

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Brandy Williams, Engineer and Zoning Administrator

DATE: April 25, 2024

SUBJECT: PC 24-01: Request a Special Use Permit on the subject property to construct, operate, and maintain a Solar Farm on PINs 09-17-200-023 and 09-17-400-012 Cortland IL 60112

APPLICANT/ Aspasia Solar Project, LLC, applicant
OWNER: LNL 4 EVER, Landowner

On March 7th, 2024, a Public Hearing was held by the Planning Commission on the Aspasia Solar Project, LLC request for a Special Use Permit to construct, operate, and maintain a Solar Farm on PINs 09-17-200-023 and 09-17-400-012. The Planning Commission voted to recommend denial of the request and forwarded its recommendation to the Town Board. This was considered by the Town Board at its meeting on April 8th, 2024, at which time the applicant presented information regarding the impact on real estate values adjacent to solar farm projects. Due to the introduction of this additional information submitted by the applicant, the Town Board voted to send the matter back to the Planning Commission for further evaluation and recommendation in accordance with Section 9-10-6.D of the Town Code.

The Petitioner's request for a Special Use Permit must be specifically weighed based upon the Standards for granting a Special Use Permit under Section 9-10-3 of the Town Code. The standards are as follows:

- A. Is the proposed structure or use at the particular location requested necessary or desirable to provide a service or a facility which is in the interest of the public, and will it contribute to the general welfare of the neighborhood or community?
- B. Will the proposed structure or use have a substantial adverse effect upon the adjacent property, the character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, utility facilities and other matters affecting the public health, safety and general welfare?
- C. Will the proposed structure or use be designed, arranged, and operated so as to permit the development and use of neighboring property in accordance with the applicable district regulations?

Elements from previously presented and newly heard information should be considered by the Plan Commission now for adherence to the above applicable standards. It is important that the Plan Commission specifically identify facts in support of, or against, the relevant standards in making its recommendation to the Town Board.

Staff offers the following comments to assist the Plan Commission with respect to its consideration of the application for a special use to locate its proposed solar farm on the subject location south of Barber Greene Road and east of Somonauk Road:

- 1) From a planning standpoint, the anticipated 40-year lease invokes potential municipal planning concerns related to road networks and infrastructure connectivity. Upon development, the area east of Somonauk

Road between Barber Green Road and Cortland Center Road may best be served by the extension of Tallgrass Parkway east. Tallgrass Parkway, a boulevard, is one of only two cross streets on this segment of Somonauk Road. The second cross street, Stonegate Avenue, is a short 200-foot street that only serves residential districting beyond it and not suitable for a through street. Should this project be constructed as presented, the extension of Tallgrass Parkway would be unfeasible from a cost-benefit analysis impacting the planning of approximately 200 acres. While not determinative of whether a solar farm is viable and appropriate at the subject location, these items may be considered in the Plan Commission's evaluation of the standards cited above.

- 2) The infrastructure framework may similarly be impacted by the proposed project. If built as specified, a limitation on the placement of utilities within the footprint of the solar farm could therefore restrict connectivity along the eastern boundary of the corporation limits in this quadrant.
- 3) It is anticipated vehicular traffic north on Somonauk Road and on Barber Green Road will see significant increases in the future. The intersection of the two will be a high visibility, well-traveled crossing. In its consideration of the required standards associated with granting this Special Use permit, the Planning Commission should take into consideration its site location. The currently zoned commercial parcel at the southeast corner of this intersection indicates the potential in this area for a desirable commercial district. Limiting road and infrastructure connectivity, or raising its cost, may be deemed detrimental by restricting development or delaying development.

The Town Board has requested that the Planning Commission evaluate the further information provided by the Petitioner at its next meeting and it may consider any further public input as well. It should deliberate on the totality of all information presented by the Petitioner, making specific findings of fact in addition to conclusions regarding the standards, and forward its updated recommendation to the Town Board. Within 30 days of delivery of this recommendation, the Town Board shall act on the request. In the event that the Planning Commission recommends against the issuance of the special use, it may be issued only upon the favorable vote of 2/3 of all the members of the Town Board. (Section 9-10-6 of the Town Code).

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brandy Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brandy" and last name "Williams" clearly distinguishable.

Brandy Williams
Engineer and Zoning Administrator