

DEKALB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

October 30, 2023

Commissioners Present: President William L Hartman
Vice President Michael Watson
Vice President Todd Sanderson, via Zoom

Others Present: Auditor Susan Sleeper
Deputy Jody Wiedenhoeft
Attorney Andrew Kruse

MATTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Dotty explained the difference in Parkview pricing that she had briefly discussed last week. The Department Head Meeting will be held on Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. in the Red Room of the Annex. Dotty feels the Job Study Committee would like Larry's job description to be sent on to WIS for their review. Recruitment around the county was covered. Lastly, Dotty reminded the Commissioners to complete their employee evaluations.

MATTER OF RESOLUTION 2023-R-20: UDO-88 | AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE DEKALB COUNTY UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Karl Pearce represents part of EDF from North Carolina over to the Dakotas and has been involved with power for many years. Karl said this is the first time that as customer like I&M was in attendance and feels this is very nice showing the collaboration of the County. Karl introduced Sarah Massara whom echoed Karl's 'thanks' for taking the time to consider the project. Sarah touched briefly on each 'Finding of Fact'.

Colbin Steury: against the Solar Project, says he doesn't have the fancy corporate backup but wanted to share some words from his personal feelings and others from the County that the Commissioners are supposed to be representing. He then read from a prepared document at the podium.

Discussion was raised to Commissioner Hartman as he was not going to allow a speaker in favor of the project. Commissioner Hartman agreed for one person only.

Lynn Reinhart: addressed the Commissioners in support of the solar project and went over the timeline of events that have occurred since the beginning of this process. He also read from his prepared notes at the podium.

Commissioner Watson: agreed with Colbin that here we are 2.5 years later and wanted to thank Colbin for being a gentleman through this whole project and willing to talk. He feels that individual property rights are an important piece and feels it is hard to justify one person's rights means more than the other persons. He represents the entire county and does feel the Stop Solar Group has worked very hard and is very passionate on the topic but does feel most feelings have

developed with false information. Commissioner Watson feels economic growth will be hindered without this project, specifically from letters received from companies in support. In closing, Commissioner Watson goes back to the core values of equal property rights, lower taxes for the county, and economic growth; this project would generate a great financial impact for the County and will have an affect on everyone in the County. The message the County sends on being in support of

Commissioner Sanderson: agrees with Commissioner Watson on the tax implication for the residents, he is not totally sure on the ability of taxes getting reduced as he feels that every time government gets more money they spend more money. Individual Property rights are a huge component. Sanderson read from the UDO the different classifications. He is all for property rights, but there is also zoning that regulates property rights. He is questioning why change is being sought as he does not feel that we are lacking energy. Sanderson feels the best use of land is agriculture, as the UDO shows. Sanderson would like everyone to look around, this is the last level of protection between local and federal government, and someone needs to say no to those pushing the changes. He is tired of politicians telling him something he already knows; history proves we are on the right track.

Commissioner Hartman: feels the best use of land when considering the efficiency of production on farmland and has seen an increase over the years, therefore unless there is a drought the efficiency would be 100%. When considering solar, it will only be about 23% efficient with the amount of sunlight, snow on panels, etc. He feels property value studies can be manipulated with data input; he feels the property values will reduce for sure. Commissioner Hartman has seen it before and if tax rates are reduced then something else will be pulled from another pocket to back up the reduction. There will need to be a standby that will increase the cost and there is no way the utility bills will not go through the roof. A year to year and half ago Commissioner Hartman stated, 'why would we trade the most important way of producing food for the most inefficient way to produce energy' and ended his comments.

Commissioner Watson agreed with Hartman on the tax rate comment and explained that the solar project would increase assessed value. He also feels that some of the decisions that are made are based off consequences either intended or unintended. Watson can assure the residents that the letter from I&M landed on the desks of State legislative representatives and he has a fear that we will lose local control regardless of the decision made here today.

Commissioner Sanderson agreed the property values will go down, but the assessment will not go down immediately. The best use of land, he wanted to touch on the land they had to build the highway department on and the people didn't want it there so the school didn't lose their found ground, and the people didn't want to look at the farm ground when riding the bikes.

Councilman Ring wanted to point out the everything Commissioner Sanderson made was false, it was the school that didn't want the highway in that location. Commissioner Hartman cut Ring off.

Commissioner Watson explained that the property values will reduce if the project is turned down and may or may not if the project goes through.

The Plan Commissioner held a public hearing on October 18, 2023, and considered the overlay district amendment to the Commercial Solar Energy Systems Overlay District petition for the inclusion of approximately 1778.8 acres on property generally located in Stafford & Wilmington Townships: south/southeast of Butler, Indiana. The DeKalb County Plan Commission did certify no recommendation for the Commercial Solar Energy Systems Overlay District amendment to the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners.

Michael Watson made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-R-20: UDO-88 as described above for the Commercial Solar Energy Systems Overlay District in relation to the Sculpin Solar Project. Motion died for lack of second.

Todd Sanderson made a motion to reject the proposal of Resolution 2023-R-20: UDO-88. William Hartman seconded, and motion passed to reject (2,0).

Sanderson: aye

Watson: nay

Hartman: aye

MATTER OF LARE PROJECT GRANT AWARD

Nellie announced that the Clean Water Indiana Grant was approved in the amount of \$100,000, the LARE grant is \$100,000, Maumee River Basin Commission's portion is \$87,382.26, the City of Auburn's and DeKalb County's portion is \$4,918.17 each. Nellie attended all the different boards and they all agree to go with the lowest bid. Scott Graham wanted to thank the Commissioners and support staff for all their work for keeping the County running.

Michael Watson made a motion to approve Flatland Resources bid in the amount of \$297,218.59 for the LARE Cedar Creek Grant Project. Todd Sanderson seconded, and motion passed (3,0).

Sanderson: aye

Watson: aye

Hartman: aye

MATTER OF PAYROLL

Michael Watson made a motion to approve payroll for the period of October 8-21, 2023. Todd Sanderson seconded, and motion was approved (3,0).

Sanderson: aye

Watson: aye

Hartman: aye

MATTER OF MINUTES

Todd Sanderson made the motion to approve the minutes dated October 23, 2023. Michael Watson seconded, and motion passed (2,0).

Sanderson: aye

Watson: aye

Hartman: abstain.

MATTER OF COMMERCIAL LEASE AGREEMENT ADDENDUM #1

Todd read the original contract and there was a clause that allowed the City to get an inspection on if it were safe to foot traffic, but he does not recall receiving a report. A discussion took place and Commissioner Watson will reach out to the mayor when he returns and report back.

MATTER OF ORDINANCE 2023-O-7, DCC 32-3-2(a) | FAIR HOUSING ORDINANCE

As part of the Grant Submission for the OCRA Wastewater Grant a Fair Housing Ordinance for the County is required. Auditor Sleeper was unable to find a recent ordinance but was instructed by Kleinpeter Consulting that in 2017 there was language changed that is required by OCRA, thus a new ordinance needs to be passed.

Michael Watson made a motion to approve Ordinance #2023-O-7: DCC 32-3-2(a) on the FIRST Reading. Todd Sanderson seconded, and motion passed (3,0).

Sanderson: aye

Watson: aye

Hartman: aye

Todd Sanderson made a motion to suspend the rules and pass Ordinance #2023-O-7: DCC 32-3-2(a) on SECOND and THIRD Readings. Michael Watson seconded, and motion passed (3,0).

Sanderson: aye

Watson: aye

Hartman: aye

Todd Sanderson made a motion to approve Ordinance #2023-O-7: DCC 32-3-2-(a) on the SECOND and THIRD Readings. Michael Watson seconded, and motion passed (3,0).

Sanderson: aye

Watson: aye

Hartman: aye

MATTER OF NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED FOR OCRA GRANT

Michael Watson made a motion to sign the letter of No Historical Properties being affected for the OCRA wastewater grant submission. William Hartman seconded, and motion passed (3,0).

Sanderson: aye

Watson: aye

Hartman: aye

MATTER OF COUNCIL ON AGING VEHICLE TITLE

Michael Watson made a motion for the president to sign the title for the vehicle listed below for Council on Aging to sell. Todd Sanderson seconded, and motion passed (3,0).

VIN#2C7WDGBG7FR634411 | 2015 Braun Handicap Van

Sanderson: aye

Watson: aye

Hartman: aye

MATTER OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES TRUCK

Commissioner Hartman had forwarded the Commissioners an email on the type of truck needed, and Commissioner Sanderson feels it would be better to purchase a new vehicle that is equipped with the options needed. Hartman will touch base with Patrick Grant and have him move forward on collecting quotes from two different companies on a new purchase.

MATTER OF OTHER DISCUSSION

Topics include-

County Administrator: short discussion, all agree not ready to act on for a while.

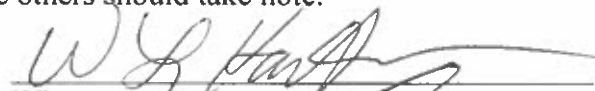
Commissioner Watson feels a purchasing agent would be more viable.


Scott Graham: 7841 CR 32, Butler | wanted to ask who spoke first at the meeting (HR Director). He would like to work 'there'.

Andrew Provines: 3920 CR 75, Butler | thanked all 3 commissioners for their time on the solar project, and referenced that Commissioner Watson had mentioned multiple times about losing local control and wanted to know who Mike Watson worked for- the County or the State? Commissioner Watson replied that was an absurd question. Andrew wants everyone to know the mentality here on the local level and the inconsistencies here in DeKalb County. Commissioner Watson knows that as part of declaring candidacy there needs to be some bashing, but that the County Government is regulated by Statute from the State.

Todd Sanderson: Rick Ring called Todd a liar in an open meeting, he isn't happy with how that was handled and wanted to clarify that he had multiple contacts on the prior highway project, one of them being from the FFA. To say that everything Todd said was false is not true, it is not 'liked', and Todd is tired of being treated in this manner.

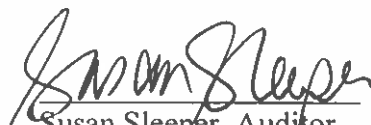
Heath Hook: 7520 CR 28 Butler | This whole solar mess has really enlightened him and wanted to take a moment to thank the Commissioners for the amount of time they have put into it, and that being a leader is hard and that he appreciated the time that Commissioner Watson puts in to different organizations and committees and feels the others should take note.


William L. Hartman – President


Michael Watson – Vice President


Todd Sanderson – Vice President

Attest:


Susan Sleeper, Auditor

