So if you don't own it, are any answers that you give now are voided and it depends on the next owner. Mr. Vielbig responded Ranger Power has financial partner with DESRI on this project who becomes the long-term owner and operator on this project. They are out of New York. Commissioner Carmack provided that DESRI is an international company out of New York. DESRI oversees the construction and it would be responsible for the project and its problems. Commissioner Cican asked how many does DESRI own? Mr. Vielbig stated a lot. Mr. Vielbig also added we could sell to a utility company, but have not sold to a utility company yet.

Commissioner Beach asked about the power connection which shows on one print ,off of Fleming and Hayner while in the summary shows one close to Owosso and Gannon. Do you know which one it will

be ? And why there is a discrepancy between your summary and prints? Mr. Vielbig stated we talk about this in the change section of the application.

Commissioner Beach asked if DTE holds up filing an application will this affect the project? Mr. Vielbig responded it's too early to know. Couldn't give a timeline now.

Commissioner Beach asked a question concerning ITC proposing a substation on Gannon Rd. between Fleming Rd. and Antcliff Rd. What would this do to your project? Mr. Vielbig responded we're not proposing to connect to it.

Commissioner Carmack asked are you in the MISO queue for approval? Queue has no names for the project. Commissioner Beach asked for a number for the queue. Chair Buttermore also asked for the numbers. Mr. Vielbig stated he would follow up with the queue number.

Trustee Charette stated that there are 269 homes that are non-participating that will be within the sound of an inverter. A 105-decibels is a chainsaw. Some States require lower decibel levels like in California. Chair Buttermore summarized the discussion regarding sound in the application project and asking if setbacks and barriers can be added to mitigate sound? Mr. Vielbig cited PA 233 and 6 db less, so actually only 49 decibels. According to another representative from Ranger Power that at Assembly Solar they are doing sound mitigation by building walls around inverters. He added that Ranger Power, in Calhoun County, they are using a different inverter that is much quieter. Ranger Power has not decided which inverter they will use for the Headland Solar project, whether it will be the Assembly Solar type or the Calhoun County type. Trustee Charette stated that California has 45 decibels and that's a big difference.

There was discussion about the ad valorem taxes. Tom from Ranger Power stated that there is a law that allows for \$7,000 per megawatt that would be broken down by the various tax entities that receive the funds. This would be a negotiated agreement. Discussion on homes not being sold based on the overlay district. Three homes along Owosso Road have gone up for sale. Commissioner Cican asked are you willing to buy these houses? Mr. Vielbig stated that we're not in the business of buying homes.

Chairperson Buttermore asked about the sound modeling and if you use a generic inverter, how can you do accurate modeling if you don't know what inverter you're going to use?

Chairperson Buttermore asked for the glare study and the two Atwell papers mentioned in the application. Mr. Vielbig stated he would provide that. Chairperson Buttermore said they would need flash drives, and one paper copy of these documents for the clerk. Mr. Vielbig stated they would provide this and a link to the glare study.

Commissioner Beach stated that your application shows disrespect to the township. Nothing in the application is respectful of our township, was in many instances incorrect and incomplete. It wasn't even addressed to the Township, with it even stated in the application this was prepared for the MPSC Board at state.

Chairperson Buttermore asked why is the overlay not good enough? Why won't you put it in our overlay? Mr. Vielbig responded that the project was developed based on capacity and doing outreach to landowners. Site is contiguous with both townships. Toby with Ranger Power stated that small projects are not viable.

Commissioner Cican asked about soil testing being done on the site. Mr. Vielbig stated its not typical to do on these projects. They do a baseline analysis pulling up data on the record. Commissioner Cican asked about water testing and well water testing. Commissioner Cican asked how do you return the land to its original condition if you don't do a soil analysis? Commissioner Cican asked about the decommissioning form in the application not being filled out. Mr. Vielbig stated its a form we negotiate with the township. Tom, Ranger Power representative stated is normally completed just before construction starts. Call to the public: comments were received. Supervisor Fosdick commented that the planning commission should invite DESRI to come a meeting and answer these questions since they will be the actual developer.

The PC commissioners will have further discussions and questions at subsequent pc meetings to follow.

Ranger Power stated they would not be present at the next few meetings but would take written questions.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

J.Haas made a public comment regarding how Ranger Power/Headland Solar has been unwilling to work with the township, unwilling to make the project smaller, unwilling to mitigate the noise pollution and sound from the invertors, and have not been "good neighbors" as they have been claiming

M.Fosdick, Cohoctah Twp Supervisor, made a public comment stating representatives from DESRI, who will take ownership of the Ranger Power/Headland Solar LLC project once construction starts, will be invited to speak and answer questions from the Planning Commision members.

F.DiSanti made a public comment regarding the article about DTE suing St Clair County over the imposed 45db max ruling from the county health dept.

S.Porter made a public comment asking Why Ranger Power/Headland Solar LLC project has yet to have a "buyer" for the energy proposed from the project?

Ranger Power/Headland Solar LLC answered Porters query.....Correct, they have no "buyer" at this time.

M.Brown made a public comment regarding Soil Sampling within the Ranger Power/Headland Solar LLC project to determine the pre-decommissioning state of the soil

T.Parker made a public comment regarding the proposed galvanised post vs steel posts for the Ranger Power/Headland Solar LLC project

Ranger Power/Headland Solar LLC replied there is a potential for their to be different set of standards for each township within the footprint of the project depending on the requirements.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Newton, 2nd by Beach
meeting was adjourned at 8:42pm