

San Francisco Township Monthly Meeting  
August 21, 2017

The monthly meeting of the San Francisco Township Board was held on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Board members convened at 6:45 to review accounts payable and authorize payments.

Chairman Doug Weber called the business meeting to order at 7:00. Present were Board members, Larry Schmidt, Doug Weber and Kevin Lundquist, Treasurer Denise Andersen, Clerk Heidi Schmidt and 16 residents.

The July minutes were reviewed. Approved with 3 changes. Mining Par 3: setback change would happen at restoration. The footprint change could be added at that time. P&Z US Solar: Residents within 1000 ft were notified. New Bus: Land owners have hired an attorney to file a complaint against the county and the township **about the Steve Kahmeyer dogs, cattle and possible small business issues in their area.**

The minutes will be posted on the website.

Treasurer reported \$244,384.73 in checking and \$269,190.87 in CDs. Report was accepted.

**Planning and Zoning:** David Watts was present from US Solar to ask for township approval of a CUP allowing a solar garden on a 46 acre parcel on Market Ave. Parcel is owned by Woesthoffs. David stated there would be minimal impact on the township road. They were willing to make a road use agreement using recommendations from the board. Visual impact would be limited by plant screening along 2 sides. According to his research community solar gardens do not have any of the circumstances that create stray voltage and it has not been proven to affect dairy herds. US Solar will meet or exceed all county requirements for such a project.

Abbreviated comments from residents: US Solar responses:

Jim Forberg. - Closest neighbor. Strongly opposed. It would be 90 ft from his back door. Industry does not belong on Ag land.

Chris Trenary (Jim's Daughter) - Presented letter to supervisors in opposition. Every Bedroom would overlook solar panels. Changes family legacy.

Dave/US Solar: County allows solar on Ag land. They will plant native prairie grass with dogwood hedge on 2 sides.

Larry Johnson – 1 mile north. Opposed. Solar panels are not an Ag use.

Teresa Hoverson – Opposed. Current location will look like an alien in otherwise beautiful Ag land.

Roy Bryan – Joyce Rd. Opposed. Not opposed to growth, but questions economics of it all? What benefit is it to area? Land owner benefits and community is the loser.

Dave/US Solar: Subscribers will get electrical discount. Mostly schools. Environment wins.

Lee Muehlenhardt – Owns dairy less than ½ mile from site. Will be looking at back side with no screening.

Concerned about magnetic fields and stray voltage. Always present in electrical power plants, which this is.

Jim Johnson – 70 resident of township. Parents owned current site. Speaks to common sense. This is project location does not use common sense. Not a good use of the land.

Dave/US Solar: It is only 9 acres.

Kellen Schmidt – Linesman. Lives within 1 mile. US Solar denied their other project within 1 mile at the last meeting. He knows that inverters make a loud humming noise that will be heard by neighbors. How can they guarantee high quality construction of wiring when they take the lowest bid for construction?

Dave/US Solar: The inverter is not that loud.

Tony Chevalier - South of project. Opposed. Too close to local residence.

Einar Karnitz – Opposed. Farm land should not be used for industrial use. Find another location.

Bob Davis – Lives less than 1000 ft from site. Opposed. Was never notified of any meetings etc. What happens to the 6 months of the year when the screening has no leaves? Everyone will see the eye sore.

Public Comment was closed.

Larry commented that the property owner lives off site and is not impacted by the noise or sight of the project. Also recited the townships written obligation to keep Ag land as Ag land. As an electrician he knows stray voltage happens. This location on the 46 acre site is being considered because it is convenient for the owners farming and US Solars access to power lines. It is not convenient for any of the rest of the community. Kevin also recited that the townships 2030 comp plan states that we preserve Ag land. This project goes against that objective. The impact on the neighborhood needs to be considered.

Doug asked where the invertors were located. He knows that phone invertors are very loud. Dave did not have a project map. Also asked when the road agreement would be made? Dave stated they would only consider the recommendation from the county permit regarding road use. Lastly Doug noted that the new county regulations state that the project have a 500' setback from residences. This project was applied for before that went into affect. US Solar is not being a good neighbor, as Dave repeated claimed, if they do not abide by this new 500' setback rule.

Larry made a motion to deny the CUP application on the basis of the 2030 township comp plan and it's proximity to residences and a dairy operation. Doug Seconded. Motion carried.

**Mining:** Terry Overn reported that they are not hauling with any extra trucks or using the extra time in the morning right now. They would like to keep the option open for another month with the stipulation that they contact the board if they intend to operate earlier or with more trucks. Motion made to extend. Passed.

**Road and Bridge Report:** Doug has scouted out the parsnip weed that is highly toxic to humans and horses. There is some along 166<sup>th</sup> St and on Market Ave. It needs to be sprayed before it goes to seed. **To late this year, but mapped for next spring.** Doug will contact a company that will spray. He will contact them. Kevin did road work on Beverly Dr. The recent rain has washed most of the gravel into the ditch. Quote for the tarring of Beverly Dr corner does not include the culvert. This will be added and reviewed at the next meeting so it can be done this fall.

**Old Business:** Board needs to review the generalized land use plan for the 2040 comp plan by December and submit changes to county.

Heidi noted that there is grant money available for repair and restoration of historic public buildings such as our town hall. The ADHOC Committee that is being formed could look into that.

**New Business:** Hancock township has contacted us about combining polling places at West Union Church. This would be a central location for both townships and it would have a restroom and kitchen available for election workers. A resolution needs to be adopted soon to facilitate this for the 2018 election. Heidi will contact the church and see if they would be agreeable to such an arrangement.

**Notes from the clerk:**

The 5+ yr old township printer is not working. Instead of replacement the board approved a \$10/mo allowance for use of Heidi's personal printer.

The website is not accessible for some updates. Still working on getting everything on there.

The letter was written to Boechers concerning the trellis that is in the right of way. They were asked to remove it when they applied for a variance last spring. Mr Boecher was present with pictures of many other right of way violations. It was discussed that the township has not been proactive in sighting anyone for this and will make an effort to get the guidelines published and then note dangers when they do their spring road tour meeting. Board will review and adopt MAT recommendations regarding right of way at the next meeting. Public hearing for the US Solar permit is August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

MAT annual meeting is in Rochester Nov 16-18.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:59 pm

Respectfully submitted by, Heidi Schmidt - San Francisco Township Clerk