

City of Mayer
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 11, 2017

Commission Members Present: Chairperson Tom Stifter, and Commissioners Les Hahn, Patty Lanting, Barney Johnson and Don Wachholz.

Commission Members Absent: Council Liaison Erick Boder and Commissioner Rod Maetzold.

Others Present: Evan Carlson from Innovative Power Systems, Larry Olson and numerous residents.

Staff Present: Planning Consultant John Anderson of Municipal Development Group, LLC

CALL MEETING TO ORDER.

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairperson Stifter.

ADOPT AGENDA.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Chairperson Stifter and seconded by Commissioner Hahn. Motion carried 5/0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

A motion to approve the April 4, 2017 Planning Commission minutes was made by Commissioner Hahn with one correction and seconded by Commissioner Wachholz. Motion carried 5/0.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF A PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A SOLAR GARDEN IN WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP.

At 6:34 PM, Planning Consultant Anderson introduced Evan Carlson of Innovative Power Systems, to discuss the proposed Solar Garden in Watertown Township just north of the City of Mayer and west of State Trunk Highway 25.

Evan Carlson stated Innovative Power Systems is based out of Roseville, Minnesota and use to do a lot of rooftop solar panels. He stated that the solar garden being proposed in Watertown township is a community solar system that people or groups can buy subscriptions to. It is a net metering system and will be one megawatt on about eight acres. He stated that Xcel Energy now has a cap on projects and they can only be one megawatt where they use to be able to be larger. He also stated that Carver County has just changed its regulations making it harder to locate these types of solar gardens and that these systems need to be next to phase three power and near a substation. He stated that Carver County does not allow solar gardens in Ag Preserve so it tends to push these systems closer to the municipalities. He stated this proposed site is to be leased from Larry Olson and that in the last day Watertown Township recommended denial of this project.

Commissioner Lanting asked about the timing and length of the lease.

Evan Carlson stated that it is about a one to two year design phase then a 25 to 35 year lease for operating purposes.

Commissioner Hahn asked how many total panels there would be.

Evan Carlson stated that there would be just under 4,000 panels. He said these panels would be close to a home and that the homeowner is against it and was in the audience tonight.

Commissioner Wachholz asked about subscribing to the process.

Evan Carlson said in this case Annandale school district and Minnetonka school district along with one other school district has subscribed to this proposed solar garden and that individuals could subscribe to this solar garden as well. He also stated that if the solar garden is not approved on this site, that he has another site just east of State Trunk Highway 25 that he has a lease on that he would look to try to get approved. He said this site would be located in a created wetland and would bring this property onto the tax rolls.

Planning Consultant Anderson stated that at this time the proposal is in Watertown Township and that Carver County and the township were the decision making jurisdictions. He stated that the City of Mayer is reviewing this to provide feedback since it is so close to the City boundaries and this property is located in the future growth area of the City. He said that if the site is denied by the County, and the applicant proceeded forward with site B east of State Trunk Highway 25, that the City of Mayer would have jurisdiction over that site since an agreement was made with the Township to have zoning jurisdiction over that property even though it still remained in the township. He also stated that the site B location would have to adhere to the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act, along with any shoreland regulation and floodplain regulations that may apply since part of the site is a shoreland overlay and floodplain overlay area. He stated that both locations are in the future growth area of the City of Mayer and that they are both guided for residential uses and that typically in municipalities, uses like solar gardens are permitted in more industrial or commercial settings.

Commissioner Hahn made a motion to recommend opposing the locations on both the east and west side of State Trunk Highway 25.

Larry Olson, the property owner, stated that they purchased the property forty years ago and are looking to be able to cash flow the property by leasing it for a solar garden. He said they tried to sell the property but they had no takers to purchase the site.

Chairperson Stifter seconded the motion by Commissioner Hahn to oppose the locations on both the east and west side of State Trunk Highway 25 for a solar garden and that it may be more well suited for a area that is not guided for residential. Motion carried 4/1 with Commissioner Wachholz voting no.

UPDATE ON THE 2018 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE.

At 7:40 PM Planning Consultant Anderson give a update as to what the next steps will be in the comprehensive plan update.

NEXT MEETING.

Next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, June 6, 2017.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT.

Nothing presented.

ADJOURNMENT.

A motion was made by Chairperson Stifter and seconded by Commissioner Wachholz to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 PM. Motion carried 5/0.