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## **Public Hearing Meeting Minutes – MN Power Solar Park Thursday July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

*Note: This meeting was recorded and will be kept in electronic records with the minutes.*

**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call:** Chair Booth called the Public Hearing Meeting to order at 6:00 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Those present at the meeting were Supervisors Greg Booth, Arlene Schmit, Yvette Adelman-Dullinger, Greg Bennett, Bob Johnson, and Clerk Jenna Ruggles. Residents present included Diane Peck, Paula Braun, Jeff Baillif, and Les McClelland. Dan McCartney was also present from Minnesota Power.

**Purpose of Hearing** is to discuss and take comments on the application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Minnesota Power to put up a Solar Farm on their land.

Supervisor Booth read the Public Notice and Clerk Ruggles entered it into the record of proceeding. Supervisor Booth announced that the Affidavit of Publication was in the Brainerd Dispatch on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and Clerk Ruggles entered it into the record.

Supervisor Booth welcomed the public and allowed Mr. McCartney time to explain his permit application. After Supervisor Booth opened it up for comments from the public.

Discussion included the following questions and concerns.

- The trees along the South side of the property: Residents, Diane Peck and Jeff Baillif would like to see them stay; MN Power says they are too tall. The Board suggested they add a condition to plant trees or shrubs that are max of 6-8 feet tall instead of the fence and vines as a compromise.
- The service in the area was discussed by Diane Peck and how it is spotty at times. Mr. McCartney explained that there are 2 connections to each transmitter and if one is overloaded the other kicks in, which is why the outages are so short. This solar farm will not help this outage issue that residents are seeing.
- There was a question from Paula Braun, if they will relocate the animals that are currently using the land and the answer is no, the animals will move on their own as construction begins.
- Residents, Jeff Baillif and Paula Braun are worried about the entrances off Gull River Drive – Mr. McCartney explained that they do need to have one maintenance entrance on the South side for some larger equipment that needs a larger area to make turns. This entrance will not be the main access and will be used mainly during construction and then randomly for maintenance needs. The main entrance will be on the West side of the property off the County Road.
- Les McClelland asked if MN Power will continue to maintain the vines and shrubs/trees that they plant, and the answer is yes.
- Jeff Baillif also asked how this will affect the resident's property values; Supervisor Booth let them know that Cass County would be able to help answer that question.



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- Diane Peck asked if solar farms have a lot of vandalism, and the answer was no – Mr. McCourtney has not heard or seen of much vandalism at other solar farms.
- Mr. McCourtney suggested that the Board add a Safety Plan to the list of conditions.
- Jeff Baillif asked if there were any issues for Camp Ripley as far as glare off the panels during their flight path. Mr. McCourtney explained that they do glare analysis prior to developing solar farms if it is needed and this location was outside the requirement area.
- Mr. McCourtney suggested that the Board add a Discontinuation Plan to the list of conditions as well.
- Lighting at the site was discussed and it was mentioned to use downlighting.

Supervisor Bennett **moved to approve the Conditional Use Permit Application for MN Power with the Conditions that they will...**

- **Plant trees or shrubs no taller than 6' - 8' on the South side of property with the fence and vines. Will also place fencing and vines on the West side of property and part way up the East side of the property.**
- **Develop and follow a construction safety plan.**
- **Use the South side entrance (rock entrance) as a maintenance only access and follow all Sylvan Township's Driveway Permit and Standards.**
- **Develop a decommission plan.**
- **Pave the main access entrance on the West side of the property at least 50 feet in from the County Road.**
- **Follow Sylvan Township's Standards for all lighting, using down lighting fixtures.**
- **Maintain all plantings throughout the time of permit.**
- **Meet all other county, state, and federal regulations.**

seconded by Supervisor Adelman-Dullinger. The conditions are listed above.

Mr. McCourtney indicated that they hope to start the process in late August, early September.

**Adjournment:** Supervisor Schmit **moved to adjourn**, seconded by Supervisor Adelman-Dullinger and the motion carried with the meeting adjourning at 6:55 pm.

Minutes submitted by,

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Jenna Ruggles, Clerk

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Greg Booth, Chair

These minutes were approved as amended on August 19, 2021 by Supervisor Schmit, seconded by Supervisor Adelman-Dullinger and the motion carried with Supervisors Booth, Adelman-Dullinger, & Schmit.

Amendments: Spelling correction.

Date: 08.19.2021