

Randolph County Council

December 30, 2024

The Randolph County Council met at their regular meeting at 9:00 AM in the Commissioners and Council Room in the Courthouse with the following members present: Board President David Lenkensdofer, Tom Chalfant, Beverly Fields, Missy Williams, Tom Kerns. Also present was Randolph County Auditor Laura Martin and County Attorney Meeks Cockerill.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Hearing – South Salem Solar abatement

David said okay, first order of business is to open the public hearing. I'd entertain a motion.

Beverly said motion to open the public hearing, South Salem Solar abatement.

Tom Chalfant seconded the motion. All aye votes. Public Hearing opened.

David said this is where we have input from the audience to see if there're any questions about this project. I guess, seeing none.

Meeks said close the public hearing.

David said entertain a motion to close the public hearing.

Jay Long said got one.

David said okay.

Jay Long said the only question I have is I've never seen like the road use agreement or anything on that.

Meeks said we have it. I can send that to you.

Jay Long said do you? Okay. That's the only question I had.

David said okay. Sounds good. Thanks Jay.

Meeks said I'll email it to you.

Missy said on that agreement, is it what?

Meeks said it's the public, probably we close the public hearing, we we'd need to have a discussion, not that.'

David said entertain a motion to close the public hearing for the South Salem Solar abatement.

Tom Chalfant made a motion to approve. Missy seconded the motion. All aye votes. Public meeting closed.

Council Meeting – open

David said okay, now we can get into the council meeting.

Resolution 2024-18 South Salem Solar

Ben Vollmer said so, I thought I might run through this and then we can do questions afterwards if that's okay. So, first of all, thank you for this special meeting, for taking the time. I know this is a tough time of the year to get away. Everyone has got family obligations and so, I appreciate that. I hope everyone had a good Christmas. So, just wanted to talk a little bit more about this project. This is the South Salem Solar project in Wayne Township. We are looking at building on approximately 800 acres, a name plate capacity of 150 megawatts. We're aiming to start construction in early spring of 2028, and finish by the end of 2029. So, our timeline for project development, we actually signed leases back in early 2021. We thought we would be farther along at this point, but PJM, which I imagine you may be familiar with, due to your familiarity with other renewables projects, put a two-year pause on studying these. So, that pushed back our timeline. So, here we are, end of 2024. We recently did our environmental studies and the economic development agreement, road use agreement, and decommissioning agreements were signed a couple of weeks ago. Next year, we're going to continue with more studies. We'll send a surveyor out there, a geotechnical crew, our engineering design will progress, and we'll have outreach to the neighbors. There's not a lot of them in that area, but the ones that are there, we'll reach out to let them know about the project, see what concerns or questions they might have, and address those. In 2026 and 27, the interconnections studies will be complete. We'll have applied for the improvement location permit, and we'll have secured our PPA, that's the power purchase agreement for the sale of the power. In 2028, before construction starts, we would have community open houses. This is for a broader audience than just the neighbors, to let everyone know about the project and what to expect, and then construction would start with grading. We don't expect a lot of that on this site, given its nature. But, that's what we'll do. Construction, I'll talk about next. A little bit later on, that continues through 2029 and then we move to operations after that. So, here I a conceptual site plan. We have preliminary information here based on publicly available data. The final site plan will incorporate data from site studies performed by the environmental consultants, surveyors and geotechnical engineers. And the project will observe setbacks in will install vegetative buffer screens to screen the equipment from nearby residences and public view shed. You have a well thought out solar ordinances that establishes these requirements. As I said, neighbors will be contacted and then prior to the issuance of a building permit, we will submit an emergency services plan and operations and maintenance plan, and an erosion control plan. The economic agreement that was signed a couple of weeks ago, the project represents a 200-million-dollar investment that's nearly 8.2 million dollars in economic development payments over 10 years. I've been at a number of these meetings now and I've seen how the county can use that money. And that's been great to see, and we look forward to contributing to that fund. There'll be a lot of jobs, temporary jobs

during construction, and a few after. Local businesses will benefit. I've stayed at the Randolph Inn and Suites a few times now, and I think it would be hard for me to get a room during construction, because they'll be very full. But, I think that's a good thing. And we'll be trying to work with other vendors that can provide services in support of the project. Councilman, you asked about the road use agreement. So, that was signed a couple of weeks ago. The real specifics of that are yet to come. So, I'll just read from it briefly. Developer shall create a detailed video visual record and summary textual narrative of the pre-existing condition of all roads covered under this agreement, road condition report that is reasonably acceptable to the highway superintendent. So, there will be a recording and survey and deep understanding of any current conditions before starting work. And I think the key takeaway here is South Salem Solar, the project is responsible for and will, at its expense, repair any damage the project causes to roads, bridges and affected drains. And that includes after the decommissioning period. So, after it's been operating for 30, 40, 50 years, when the equipment needs to come out, we'll still be responsible for any damage to roads that may happen after that. And it's my understanding that quite a few miles of road in the county are in better condition now than they were prior to the construction of other renewables projects and we should see some of that with our project as well. Project compatibility, so, how does this project fit it? How will we treat the land? This can be viewed as a holding use and not a permanent one, but while we're on the land, we'll respect it and work to build up the soil. That's done by responsible growth of vegetative cover and hopefully, with sheep as well. We have sheep on several other projects, and we'll look to do so here. I've spoken with the extension office about this a little bit. And last, just to show the scale of the impact, we'd be building on approximately .3% of the county farmland. Construction safety is the top core value at AES, so that applies to on the site and off as well, careful handling the equipment and also not having construction workers speed to work because they're late. We'll endeavor to use maximum local resources doing construction, giving more people in the community a stake in the project. There will be some inconveniences during construction, but we'll try to minimize those, referring to traffic and noise. After construction will be very little traffic and the project will be a quiet neighbor. Operations, there're 24/7, 365 monitoring of these. The monitoring rooms look like a NASA control room. It's screen to screen across an entire wall there. If something goes wrong electrically, we'll know about it and someone will be dispatched. The site will also be regularly inspected for any issues that might arise. We aim to contract with any local landscaping companies to provide vegetative maintenance services for the, mowing, sheep, both and also the upkeep of the vegetative buffer screen that will screen the project from view. And then I mentioned the emergency services plan earlier. Local fire and rescue will receive project specific training from AES and will had access to the site as needed. Decommissioning, after operations on the project have ceased, the site will be restored to as near as practicable the condition of the site immediately prior to construction beginning. A bond will be established to ensure that's the case, and the bond amount will be adjusted every few years. The signed decommissioning plan includes within an agricultural soil reclamation plan detailing practices that will allow for the land to return to productive agricultural use following decommissioning. So, that's keeping top soil in place, minimizing soil disturbance, not doing construction on days when it's too rainy, things of that nature. And on the back is, I hope you already have, but contact information for me. So, happy to take any questions.

Tom Chalfant said do you know how much excess capacity the transmission lines have now that you're going to hook up to?

Ben Vollmer said we think and we hope it's enough for ours, but it's not just that line. It is lines, not in just in Indiana, it'll be lines in Ohio. They might come back to us and say you have a 7% responsibility of the 30 million dollars of upgrades that needs to be done for the lines in Columbus to somewhere else.

Tom Chalfant said yeah, that's the next question. what are the upgrades? Do you know what your upgrades are presently for getting on this transmission line?

Ben Vollmer said we do not yet, no, no. We're waiting feedback from PJM.

Tom Chalfant said could that kill the project?

Ben Vollmer said it could. We do our own internal studies, and whether, of all the sites that we evaluate, we screen out the vast majority of them and we only invest this type of development in ones that we feel like we're going to get good feedback from the utility study.

Beverly said where's your closest windfarm other than Randolph County, out and about?

Ben Vollmer said windfarm?

Beverly said well I mean solar, yeah, where?

Ben Vollmer said solar. So, AES is now doing the operations and maintenance work for a project in Clinton County.

Tom Chalfant said who owns that project, do you know?

Ben Vollmer said that is owned by AES, the utility, AES Indiana utility.

Tom Chalfant said okay, utility.

Missy said how many do they own? I mean, I've been researching them a little bit because you're tied to them.

Ben Vollmer said yeah, not many. I would say, at this point, only a couple. I can't say for sure.

Missy said and what's the longevity of them having that in their portfolio they list?

Ben Vollmer said for the lifetime of the project 30.

Missy said when did their other projects begin?

Ben Vollmer said oh, just this year.

Missy said yeah, yeah.

David said any other questions?

Missy said I don't have a question, but I think it's a concern or imperative to me, but anything, I don't know what change it goes through, but our highway department, superintendent and those who are working with them, to get those agreements before so he knows, and then back to my question, I know, and maybe I'm just re-thinking at this, but I noticed you mentioned the east, west roads but you didn't mention any north, south roads to get there. And I know you're going to have to, equipment is going to have to go up there. I just wanted to make sure that was in that road use agreement to be brought back to as good, or better, hopefully better. EDP has been very good about, it is, in my opinion, only better than what the older roads were. And people are, I mean, while the projects are going on, there's a lot of rumbling over poor road conditions because of the equipment that's going over them. So, somewhere, I guess, in that agreement I wanted to make sure that any county roads you're going to be on, and that could be more than one, north, south.

Ben Vollmer said absolutely, yeah. There's a designated person who is to meet with the highway superintendent, I think it's weekly.

David said okay. I assume Jay, you'll probably take recordings of those roads before the project starts?

Jay Long said yes sir.

David said just wanted to bring it up. Thanks.

Jay Long said we're good.

David said any other questions? If not, I'd entertain a motion to grant this solar abatement for AES.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF RANDOLPH COUNTY, INDIANA

FINAL ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION AREA RESOLUTION

Resolution No. 2024-18

REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

WHEREAS, South Salem Solar, LLC ("South Salem Solar") has received from the County Council of Randolph County, Indiana (the "Council") a ten-year real property tax deduction period and a ten-year personal property tax deduction schedule for a proposed solar energy conversion system project of approximately one hundred fifty (150) megawatts of new generating capacity, which will include real property redevelopment or rehabilitation and installation of new manufacturing equipment under Resolution No. 2024-14 (the "Project");

WHEREAS, South Salem Solar has advised the Council that it intends to construct the Project in Wayne Township, as further described in the map attached to Resolution No. 2024-14 as Exhibit A (collectively, the “Development Area”);

WHEREAS, the Development Area has been designated an economic revitalization area (an “ERA”) for purposes of permitting such deductions;

WHEREAS, the property within the ERA, as depicted on Exhibit A, is the real property (the “Real Property”) upon which the new manufacturing equipment will be located;

WHEREAS, South Salem Solar has advised the Council that the Project will involve significant investment in new manufacturing equipment on the Real Property;

WHEREAS, South Salem Solar submitted to the Council a form *SB-1/Utility Distributable Statement of Benefits*, a form *SB-1/Real Property Statement of Benefits*, and a form *SB-1/Personal Property Statement of Benefits* in connection with the Project, and provided all information and documentation necessary for the Council to make an informed decision (collectively, the “Statements”);

WHEREAS, the Council is authorized under the provisions of Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-1 *et seq.* to designate areas of the County as an ERA for the purposes described herein;

WHEREAS, the Council has considered the Statements submitted by South Salem Solar and has conducted a complete and proper investigation of the Real Property and determined that the area qualifies as an ERA under Indiana statutes;

WHEREAS, the Council has considered the following factors under Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-17 in connection with the Project:

1. The total amount of South Salem Solar’s investment in real and personal property under the Project;
2. The number of new full-time equivalent jobs to be created under the Project;
3. The average wage of the new employees under the Project compared to the state minimum wage; and
4. The infrastructure requirements for the taxpayer’s investment under the Project;

(collectively, the “Deduction Schedule Factors”); and

WHEREAS, South Salem Solar and the Council intend and understand that in the event that the Real Property is designated an ERA, pursuant to Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-2(i)(6), any real and personal property tax deductions received by South Salem Solar would be subject to conditions more particularly described in that certain economic development agreement to be entered into by Randolph County, Indiana and South Salem Solar with respect to the Project (the “Economic Development Agreement”).

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS FOUND, DETERMINED AND RESOLVED by the Council that:

1. That the estimate of the value of the redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Real Property is reasonable for projects of that nature and the estimate of the cost of the new manufacturing equipment to be installed in connection with the Project is reasonable for projects of that type.

2. That the estimate of the number of individuals who will be employed or whose employment will be retained as a result of the proposed redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Real Property and the installation of the new manufacturing equipment can reasonably be expected to result from the proposed redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Real Property and the proposed installation of new manufacturing equipment.

3. That the estimate of annual salaries of those individuals who will be employed or whose employment will be retained can reasonably be expected to result from the proposed redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Real Property and the proposed installation of new manufacturing equipment.

4. That the number of individual opportunities for employment, both temporary and permanent, and the compensation to be paid to employees, along with the value of the acquisition and construction of improvements as a result of the Project, create benefits of the type and quality anticipated by the Council within the ERA and can reasonably be expected to result from the proposed redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Real Property and the proposed installation of new manufacturing equipment.

5. That the benefits described in the Statements can reasonably be expected to result from the proposed redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Real Property and the proposed installation of new manufacturing equipment.

6. That the totality of benefits from the proposed redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Real Property and the proposed installation of new manufacturing equipment is sufficient to justify an abatement schedule under Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-17, including a ten-year real property tax deduction period and a ten-year personal property tax deduction schedule as specified herein.

7. That the Deduction Schedule Factors in connection with the Project justify granting the deduction schedule for both real and personal property under Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-17 as specified herein.

8. That the Real Property constitutes an "economic revitalization area," as defined by Ind. Code 6-1.1-12.1-1(1).

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing, the Council further RESOLVES, FINDS AND DETERMINES:

1. That all of the conditions for the designation of the ERA and all of the requirements for the tax deductions to be granted hereby have been met, and the foregoing findings are true and all information required to be submitted has been submitted in proper form.

2. That the Statements submitted by South Salem Solar are hereby approved.

3. That the Real Property is hereby designated as an ERA pursuant to Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-1 *et seq.*

4. That all prior actions of the Council as reflected herein are hereby confirmed, and South Salem Solar is entitled to real property tax deductions under Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-4 for the proposed redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Real Property as part of the Project for a period of ten years and in accordance with the following abatement schedule under Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-17, and personal property tax deductions under Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-4.5 for the proposed installation of new manufacturing equipment as part of the Project for a period of ten years and in accordance with the following abatement schedule* under Ind. Code § 6-1.1-12.1-17, (all as in effect on the date hereof):

YEAR OF DEDUCTION	% ABATED
1	100%
2	100%
3	100%
4	100%
5	100%
6	100%
7	100%
8	100%
9	100%
10	100%

* for any aggregate cost of real property improvements and new manufacturing equipment in excess of Two Hundred Million Dollars (\$200,000,000), South Salem Solar shall receive deductions in the following amounts, expressed as a portion of the assessed value: (i) first year - 100%; (ii) second year - 90%, (iii) third year - 80%, (iv) fourth year - 70%; (v) fifth year - 60 %; (vi) sixth year - 50%; (vii) seventh year - 40%; (viii) eighth year - 30%; (ix) ninth year - 20%; and (x) tenth year - 10%.

5. That the Council has held a public hearing for the purpose of receiving remonstrances and objections after public notice thereof, all as required by law.

6. That this Resolution shall be effective immediately upon its passage.

7. This Resolution is supplementary to and in addition to any prior resolutions and, to the extent any prior resolutions are inconsistent herewith, they are hereby modified.

8. That, notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, the granting of the tax deductions described herein is conditioned on and subject to the terms in the Economic Development Agreement between South Salem Solar and Randolph County, effective December 16, 2024.

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Tom Kerns make a motion to approve Resolution 2024-18.

Beverly seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

David said we've approved the resolution for you. Hope the project goes well for you.

Ben Vollmer said appreciate it. Thank you everyone.

Other Business:

Minutes of November 6 and December 3, 2024

David said okay, under other business, we have minutes of November 6th and December 3rd of 2024.

Beverly made a motion to approve. Missy seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

APC and BZA 4th Quarter attendance

David said last other business is the APC and BZA 4th quarter attendance report that was emailed to us.

Citizen Comments (3 minutes)

David said is there any citizen comments out there? Anybody want to comment on anything? No comments.

Dave said okay, last thing is I guess, we're going to have to go around the room real quick. I'll start with you, Missy.

Missy said I appreciate the opportunity to serve, and looking, I think I'm looking forward to my next roll.

David said you'll do great.

Missy said I really appreciate all of your support.

David said thanks for being part of the team.

Bev, do you have anything?

Bev said thank you, thank you. It's been a pleasure working with you, and we'll be working with you again in your new places, so, appreciate it. Thank you.

David said Tom?

Bev said you too, Tom.

Tom Chalfant said I'd say ditto, yeah.

David said ditto, okay. Tom?

Tom Kerns said it's been a pleasure. Thank you, Tom, for your years as a commissioner and council.

David said I'd just like to say, it's been an honor serving with all of you because you know, I know Tom's been through a couple times where the county was struggling, and we have earned financial good position at this time, and that's how you develop your good teams and move this process forward for the county. So, we all are definitely leaving the county in a good position, so.

Tom Chalfant said I should have said something else, but don't be afraid to say no.

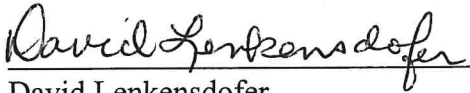
David said okay. Any other things?

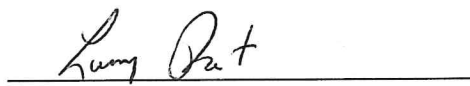
Adjournment


David said entertain a motion to adjourn.

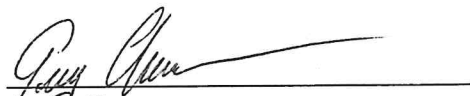
Tom Chalfant made a motion to adjourn. Beverly seconded the motion. All aye votes. Meeting adjourned.

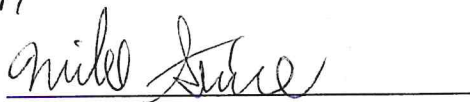
Reviewed and accepted this 4 day of February, 2025.

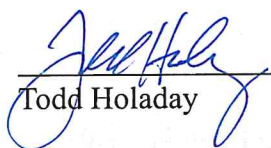

David Lenkensdofer


Larry Preston


Beverly Fields


Greg Cheesman

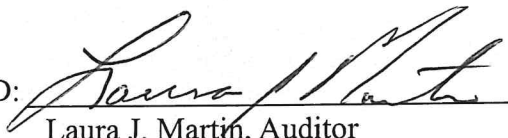

Mike Stine



Todd Holaday



Scott Fisher

ATTESTED: 

Laura J. Martin, Auditor