VILLAGE OF POPLAR GROVE

"A Great Place to Call Home"

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 - 6:00 PM

200 N. Hill Street, Poplar Grove, IL 61065

Commissioners – Jake Dykstra (Chair), Jessica Roberts, Don Sattler, Ed Wethington, Keith Richard, Nate Sroka, George Fowler

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER
Jessica Roberts called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

ROLL CALL
PRESENT

Chairperson Jessica Roberts
Commissioner Bill Brandenburg
Commissioner Nate Sroka
Commissioner Dan Cheek
Planner Gina Delrose
Clerk Karri Anderberg
Attorney Aaron Szeto

ABSENT
Commissioner George Flower
Commissioner Al Tilford
Commissioner Jason Vodnansky

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Motion to approve the minutes from June 24, 2020
   Motion made by Commissioner Brandenburg, Seconded by Commissioner Sroka. Motion passed by voice vote

PUBLIC COMMENTS: *(General Comments)*
no public comments

NEW BUSINESS

2. Case 2020-05; Poplar Grove Solar (East Half)- The applicant, Poplar Grove Solar, PO Box 310, Highland Park, IL 60035, on behalf of the property owner, DYN 173, LLC (First Midwest Group), 6801 Spring Creek Road, Rockford, IL 61114, is requesting a special use to install non-building mounted solar collectors (total of 18 acres, eastern phase) for export of energy for use by an electrical utility at 4324 Illinois Route 173 within LI, Light Industrial District (Poplar Grove Zoning Ordinance Sections 8-6-11-B-2 and 8-5-7 Special Use). Part of PIN: 03-14-300-002.

Case open at 6:01 pm
Delrose sworn in at 6:02 pm
Planner Delrose presented the case and finding of facts.

FINDINGS OF FACT:
Per Section 8-5-7(D) of the Village of Poplar Grove Zoning Ordinance, the criteria for granting a Special Use Permit are as follows:

A. Findings: The establishment, maintenance or operation of the special use would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare.

There are many kinds of solar farms, each having their own set of environmental impacts. Solar farms can be thousands of acres in size. Some require that all vegetation be removed which impacts wildlife by loss of habitat; some are constructed on cement pads that increase surface water run-off; some radiate heat and some feed into a tower that can be dangerous for birds and insects. Phase I of the proposed solar farm will be 18 acres in size, have adequate vegetation, create minimal surface water run-off and is not anticipated to create a noticeable amount of heat or glare.

Considering the zoning of the property and the potential development that is permitted, the solar farms, with proper conditions of approval, would have less of an impact to neighboring properties. An increased setback is being utilized along the east property lines to provide an additional buffer between the projects and nearby residences. The addition of pollinating plants will benefit the community while providing a low maintenance vegetative cover rather than grass seed which can become unsightly.

B. Findings: The special use would not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood.

Industrial and limited commercial development is already permitted. The solar farm will be required to adhere to all local, state and federal regulations in

addition to the conditions of approval. The height (and potential shadow casting) and lot coverage of the solar panels are less than the amount permitted while the setbacks are greater. The amount of traffic generated by the solar farm is less than that created by an industrial or commercial development.

Although the NRI report indicated agricultural drainage tiles on the western half of the property, through the special use process, a study can be conducted on the eastern half of the property. This will ensure that any potential agricultural drainage tiles are discovered and can now be protected.

C. Findings: The establishment of the special use will not impede the normal or orderly development and improvements of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.

The solar farms are not anticipated to impact the ability of the surrounding properties to be used agriculturally. The addition of pollinators is intended to be a benefit to the agricultural community. The solar farm is not anticipated to create additional heat, odor, light or noise that would infringe on the nearby residents' enjoyment of their properties.

D. Findings: Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities will be provided.

The property is located along Illinois Route 173 which can adequately handle construction equipment and increased traffic during construction. Access roads, drainage and additional power lines and power poles will be installed by the developer in accordance to the project's needs and submitted narrative and site plan.

E. Findings: Adequate measures have been taken to provide ingress or egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

Once construction of the special use is complete, there will be minimal traffic generated by the routine maintenance and monitoring of the site. An access road will be wide enough to handle two-way traffic, for instance, when multiple vehicles are present.

F. Findings: The special use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the districts in which it is located.

The special use will be required to conform to all the applicable regulations of the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Ordinance, all other regulations and to any conditions of approval enacted by the Village Board.

Johnathon Carson sworn in at 6:07pm Mr. Carson presented a power point about the project. The power point is on file with the clerk's office.

Mike Shultz sworn in at 6:13 pm. Mr. Shultz is an attorney for the Lindburg family. they are asking that recommendation #5 of the case be changed to the following:

A subsurface agricultural investigation and survey shall be performed to accurately locate, map, and protect tiles, prior to any construction activity. The drainage system shall be protected and repaired or replaced, as necessary, during the term of the special use to avoid any issues with the Illinois Drainage Law and any unforeseen flooding or impact to drainage that could negatively impact this project or any adjacent landowners.

Planner Delrose is ok with the change

Public Hearing closed at 6:18 pm

Motion made by Commissioner Sroka, Seconded by Commissioner Brandenburg to amend condition #5 as read by Attorney Shultz.
Voting Yea: Chairperson Roberts, Commissioner Brandenburg, Commissioner Sroka Commissioner Cheek

Motion made by Commissioner Sroka, Seconded by Commissioner Brandenburg to approve the find of facts.
Voting Yea: Chairperson Roberts, Commissioner Brandenburg, Commissioner Sroka Commissioner Cheek

Motion made by Commissioner Sroka, Seconded by Commissioner Brandenburg to approve case 05.
Voting Yea: Chairperson Roberts, Commissioner Brandenburg, Commissioner Sroka, Commissioner Cheek

Motion made by Commissioner Sroka, Seconded by Commissioner Brandenburg.
Voting Yea: Chairperson Roberts, Commissioner Brandenburg, Commissioner Sroka

3. Case 2020-06; Poplar Grove Solar (West Half)- The applicant, Poplar Grove Solar, PO Box 310, Highland Park, IL 60035, on behalf of the property owner, DYN 173, LLC (First Midwest Group), 6801 Spring Creek Road, Rockford, IL 61114, is requesting a special use to install non-building mounted solar collectors (total of 18 acres, western phase) for export of energy for use by an electrical utility at 4324 Illinois Route 173 within LI, Light Industrial District (Poplar Grove Zoning Ordinance Sections 8-6-11-B-2 and 8-5-7 Special Use. Part of PIN: 03-14-300-002.
Case open at 6:20 pm
Delrose sworn in at 6:21 pm
Planner Delrose presented the case and finding of facts.
FINDINGS OF FACT:

Per Section 8-5-7(D) of the Village of Poplar Grove Zoning Ordinance, the criteria for granting a Special Use Permit are as follows:

A. Findings: The establishment, maintenance or operation of the special use would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare.

There are many kinds of solar farms, each having their own set of environmental impacts. Solar farms can be thousands of acres in size. Some require that all vegetation be removed which impacts wildlife by loss of habitat; some are constructed on cement pads that increase surface water run-off; some radiate heat and some feed into a tower that can be dangerous for birds and insects. Phase I of the proposed solar farm will be 18 acres in size, have adequate vegetation, create minimal surface water run-off and is not anticipated to create a noticeable amount of heat or glare.

Considering the zoning of the property and the potential development that is permitted, the solar farms, with proper conditions of approval, would have less of an impact to neighboring properties. An increased setback is being utilized along the east property lines to provide an additional buffer between the projects and nearby residences. The addition of pollinating plants will benefit the community while providing a low maintenance vegetative cover rather than grass seed which can become unsightly.

B. Findings: The special use would not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood.

Industrial and limited commercial development is already permitted. The solar farm will be required to adhere to all local, state and federal regulations in addition to the conditions of approval. The height (and potential shadow casting) and lot coverage of the solar panels are less than the amount permitted while the setbacks are greater. The amount of traffic generated by the solar farm is less than that created by an industrial or commercial development.

Although the NRI report indicated agricultural drainage tiles on the western half of the property, through the special use process, a study can be conducted on the eastern half of the property. This will ensure that any potential agricultural drainage tiles are discovered and can now be protected.

C. Findings: The establishment of the special use will not impede the normal or orderly development and improvements of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.

The solar farms are not anticipated to impact the ability of the surrounding properties to be used agriculturally. The addition of pollinators is intended to be

a benefit to the agricultural community. The solar farm is not anticipated to create additional heat, odor, light or noise that would infringe on the nearby residents' enjoyment of their properties.

D. Findings: Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities will be provided.

The property is located along Illinois Route 173 which can adequately handle construction equipment and increased traffic during construction. Access roads, drainage and additional power lines and power poles will be installed by the developer in accordance to the project's needs and submitted narrative and site plan.

E. Findings: Adequate measures have been taken to provide ingress or egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

Once construction of the special use is complete, there will be minimal traffic generated by the routine maintenance and monitoring of the site. An access road will be wide enough to handle two-way traffic, for instance, when multiple vehicles are present.

F. Findings: The special use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the districts in which it is located.

The special use will be required to conform to all the applicable regulations of the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Ordinance, all other regulations and to any conditions of approval enacted by the Village Board.

Johnathon Carson sworn in at 6:27pm Mr. Carson presented a power point about the project. The power point is on file with the clerk's office.

Mike Shultz sworn in at 6:28 pm. Mr. Shultz is an attorney for the Lindburg family. they are asking that recommendation #5 of the case be changed to the following:

A subsurface agricultural investigation and survey shall be performed to accurately locate, map, and protect tiles, prior to any construction activity. The drainage system shall be protected and repaired or replaced, as necessary, during the term of the special use to avoid any issues with the Illinois Drainage Law and any unforeseen flooding or impact to drainage that could negatively impact this project or any adjacent landowners.

Planner Delrose is ok with the change

Public Hearing closed at 6:29 pm

Motion made by Commissioner Sroka, Seconded by Commissioner Brandenburg to amend condition #5 as read by Attorney Shultz.

Voting Yea: Chairperson Roberts, Commissioner Brandenburg, Commissioner Sroka Commissioner Cheek

Motion made by Commissioner Sroka, Seconded by Commissioner Brandenburg to approve the find of facts.
Voting Yea: Chairperson Roberts, Commissioner Brandenburg, Commissioner Sroka Commissioner Cheek

Motion made by Commissioner Brandenburg, Seconded by Commissioner Sroka to approve case 06.
Voting Yea: Chairperson Roberts, Commissioner Brandenburg, Commissioner Sroka, Commissioner Cheek

ADJOURNMENT
Motion made by Commissioner Sroka, Seconded by Commissioner Brandenburg. Motion passed by voice vote.

meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm