

LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
CEDAR RAPIDS, LINN COUNTY, IOWA
TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2021 1:10 P.M.

The Board met in session at the Linn County Jean Oxley Public Service Center.
Present: Chairperson Walker, Vice Chairperson Rogers and Supervisor Zumbach. Board members voting "AYE" unless otherwise noted.

Chairperson Walker called the meeting to order.

Motion by Rogers, seconded by Zumbach to approve Claims for AP checks #71002885-#71003039 in the amt. of \$863,780.82; AP re-issue checks #71003040-#71003041 in the amt. of \$1,620.00; and AP ACH in the amt. of \$1,492,062.84.

Sara Bearrows, Budget Dir., discussed Linn County Attorney Fiscal Year 2021 budget surplus in the amt. of \$150,000, They are asking the Board to carry over the budget surplus.

Gayle Keiser, County Atty. Office Mgr., stated that they would like to use the surplus money for the conversion cost of software. The Board will make a decision tomorrow.

Discussion took place regarding an eighteen month moratorium on utility scale solar.

Danny Hemminger, 6219 Ridgewood Meadows Ln NE, Cedar Rapids, stated that he encourages the Board to vote against the moratorium. He is in favor of the county deciding if the project is appropriate and is for solar power in Linn County.

Don White, 602 Blue Heron Ct NE, Cedar Rapids, stated that he is a strong advocate for renewable energy. He does not want to stop industrial scale solar projects. If the Board moves forward with the moratorium, he feels they are setting a precedent. He urged the Board to not approve the moratorium.

Jerry Rozeboom, 5206 N Center Point Rd, Walker, stated that he is advocating for the moratorium. He feels that they need to research all of the ramifications of this project before moving forward as well as reviewing the NextEra contracts. The Board needs to take care of those that elected them to their positions. He urged the Board to approve the moratorium.

Danielle Hall, 2490 Hollenbeck Rd, Palo, voiced issues regarding the cost of the energy and needing backup energy sources. She asked Board members to review an article she printed off and handed to them.

Wayne Buelow, 4646 Yates Rd, Palo, stated that he has enjoyed the wildlife and views over the years and this solar project wants to take away that farm ground. He asked about issues with the panels breaking and what the ramifications are. He asked that the Board consider those who live in the rural area.

Steve Mason, 6547 Benton Linn Rd, Palo, addressed solar fires and how the soil would be handled after a fire noting that fire data is underreported. He also highlighted the decline in volunteer firefighters.

Eric VanKerckhove, 111 Driftwood Cir, Palo, stated that renewable energy is moving in the right direction but change can be difficult. He voiced concerns with the ability for Palo to grow and the measureable effects due to this solar project. He noted that government moves much slower and it is by design. He asked if they should move slow with this project or quickly just so they don't miss this opportunity.

Kendra Aarhus, 111 Driftwood Cir, Palo, stated that she has been closely following the industrial scale solar plants proposed in Linn County. She highlighted comments made by Charlie Nichols and the number of acres that would be affected. They are scrambling to urge the Board to pass the moratorium to call attention to transparency noting that the Board only gets one chance to approve it. They are questioning NextEra's aggressive timeline and their intentions with the project.

Traci Nelson, 3311 Pleasant Creek Rd, Palo, stated that she first heard about this proposed solar project in May of this year. She shared thoughts behind the reasoning for NextEra's placement of the proposed project. She also highlighted reasons that the project should not be situated in Linn County. She is asking that the Board approves the 18 month moratorium.

Lance Lillibridge, 5736 28th Ave, Vinton, stated that he is in favor of the moratorium. He provided background information regarding farms in Iowa including the size, crops that were planted and harvested and farm employees. He is not against solar but feels this project would be destroying the farm land.

Tom Robinson, 2094 Linn Delaware Rd, Coggon, voiced his concerns about high quality farm ground being impacted by the proposed project along with tile and drainage issues. He strongly encourages the Board to approve the moratorium.

Marc Franke, 4205 Vista Rd, Ely, stated that he is in favor of this project noting that he has had solar panel on his property for eight years now with no issues. He also highlighted that the Derecho did not affect his panels. He is not in favor of the moratorium.

David Gustafson, 311 12th St SW, Cedar Rapids, stated that the Board passed a climate action resolution in 2019 and believes this proposed project is their moral duty. He is not in favor of the moratorium.

John Zakrasek, 531 Lawndale Dr SE, Cedar Rapids, stated that they have a responsibility to get clean energy back online and this proposed project would be a great start. He added that farmer's get to share the income that the solar energy creates. The Supervisors have the power to take action.

Kimberly Dickey, 2601 Bever Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, stated that the proposed moratorium is a halt. Utility scale solar may be new to Linn County but it is not new technology. Linn County's ordinance is stringent and the Supervisors have the authority to enforce it and the permits that are applied for. Renewable energy aspects will attract people to the community and she is competent that Linn County will exercise proper leadership. They are working to make it the best project for Palo.

Sara Alden, 4124 Greens Grove Rd, Center Point, stated that they requested the moratorium two weeks ago. Their concerns are regarding industrial scale solar and its impact on community resources, way of life, counties resources and growth for their future. She feels that they need additional time to understand the impact and a moratorium will not halt growth.

Charlie Nichols, Planning & Development Dir., explained the rezoning process for utility scale solar and the timeline for the review process.

Elena Wolford, Asst. County Attorney, stated that it is in their best interest to make a decision regarding a moratorium sooner rather than later.

Discussion continued among Board members noting that they are not for or against the moratorium. They are making an effort to reflect the needs of the county. Supervisor Zumbach would like to strengthen the ordinance before applications start coming in. The Board will make a decision tomorrow.

Public Comment: Don White, 602 Blue Herson Ct NE, Cedar Rapids, stated that he forgot to include his comments about landowner's voluntarily entering into agreements and their property rights.

Jerry Rozeboom, 5206 N Center Point Rd, Walker, spoke regarding developing parameters for renewable energy. He would like the Board to review all the input that has been received and the moratorium gives them a chance to do that. He would also like to know the plan for decommissioning of the solar panels and whose responsibility it is.

Kimberly Dickey, 2601 Bever Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, pointed out that in addition to Linn County's permitting process, they have to apply to the Iowa Utilities Board as well. Decommissioning is also included in their contracts. They are proud to be a partner in Iowa.

Nancy Patrilla, 3796 Alice Rd, Toddville, stated that it is their right whether or not to do solar and she does not understand how that will be addressed.

Lance Lillibridge, 5736 28th Ave, Vinton, shared that there is a huge push and he does not feel it is that great of a deal to go with solar.

Traci Nelson, 3311 Pleasant Creek Rd, Palo, stated that if regulations do not get changed before the applications are made they cannot go back. The zoning regulations are very vague and that should be taken into consideration.

Tom Robinson, 2094 Linn Delaware Rd, Coggon, stated that there will be drainage issues and asked who will be responsible. It is a huge deal and needs to be addressed.

Kelly Merta, 4194 Quail Ridge Rd, Center Point, stated that drainage district questions were asked in Palo noting that landowner rights need to be discussed. They need time to understand all of the different angles and to ensure good decisions are made for everyone involved.

Deb Yates, 2302 Young Rd., Palo, asked who is going to protect those that sign the contracts from NextEra. She feels that it needs to be included in Linn County's ordinance.

Laura Myres, 3372 64th Street Dr Lot 3, Palo, stated that there is a path to 100% renewable energy in Iowa by 2050 and that would require approximately 20% of the land mass of Iowa for solar and wind. What the Board decides to do with the moratorium sets the precedent for the next 30 years.

Brian Mullenbach, 4004 High Woods Rd, Center Point, stated that he volunteered his time at the Linn County Fair this past weekend to help educate people about this proposed project. He is disturbed by the amount of residents that knew nothing about this project and feels that the county needs more time to inform residents. They do have a petition with over 3,000 signatures. Mullenbach encourages the Board to put the moratorium in place.

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Adjournment at 3:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JOEL D. MILLER, Linn County Auditor
By: Amanda Hoy, Executive Assistant

Approved by:

STACEY WALKER, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors