

THE SHELBY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MET ON MONDAY NOVEMBER 30, 2020, AT 8:00 A.M. PRESENT WERE COMMISSIONERS NIGH, PARKER, ROSS, COUNTY ATTORNEY AND COUNTY AUDITOR

MINUTES:

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 23, 2020 WAS MADE BY ROSS, SECONDED BY PARKER, APPROVED 3-0

HIGHWAY MATERIAL BIDS/QUOTES:

THE COMMISSIONERS SAID ANDERSON WILL HAVE THE RESULTS AT NEXT MONDAY'S MEETING.

RECEIVE BIDS / SNOW REMOVAL & MOWING:

THE COMMISSIONERS RECEIVED AND OPENED 3 BIDS FOR THE SNOW REMOVAL & MOWING:

FREEDOM LAWCARE: MOWING ONLY \$6,750.00 ESTIMATED 26 MOWING'S

MILLER LAWCARE: MOWING \$50.00 PER CUT, SHRUB MAINTENANCE \$ 100.00,

SNOW REMOVAL \$70.00 PER HOUR/ \$130.00 PER HOUR
HEAVY EQUIPMENT, SHOVEL - \$55.00 PER HOUR, \$18.00 PER
BAG ICE MELT

MCINTIRE LANDSCAPE: MOWING \$200.00 PER EVENT, SNOW REMOVAL 1-3
INCHES \$350.00 PER EVENT

MOTION TO TAKE UNDER ADVISEMENT FOR ONE WEEK WAS MADE BY PARKER, SECONDED BY ROSS, APPROVED 3-0

PLAN COMMISSION/ NEW FEE ORDINANCE:

DESIREE PRESENTED THE COMMISSIONERS WITH ORDINANCE 2020-25 THAT WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2021. THIS ORDINANCE IS TO AMEND THE FEE SCHEDULE FOR THE SHELBY COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION AND SHELBY COUNTY BUILDING INSPECTOR. MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY ROSS, SECONDED BY PARKER, APPROVED 3-0

UTILITY REQUEST:

VECTREN IS REQUESTING TO PUT IN A NEW SERVICE AT 1505 N. KNIGHTSTOWN RD. THIS IS FOR 225 FT OF NEW GAS LINE AND WILL BE AN OPEN TRENCH.

MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY PARKER, SECONDED BY ROSS, APPROVED 3-0

ANNEX II BLDG/ CHANGE ORDER #3:

COMMISSIONER NIGH PRESENTED CHANGE ORDER #3 FOR THE NEW ANNEX II BUILDING. THE CHANGE ORDER IS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,723.00. THIS IS FOR THE WIDENING AND REPOSITIONING OF 6 WINDOWS ON THE SECOND FLOOR EAST ELEVATION. MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY PARKER, SECONDED BY ROSS, APPROVED 3-0

MCGREGOR ROAD / FINANCIAL COMMITMENT LETTER:

THE COUNTY IS APPLYING FOR A FEDERAL GRANT TO HELP WITH THE MCGREGOR ROAD PROJECT FOR POTENTIAL BUSINESS. THIS IS FOR FEDERAL MATCH. MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY ROSS, SECONDED BY PARKER, APPROVED 3-0

COMMISSIONER ROSS OUT AT THIS TIME.

GALLAHUE MENTAL HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT:

GEORGE HURD, DEVON JOHNSON & JENNIFER WEIMER PRESENTED THE COMMISSIONERS WITH THEIR ANNUAL UPDATE. THEY HANDED OUT PACKETS WITH INFORMATION WITH STATISTICS. TOTAL PEOPLE SEEN THIS YEAR SO FAR 925 ADULTS, 231 YOUTH, SERVICES HAVE BEEN FOR MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION TREATMENTS. THEY WENT OVER SOME OF THE PROGRAMS THEY HAVE BEEN RUNNING. THE JAIL INTERVENTION PROGRAM (JIP) THIS PROGRAM HAS BEEN DOING VERY WELL AND THEY HAVE PRETTY MUCH TAKEN IT OVER. THEY HAVE TALKED WITH JARED SIPES, BECAUSE HE FEELS THAT MAYBE SOME OF THE OTHER INMATES COULD USE SOME THERAPY. THEY HAVE COME UP WITH A PLAN TO TRY TO HELP SOME OF THE OTHER INMATES OTHER THAN CRISIS MANAGEMENT. THEY CURRENTLY HAVE GONE TO 12 HOUR SHIFTS AND HAVE HIRED NEW EMPLOYEES. THIS WAS INFORMATION ONLY; NO ACTION WAS NEEDED.

SOLAR PLANT SPEAKERS:

KYLE BARLOW:

KYLE PRESENTED A MAP OF THE SHELBY COUNTY TOWNSHIPS. HE ADVISED THE TOWNSHIPS IN RED HAVE CONFIRMED SOLICITATION BY COMMERCIAL SOLAR DEVELOPERS. ANY TOWNSHIP WITH AN ASTERISK HAS A PENDING SOLAR DEVELOPMENT OR AN INTERCONNECTION REQUEST TO THE ELECTRICITY GRID. WE DO NOT HAVE ANY LIMITS ON SIZE PER PROJECT OR HOW MUCH OF OUR COUNTY CAN BE ENCOMPASSED BY SOLAR PANELS AND BATTERY STORAGE. IT'S NO WONDER SPOWER, RANGER POWER, HECATE & TENASKA ARE ALL HERE ATTEMPTING TO PLACE THEIR LARGEST PROJECTS IN SHELBY COUNTY. WELCOME TO SOLAR COUNTY. YOU WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR THIS ONE. THE GOVERNMENT THAT ALLOWED OUR AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY TO BE DESTROYED. DON'T WORRY, WE ARE JUST REACTING TO A PANIC. THINK IT'S TIME FOR A MORATORIUM? FOR THE LAST FOUR MONTHS, YOU HAVE HEARD FROM A DIVERSE GROUP OF SPEAKERS IN OPPOSITION OF INDUSTRIAL SOLAR ON PRIME FARmland. A FIREMAN, TEACHER, SOCIAL HEALTH WORKER, STAY AT HOME MOM, DOCTOR, REAL ESTATE BROKER, RENEWABLE ENERGY ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION/ELECTRICAL ENGINEER, CEO OF ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, COMMUNITY PLANNER, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, IRRIGATION SPECIALIST, HOMESTEADER, RADIOLOGIST, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, STUDENT, SMALL BUSINESS OWNER, PASTOR, AND LETS NOT FORGET MANY FARMERS AND FARM MANAGERS. ALL OF THESE SPEAKERS HAVE GIVEN FACTUAL INFORMATION THAT HIGHLIGHTS DIFFERENT NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF SOLAR PLANS ON AGRICULTURAL LAND. AGAIN, THIS FURTHER PROVES THAT IT'S NOT ABOUT THE EDUCATION OR RESEARCH OF THOSE THAT PLEAD FOR HELP. IN SHELBY COUNTY, IT'S MORE ABOUT WHO COMES TO SPEAK AND WHAT TIES THEY HAVE. I RECENTLY READ AN ARTICLE FROM THE CAROLINA JOURNAL TITLED "ARE COUNTIES TAKING THE LEAD IN SOLAR PLANT

PUSHBACK? THIS ARTICLE WAS EMAILED TO ALL OF YOU LAST WEEK, HAVE YOU READ IT? REMEMBER NORTH CAROLINA IS NUMBER 2 IN SOLAR BEHIND CALIFORNIA. THE ARTICLE STATES AND I QUOTE “REDUCING PROPERTY VALUES OF OTHERS, CAUSING MORE AIR POLLUTION, AND CONTAMINATING GROUNDWATER ARE ALL “EXTERNAL” COSTS OF SOLAR POWER; THAT IS, THE SOLAR COMPANIES AREN’T PAYING FOR THEM – OTHERS EXTERNAL TO THE COMPANIES ARE. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SEEKS TO “INTERNALIZE” THOSE COSTS, MEANING TO HAVE THE POLLUTING COMPANY TO PAY FOR THEM.”

TWO COUNTIES IN NC HAVE PUSHED BACK-

HERTFORD COUNTY RECENTLY PASSED A MORATORIUM ON NEW SOLAR PLANT CONSTRUCTION. THE OTHER, STANLY COUNTY, WENT EVEN FURTHER, PASSING REGULATIONS THAT WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD INTERNALIZING THE COSTS SOLAR PLANTS HAD BEEN EXTERNALIZING. THE NEW REGULATIONS REQUIRE PROSPECTIVE SOLAR COMPANIES TO DO THE FOLLOWING.

1. BASELINE GROUNDWATER TESTING-CHANGES TO METAL CONCENTRATIONS
2. MONITORING WELLS BEFORE, DURING & AFTER OPERATION
3. NO SOLAR PANELS MAY CONTAIN PFA’S/GENX
4. SUFFICIENT RESOURCES & TRAINING FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT- FIREFIGHTING FOAM MUST BE PFA’S FREE
5. SUFFICIENT SETBACKS-OUR PLANNING COMMISSION IS PROPOSING 660 FOOT SETBACKS FROM STRUCTURES NOT IN PROJECT
6. IMPACT STUDY COMPLETED AT SOLAR COMPANIES EXPENSE
7. DECOMMISSIONING BOND TO COUNTY \$106,000 PER MEGAWATT OR 150% OF THE ESTIMATED COST OF REMOVAL-BECAUSE SOLAR PROJECTS ARE MADE UP OF LLC’S THAT QUICKLY DISSOLVE AND CARRY NO LIABILITY

AT THIS TIME, HE WENT OVER A DOCUMENT FROM FARM CREDIT SOLAR PANEL LEASES. THEY HAVE A CHECKLIST FOR LANDOWNERS. IS THIS HANDOUT THEY HAVE SUGGESTIONS FROM FARM CREDIT, LONG LIST OF CONCERNS, THEY HAVE DONE RESEARCH ON SOLAR LEASES. THEIR CONCERNS ADDRESS MANY OF OUR CONCERNS THAT SHOULD BE TOP CONCERNS FOR SHELBY COUNTY AS A WHOLE. KYLE LEFT COPIES FOR EACH COMMISSIONER. MR. NIGH YOU HAVE SAID THAT YOU PLACE A LOT OF FAITH IN THE PLANNING COMMISSION INVOLVING REVIEWING THE ORDINANCE. THE PUBLIC IS HOPING TO GIVE INPUT TOMORROW. IT WOULD BE A SHAME IF SOME OF THEIR CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS DON’T MAKE IT INTO THE ORDINANCE. THE PROTECTION OF OUR HOMES AND LAND ULTIMATELY WILL BE PLACED AT YOUR FEET. YOU HAVE REFUSED A MORATORIUM FOR MONTHS. I AM HOPEFUL THAT EACH OF YOU WILL VALUE THE HARD WORK OF YOUR VOTERS AND COLLEAGUES AND IN TUR PASS A STRONGER SOLAR ORDINANCE. BUT I AM ALSO NOT NAÏVE IN THE FACT THAT SOLAR DISCUSSION HAS BEEN AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS BY TWO OF YOU. I HOPE YOU WILL DO WHAT’S BEST FOR THE CITIZENS OF SHELBY COUNTY. ALL OF THEIR PROPERTY RIGHTS AND NOT WHAT’S IN THE BEST INTEREST OF A HANDFUL OF SOLAR COMPANIES. LASTLY, THIS GROUP OF CONCERNED CITIZENS ARE ORGANIZED, EDUCATED AND DEDICATED. WE AREN’T GOING AWAY. WE WILL BE HERE TO SEE THIS ALL THE WAY THROUGH, I PROMISE.

MEGAN RUSH:

TOMORROW IS A BIG DAY FOR MANY OF US COUNTY CITIZENS. TOMORROW THE PLANNING COMMISSION WILL VOTE TO FINALIZE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS ORDINANCE. IF THEY VOTE TO APPROVE THE CHANGES, YOU THREE WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED REVISED ORDINANCE. THOUGH THE PROPOSED CHANGES ARE MUCH BETTER THAN THE CURRENT ORDINANCE, THERE IS STILL ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. ONE TOPIC THAT IS NOT COVERED IN THE PROPOSED CHANGES INCLUDES LIMITED COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS FROM TAKING OVER THE WHOLE COUNTY. TODAY I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU WHY THAT IS IMPORTANT AND A LIMITATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED.

ACCORDING TO THE 2017 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE SHELBY COUNTY HAS 220,477 ACRES OF FARMLAND. SO ARE 0.77% OF THOSE ACRES ARE RESERVED FOR UPWARDS OF 30 OR 40 YEARS OF COMMERCIAL SOLAR USE. AS YOU HAVE HEARD SEVERAL TIMES, THERE ARE AT LEAST 3 OTHER SOLAR COMPANIES THAT ARE TRYING TO SIGN UP LAND IN OUR COUNTY. IF EACH OF THOSE 3 COMPANIES TRY TO CREATE PROJECTS EQUAL TO THE RANGER POWER SITE, THAT BRINGS OUR TOTAL TO 7,200 ACRES WHICH IS 3.09% OF FARMLAND CONSUMED BY COMMERCIAL SOLAR. LET'S SAY EVERY 5 YEARS 3 MORE COMPANIES WANT TO DO THE SAME THING. THERE IS NOTHING STOPPING THEM ORDINANCE WISE FROM DOING SO. AFTER 20 YEARS YOU HAVE 28,800 ACRES CONSUMED BY COMMERCIAL SOLAR. THAT IS EQUAL TO 12.36% OF THE FARMLAND OUR COUNTY HAD IN 2017. YOU MAY THINK THAT COULD NEVER HAPPEN. HOWEVER, THERE IS NOTHING STOPPING THAT FROM HAPPENING BASED ON THE CURRENT ORDINANCE AND THE ONE WITH PROPOSED CHANGES THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED TOMORROW EVENING. 12% OVER 20 YEARS DOESN'T SEEM LIKE A LOT. ACCORDING TO THE 2017 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE FROM 2012 TO 2017 OUR COUNTY FARMLAND WAS REDUCED BY 12,582 ACRES. THAT IS A REDUCTION OF 5.4%. NOW THE CENSUS DOESN'T SAY THE REASON FOR THE 5.4%, BUT I ASSUME IT IS FROM LAND BEING REZONED DUE TO RESIDENTIAL HOMES BEING BUILT AND THE CITIES AND TOWNS OF OUR COUNTY EXPANDING. IF WE ADD THE SAME RATE OF REDUCTION TO THE RATE OF FARMLAND REDUCTION BY 3 COMPANIES WITH 1,800 ACRE PROJECTS EVERY 5 YEARS AFTER 20 YEARS, WE WILL BE DOWN TO 142,065 ACRES OF FARMLAND. THAT IS A REDUCTION OF 33.64% IN 20 YEARS. PER THE 2019 CENSUS 602 PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTY ARE EMPLOYED AS FARMERS. THAT IS 2.5% OF OUR COUNTY POPULATION. IF OUR FARMLAND IS REDUCED BY 33.54% IN 20 YEARS, THAT COULD MEAN 202 PEOPLE WOULD NO LONGER BE FARMERS. THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE THE SEVERAL THOUSAND PEOPLE THAT ARE EMPLOYED BY BUSINESSES THAT DIRECTLY SUPPORT FARMERS. THOSE BUSINESSES INCLUDE FERTILIZER PLANTS, SEED COMPANIES, SEED SALESMEN, IRRIGATION INSTALLERS, GRAIN BIN DEALERS, AND INSTALLERS, TRACTOR AND IMPLEMENT DEALERS, EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS, FARM MACHINERY MECHANICS, ELECTRICIANS, TRUCK DRIVERS, GRAIN ELEVATORS, FEED SUPPLIERS, ETHANOL PLANTS, SOY BEAN PROCESSING FACILITIES, AND THOSE ARE JUST THE BUSINESSES IN SHELBY COUNTY, AND I'M PROBABLY EVEN LEAVING OUT A FEW. THERE ARE ALSO BUSINESSES IN NEIGHBORING COUNTIES THAT SUPPORT SHELBY COUNTY FARMERS. IF WE ALLOW OUR FARM GROUND TO BE CONSUMED BY COMMERCIAL SOLAR, WE ARE LIMITING THE BUSINESSES THAT EMPLOY SO MANY OF OUR COUNTY RESIDENTS. AFTER 20 YEARS HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL NO LONGER HAVE A JOB, BECAUSE THE BUSINESSES HAVE TO DOWNSIZE DUE TO REDUCED FARMLAND? THERE ARE MANY OTHER WAYS THAT THE INSTALLATION OF COMMERCIAL SOLAR FACILITIES HAVE A TRICKLE-

DOWN EFFECT ON OUR COUNTY OVER TIME. FOR EXAMPLE, TAKING LARGE AMOUNTS OF FARMLAND OFF THE MARKET FOR FARMERS TO RENT WILL RESULT IN HIGH INFLATION RATES OF OTHER FARM RENT VALUE. THAT CAN BE GOOD FOR THE LANDOWNERS, BUT CAN ALSO LEAD TO MANY FARMERS CALLING IT QUILTS. ANOTHER EXAMPLE INCLUDES WHEN LAND IS CONSUMED BY SOLAR, IT WILL LIMIT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT WILL CHOOSE TO MOVE INTO THE NEARBY AREA. THAT WILL POTENTIALLY CAUSE AN INCREASE IN CITY AND TOWN RESIDENTS, WHILE ALSO LIMITING OR EVEN REDUCING THE RESIDENTS THAT WILL SEND CHILDREN TO COUNTY SCHOOLS. OUR COUNTY SCHOOLS ARE ALREADY MOSTLY SMALL. WHILE MANY PEOPLE, INCLUDING MYSELF, LOVE THAT ASPECT OF IT, I DON'T THINK THAT SCHOOLS CAN BE VERY SUSTAINABLE IF THEY GET MUCH SMALLER. IF ALL GOES WELL TOMORROW, NEXT WEEK YOU COULD HAVE A PROPOSED REVISED ORDINANCE TO APPROVE OR REJECT FOR COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS. YOU HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS TO WHAT IS PROPOSED. IF A LIMIT OF FARMLAND ALLOWED TO BE CONSUMED BY COMMERCIAL SOLAR IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED REVISED ORDINANCE, I ASK YOU TO PLEASE CONSIDER RECOMMENDING IT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION. THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT OF THE PROJECTS IS ONE THAT IS HARD TO PREDICT, BUT I PREDICT THAT IT WILL GET OUT OF HAND QUICKER THAN ANY OF US REALIZE.

AT THIS TIME COMMISSIONER PARKER MOTIONED TO DELAY THE PUBLIC HEARING AND PUT A MORATORIUM IN PLACE DUE TO THE COVID ISSUES AND NOT ALLOWING ALL CITIZENS INTO THE MEETING TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK. NIGH SAID HE WAS NOT GOING TO SECOND THIS MOTION.

SHERIFF:

MAJOR HOLDER PRESENTED THE COMMISSIONER WITH THE ANNUAL PLYMATE AGREEMENT FOR THEIR MATS & MOPS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7,614.88, MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY PARKER, SECONDED BY NIGH, APPROVED 2-0

HIGHWAY:

ANDERSON ADVISED TRISSLER IS WANTING TO SHUT DOWN 475 E AT VANDALIA ROAD TO START ON THE CULVERT LATER THIS WEEK. MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY PARKER, SECONDED BY NIGH, APPROVED 2-0

CLAIMS:

PAYROLL – MOTION TO APPROVE PAYROLL WAS MADE BY PARKER, SECONDED BY ROSS, APPROVED 3-0

TRANSFER/ADDITIONALS:

N/A

MISCELLANEOUS:

SHARP COPIERS MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT/ MAGISTRATE COURT:

THE COUNTY AUDITOR PRESENTED THE COMMISSIONERS WITH AN AGREEMENT TO ADD THE MAGISTRATE COURTS COPIERS AND PRINTERS TO THE COUNTIES MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT. MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY ROSS, SECONDED BY PARKER, APPROVED 3-0

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD. A MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE BY PARKER SECONDED BY NIGH, APPROVED 2-0

AYE:

NAYE:

ATTEST:

AMY L. GLACKMAN

SHELBY COUNTY AUDITOR