

Minutes Thursday, June 29, 2023

Mr. Schroeder moved the adoption of the following Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, By the Board of County Commissioners of Putnam, Ohio, that to provide for the unanticipated revenues for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023, the following sums be and the same are hereby appropriated for the purpose for which expenditures are to be made during the fiscal year as follows:

County General

2 C TBA, Education and Travel..... \$287.00

Mr. Lammers seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Schroeder yes Mr. Lammers yes Mr. Schlumbohm absent
Comm. Jrl. 119, Page 123

Mr. Lammers moved the adoption of the following Resolution:

that to provide for the unanticipated revenues for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023, the following sums be and the same are hereby appropriated for the purpose for which expenditures are to be made during the fiscal year as follows:

Fund 001 County General

15 A 15A, Advances Out.... \$500.00

(For Ditch Maintenance)

and also

BE IT RESOLVED, That per the request of The Board of County Commissioners for the purpose of the Ditch Maintenance Fund the following advance of funds is authorized by the Board of County Commissioners:

<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
15 A 15A, Advance Out	Q 40, Advance In	\$500.00

(Advance for General Ditch Fund)

Mr. Schroeder seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Schroeder yes Mr. Lammers yes Mr. Schlumbohm absent
Comm. Jrl. 119, Page 124

Then/Now Purchase orders

Mr. moved to approve the then and now purchase orders.
Mr. seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Schroeder Mr. Lammers Mr. Schlumbohm
Exceptions: Mr. Schroeder Mr. Lammers Mr. Schlumbohm
Comm. Jrl. 119, Page

Purchase orders and travel requests

Mr. moved to approve the purchase orders and travel requests.

Mr. seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Schroeder Mr. Lammers Mr. Schlumbohm
Exceptions: Mr. Schroeder Mr. Lammers Mr. Schlumbohm

Nicole Schroeder, Adrian Schroeder and Sam Knueven met with Commissioners Schroeder and Lammers to discuss the solar panel project. Nicole had emailed the commissioners an agenda and a solar panel summary report that she put together called Solar Panel Projects: Information and Considerations pertaining to Powell Creek and Pike Run. The ladies said this was not the fault of the commissioners and they just want to make our office aware of all the information in the report. The rules were met on the legal side for communication but they feel it still didn't reach the majority of the public. The commissioners thanked them for their hard work on this. The ladies said this is more about the environmental impact with many of us making a living and raising kids in that area. The commissioners said they are on top of this now and more studying will need to be done. Please tell individuals to write or email their opinions on it so it can go in a file. The commissioners will be having a discussion down the road because they have the authority to stop solar now due to Senate Bill 52. The discussion now will be one of three things- 1) put a referendum on ballot, 2) do a 5-year moratorium, or 3) do like Allen Co. and do a total no for the county on any solar. The ladies said that the petition they have on Pike Run was sent to everyone in Liberty and Palmer and anyone bordering those areas in another township. So far, they have 284 signatures opposing the Pike Run Project and 186 signatures opposing solar panels in Putnam County. The commissioners would like the report and their surveys, economic data and any other information they would like to submit put with the minutes. The ladies have a Facebook page that is called Putnam County for the Restriction of Solar and Wind Farms.

Agenda from Nicole

Meeting Date: June 29, 2023

Location: Putnam County Commissioners office

Time: 8:30 am

Attendees:

Purpose of the meeting: Formal introductions and discussion on the Miller City Solar Projects

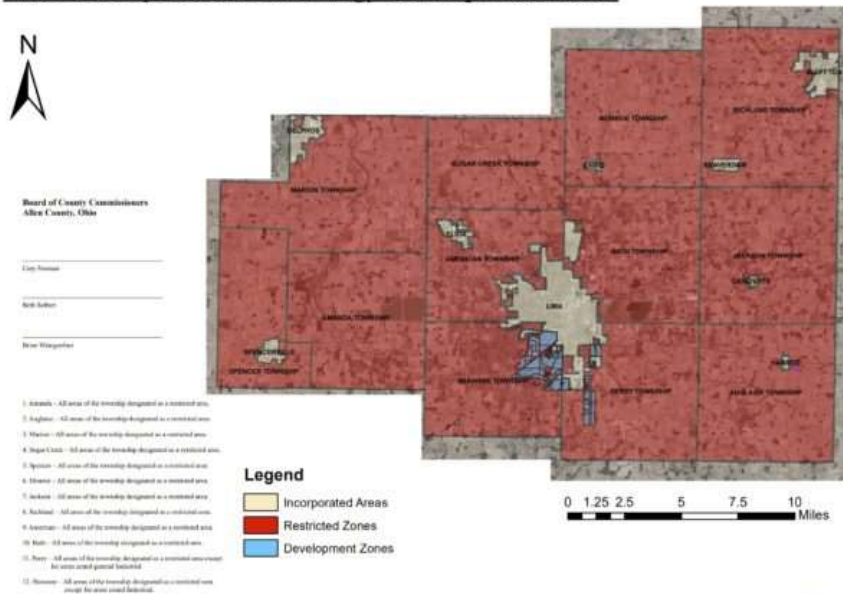
Proposed agenda:

8:30-8:35 am: Introductions

8:35-9:00 am: Discussion

1. Why were these project approved?
2. Communication and public notice is sorely lacking
3. Senate bill 52: Would the commissioners be open to excluding townships if not the entire county?
4. Opposition:
 - a. N.C. Cooperative Extension contends the cost of restoring farmland to optimum production after solar panels are removed can surpass the income from solar production. The landowner will have to spend time and money restoring soil fertility, checking for heavy metals and soil hardpans, and replacing tile. These are not included in Avangrid's decommissioning plan?
 - b. Other counties:
 - a. Allen: www.regulateohiosolar.com
 - b. Hardin: "cumulative effect"
 - c. Current counties with bans in effect: Seneca, Medina, Logan, Allen, Hancock, Auglaize, Union, Butler, Knox

Allen County Renewable Energy Development Zones



d. Phase 1: Powell Creek. What are the citizen rights? Commissioner rights? Mowing contracts? Trees planted?

Solar Panel Projects: Information and Considerations

Projects pertaining to this discussion: Powell Creek and Pike Run

Location: Miller City, Ohio

Date: June 29, 2023

Solar Panel Summary Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the various socioeconomic and environmental concerns when implementing large or “economically significant” solar farms in Putnam County, specifically the two projects in Miller City.

1. Solar Panels

- a. General information: Solar energy is an unreliable energy source. While some research that suggests it can be useful and productive in small areas like rooftops, abandoned parking lots, or factories, in large scale farms, the detriments far outweigh any supposed benefits. The PV panels churn out more energy than is needed- dumping it into the ground and creating “heat islands”. Panels ruin the soil depositing metals and leaving it unusable for generations. In fact it may take as many as 100 years to return a 6-inch layer of soil back to its original state. Solar panels emit toxic chemicals (cadmium, lead, copper, etc.) into groundwater and with run-off. Dead solar panels are considered toxic waste, a 150 MW facility will cost an estimated \$4.5 million to decommission.
Reference: Martin, C. (2019) *Solar Energy: Yes or No?*

2. Ohio Legislation

- a. SB 52: County commissioners have the ability to establish exclusion zones. 13 counties have done so (several with unanimous votes).
- b. HB 501

3. Revenue

- a. PILOT?
- b. Putnam county is already 25th out of 88 counties per capita income:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Ohio_locations_by_per_capita_income
- c. **Unemployment rate May 2023: 2.3%- how will this change with the loss of agriculture and agriculture-related business:**
 - i. Crop-spraying/fertilizers
 - ii. Seed
 - iii. Farm equipment sales and repair
 - iv. Crop insurance
 - v. **2022 OSU research estimates \$300 in variable expenses per acre (this is conservative- \$450 is more likely).**
 - vi. **5 year weighted averages conclude a loss of \$732,424-\$865,080 per year**
 - vii. **5 year weighted averages conclude a loss of \$21,972,730-\$25,952,418 over 30 years**

- d. **In 2022- 13,100,000 acres farmed. 94% of the acreage is cultivated:**
https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Putnam_County#:~:text=Ninety%2Dfour%20percent%20of%20the,harvests%20many%20of%20the%20crops.
- e. **Value of production:** Soybeans: 4,059,936,000. Corn: 3,835,557,000. Hay and Haylage: 418,752,000. Wheat: 292,043,000. Pumpkins: 14,791,000. Oats: 5,670,000. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=OHIO
- f. **Value of production:** 2020 Corn production- 18th in the state: 13,050,000 Bu. 2020 Soybean production- 4th in the state: 7,100,000 Bu.
- g. **Value of production:** All crops in PC created \$139,440,000 in receipts in 2017
- h. **92% of farms in Putnam county are family farms. 33% are valued at \$100,000 or more. 15% are valued at \$50,000-99,000.** (2017 census of agriculture). A 30 year lease prevents family farms from growing and prevents young farmers from obtaining land to grow their agribusiness
- i. Miller City sewer: EPA- <https://www.epa.gov/small-and-rural-wastewater-systems/funding-sources-small-and-rural-wastewater-systems>

4. Concerns

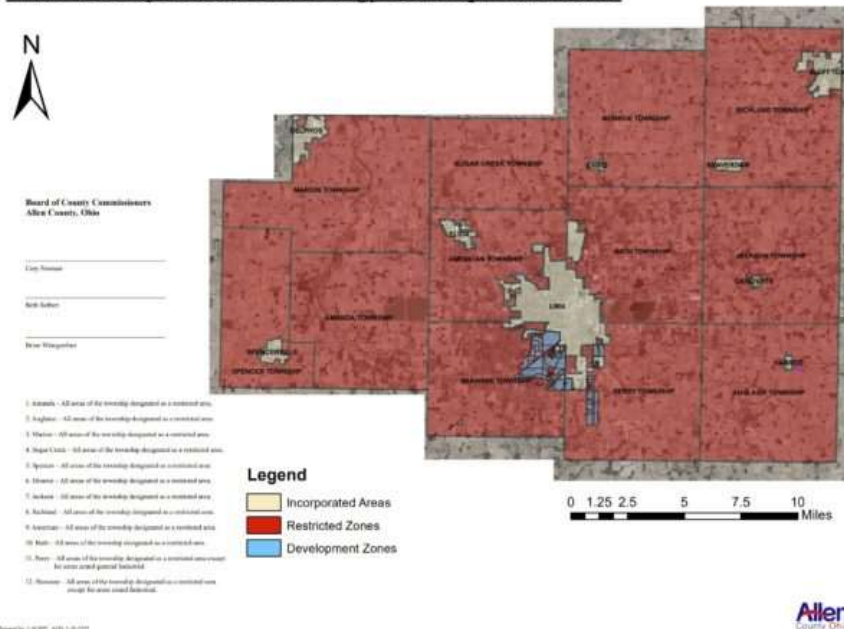
- a. Agricultural sustainability
 - i. **Environmental: See revenue concerns, number “3” and the following contamination potential, temperature rise, water run-off concerns, and heavy metal deposit concerns**
 - ii. **Socioeconomical: See revenue concerns, number “3”**
- b. Contamination potential
 - i. **EPA confirms GenX compounds (PFAS chemicals) in solar panels (Way, 2018)**
 - ii. EPA is researching PFAS and ground water contamination (Grevatt, 2018)
 - iii. Ohio Source Water Protection Plan
- c. Property value detriments
 - i. **Houses within one mile depreciate 1.7%-4% PER YEAR following construction of a solar array (University of RI). A \$400,000 home would depreciate \$200,000-\$480,000 over the 30 year lease.**
- d. Construction noise and property damage
 - i. Inverter and transformer noise: noise criteria should be established (Rand, 2020).
 - ii. Construction sound study (2012)
- e. Heat Island effect
 - i. Temp above panels during the day: 676 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than rest of air
 - ii. **Temp surrounding the PV plants increase 3 degrees Celsius (135.2 degrees Fahrenheit)**
- f. Storm Water concerns
 - i. **Attorney General sues over environmental damage (2021)**
 - ii. **Heavy metal deposits in runoff and into the water table**
- g. Wildlife concerns:

- i. Martin, C. (2019). Solar Panels: Yes or No?: **Insects** mistake the panels for water and lay eggs- they die-disrupting the food chain; especially those animals that need them (fish, birds, etc.). **Birds** mistake them for water and land- and die.
 - ii. Bald eagle nesting sites, hunting
 - iii. 2,000 **hunting** licenses in Putnam County- solar panels will limit deer moving and hunting. Hunting is a tradition, and a food source for families.
 - iv. **Deer** and other wildlife may jump the fence and not get out? Deer may also move around the fence (instead of through the fields) and closer to the roads which could increase traffic accidents
 - h. Decommissioning:
 - i. Increased risk of toxicity
 - ii. Cost
 - iii. Contract? (Example language: “only responsible for structures 3 feet height or less)
 - i. Conflict of interest and investor bias:
 - i. Township trustees and landowners (GK)
 - 1. Ohio Ethics Law- trustees and commissioners, and their immediate families, who have financial interest should recuse themselves to not breach this law
 - ii. Prior office allegations (MK)
 - iii. Prior attempts at selling land to big energy (MK) while also the Director at Putnam County Community Improvement Corporation

5. Ohio counties

- a. Counties that have passed resolutions protecting at least part (if not all) of the county from large solar and wind farms: Allen, Auglaize, Butler, Brown, Crawford, Columbiana, Hancock, Highland, Knox, Logan, Marion, Medina, Ottawa, Seneca, Union. (No trends per capita income- Allen #46, Auglaize #18, Butler #16, Brown #66, Hancock #20, Highland #77, Logan #31, Medina #4, Seneca #53, Union #10. These counties are not interested in more money-they’re objections are largely based on environmental impact, detriments to agribusiness, and public opposition).
https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1201&context=sabin_climate_change&fbclid=IwAR31_KR561gtWL_ftoLfrPfqJ3YM8Vt9_ceB6Q5sVcJ4a_TRINp4qo8D21c
- b. Allen county: April 24, 2022- county commissioners unanimously voted to ban solar and wind in unincorporated areas

Allen County Renewable Energy Development Zones



- c.
- d. Warnings from Hardin country: cumulative effect

6. Current opposition efforts

- a. Survey Results (Pike Run and Powell Creek):
 - i. 77% (126 people) were not aware of public hearings- Powell Creek
 - ii. **Currently 86% (140) of residents feel both the solar panel projects will degrade home values and quality of life; 11 feel there will be no effect, 12 feel it will enhance (June 26,2023)**
 - iii. When asked if the Lima News and Putnam County Sentinel were the best means of disseminating information, 88% (144 responses), said “no”
 - iv. 90% felt their property values would degrade (147 respondents)
- b. Petition Results:
 - i. **284 signatures opposing the Pike Run Project (June 28, 2023)**
 - ii. **186 signatures opposing solar panels in PC (petition open for 1 week)**

7. Action Plan Request

- a. If the Powell Creek project cannot be stopped, at minimum we respectfully request to control the spread
- b. Declare the rest of Palmer and Liberty townships as exclusion zones
- c. Declare surrounding counties as exclusion zones: Monroe, Van Buren, Greensburg, Ottawa
- d. Best case scenario- declare all of P.C. unincorporated areas as exclusion zones. Look to rooftops, abandoned factories, and parking lots as potential hosts for solar panel farms
- e. SB 52: A resolution described in division (A) of this section may designate one or more restricted areas and shall fix restricted area boundaries within the unincorporated area of the county. (C)(1) The board may adopt a resolution designating a restricted area at a regular meeting of the board or at a special

meeting called for the purpose of discussing such a resolution. (2) At least thirty days prior to the meeting at which a resolution to designate a restricted area will be discussed, the board shall do all of the following: (a) Provide public notice of the date and time of the meeting by one publication in a newspaper of general circulation within the county; (b) Publicly post a map showing the boundaries of the proposed restricted area at all public libraries within the county; (c) Provide written notice of the meeting, by first class mail, to all school districts, municipal corporations, and boards of township trustees located in whole, or in part, within the boundaries of the proposed restricted area. (3) The board shall comply with the requirements of divisions (C)(1) and (2) of this section before the board modifies a resolution it previously adopted under this section. (D) Any resolution designating a restricted area shall include a map of the restricted area, as well as texts sufficient to identify all boundaries of the restricted area. A copy of the resolution and any accompanying texts and maps shall be filed with the office of the county recorder of the county. (E) A resolution adopted under this section shall not affect the construction of a utility facility that was presented to the board of county commissioners under section 303.61 of the Revised Code, and the board did not adopt a resolution prohibiting the facility within the time required under section 303.62 of the Revised Code. Sec. 303.59. A resolution designating a restricted area prohibiting the construction of utility facilities, if adopted by the board of county commissioners, becomes effective thirty days after the date of its adoption.....

Other References:

<https://regulateohiosolar.com> Retrieved: June 22, 2023.

Brian Hilvers met with Commissioners Schroeder and Lammers to discuss the walk way at the EMA Office that goes back to the house and Solar Farms. In winter, he had two people fall on the walkway with the hill. He said they told him a while back to get quotes on it and the county would pay for it. He is going to have some of the hill taken out to make it flat. Of all the businesses that he called, he only got one quote. The quote is for \$1650. Commissioners said they want it out of capital improvement. Brian's next topic on solar is if one of the solar employees gets hurt working on the solar panels, there is no path for an ambulance or vehicles. That is a long way to walk someone or try to get someone out of there. He would like to go to the solar company and ask them to provide a medical gator or golf cart or anything to be used to get out to any one that would have a medical emergency that could be working in there and a trailer for hauling. The first thing that is needed is a plan for it. Brian would like to tour it and do a response plan with them. Brian will get the contact info for Blue Harvest and Avangrid and get something set up with Blue Harvest first.

The business agenda was held with Commissioners Schroeder and Lammers and Alaina Siefker, Asst. Clerk.

The minutes from Tuesday, June 27, 2023 were reviewed and approved.

Commissioners Schroeder and Lammers and Alaina Siefker, Asst. Clerk held the county budget hearing. No one from the public attended.

Mr. Schroeder moved to adjourn for lunch.

Mr. Lammers seconded the motion.

Vote: Schroeder yes Lammers yes Schlumbohm absent

Commissioners resumed session.

Kevin Niese, Sandy Knueven & Gillian Stechschulte from Technicon, Greg Bockrath from Bockrath & Associates, Tim Schnipke & Aaron Vorst from County Maintenance and Robert Wise, Julien Haggard & Caleb Helms from Helms & Sons met with Commissioners Schroeder and Lammers for the preconstruction meeting for the event center at the fairgrounds. Technicon said everything will be published out on their website and should be done either Friday or Monday and all forms will be fillable online. They want the documentation and questions to go through Sandy Knueven with Technicon and she can get them to who and where they need to go. The tax-exempt forms have been emailed out. Helms has a rough baseline for the construction progress schedule they brought to the meeting and passed out to everyone. They have October 6th as a rough estimate for delivery of building. A meeting will be set up out at the fairgrounds after the old building demo is complete before the new work starts. Demo should be completed by July 24th so the first progress meeting date was decided in this meeting to be held on July 25th at 9am at the Fairgrounds. Joe Burkhart was requested to provide sound system information to Gillian at Technicon and County Electric with new specs.

Mr. Schroeder moved to adjourn for the day.

Mr. Lammers seconded the motion.

Vote: Schroeder yes Lammers yes Schlumbohm absent

Mr. Lammers moved to approve the minutes as read from Thursday June 29, 2023.

Mr. Schroeder seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Schroeder yes Mr. Lammers yes Mr. Schlumbohm yes

