

August 28, 2026

TO: President Gustafson & Members of the Village Board of Trustees

FROM: Scot Wrighton, Interim Village Administrator

RE: Committee-of-the-Whole Item #1: Solar Energy System Installations

On August 18, the Village Board expressed its support for creating documents that would clarify, to prospective developers submitting large improvement and construction proposals, all of the metrics on which their proposals would be evaluated—criteria such as whether proposals adhere to the Village’s comprehensive planning objectives, community strategic plans, whether they constitute the highest and best use of the subject property, and are compatible with land use planning goals and overlay districts already in place for key transportation nodes, corridors and environmentally sensitive sites. Such “big picture” considerations can legally be integrated *now* into the Village’s decision-making processes, but the Board determined they should be communicated with greater clarity and precision so developers will all understand them in the same way. These criteria would be in addition to site-specific issues like setbacks, fencing and sight-breaks, height, buffering, noise abatement, decommissioning, access points, runoff and how specific utilities should serve the site. When finalized, these “big picture” criteria can be more consistently applied to projects like stand-alone solar energy system installations, data centers, large scale storage facilities, and other large development projects that would not be considered traditional residential, commercial, industrial or open space improvements.

Now, into this discussion, comes Pivot Solar. They, and the owner of a large tract immediately south of the AAE plant and immediately east of State Highway 251 (see attached site plans), have proposed the installation of a 22+ acre solar array on this high-visibility site. While formal hearings have not yet been convened to determine if such a project is compatible with the land use planning and development objectives of the Village, it certainly appears (at this early stage in the review process) that the developer’s goals could be incompatible with the measures and criteria listed in the paragraph above.

Nonetheless, the developer has asked for the opportunity to present their preliminary project in the less formal environment of a Committee-of-the-Whole meeting, to discuss the original plan, alternative concepts for a Pivot Solar project, and explore whether there is a solution that can advance the objectives of the Village *AND* the objectives of the developer/owner prior to a more detailed plan review by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

It is recommended that the Committee-of-the-Whole hear the Pivot Solar presentation, ask whatever questions they may have for the prospective developer about the presentation, plans, or the attached documents submitted to the Village, and then discuss whether, in general conceptual ways, there could be a solar energy system installation and site layout on this tract that could

simultaneously be compatible with Pivot's development objectives *and* the Village's land use planning and strategic community goals. If there is some consensus on this topic, it should form the basis of a revised submittal by Pivot Solar which they could assemble for, and submit to, the Zoning Board of Appeals in October. Conceptually, both the landowner and the developer are not opposed to moving the solar array to the rear of the existing tract in such a way as to reserve between ten and twelve acres at the front (west side) of the site for future commercial and/or industrial development in accordance with its assigned zoning designation and the Village's strategic and comprehensive plans. This alternative is illustrated with an attached drawing.

At no point is the Village Board required to find or reach a compromise with the developer; but often alternative conceptual discussions (as I propose for the Committee-of-the-Whole on September 1st) can be effective in finding common ground when a developer and a governmental entity otherwise may appear to have incompatible goals and plans.