



CHEBOYGAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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CHEBOYGAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. ROOM 135 - COMMISSIONER'S ROOM - CHEBOYGAN COUNTY BUILDING

- PRESENT:** Freese, Kavanaugh, Borowicz, Croft, Ostwald, Lyon, Johnson, Delana, Bartlett
- ABSENT:** None
- STAFF:** Mike Turisk, Jen Merk
- GUESTS:** Dave Burg, Peter Wendling, Eryn Eustice, Al Germain, Amanda Hoffman, Andrew Beethem, Andrew Lines, Cal Gouine, Carolyn Andersen, Charles Brown, Cristina Beethem, David Wolf, Desiree Dowling, Domenick DiPaolo, Eric Boyd, Gil Archambo, Jeff Zirpoli, John Moore, Ken Kaliski, Lori Stelmaszek, Lydia Terry, Mark Gershon, Mark Hemstreet, Matt Zimmerman, Michael Cressner, Michelle Wolf, Rick Nuttal, Ryan McGraw, Ryan Poley, Sharon Lang, Sonia Singh, Stu Bartlett, Tom Slowinski, Rick Tromble, Tom Eustice

The meeting was called to order via telephonic attendance by Chairperson Croft at 7:00pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Croft led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The meeting agenda was presented. **Motion** by Mr. Freese, seconded by Mr. Kavanaugh, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The May 13, 2020 Planning Commission minutes were presented. **Motion** by Mr. Kavanaugh, seconded by Mr. Borowicz, to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bartlett stated that will the proximity from his residence to the applicant's request, he will be abstaining from voting on the project.

PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON REQUESTS

Orion Renewable Energy Group, LLC - The applicant requests a Special Use Permit for a Level 3 Solar Energy System - Photovoltaic (SES-PV), per Sections 9.3.27 and 10.3.16 of the Zoning Ordinance for construction of a "solar farm"/utility-scale solar energy generating facility in Grant Township. The subject properties are zoned Agriculture and Forestry Management (M-AF) and Lake and Stream Protection (P-LS) and are located approximately 13 miles southeast of the City of Cheboygan, along N. Black River Road, south of Twin Lakes Road and bounded by Ross Road to the south and Page Road to the north, Chamberlin Road to the east and Trudeau Road to the west. The subject properties are in sections 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 and encompass approximately 1,572 acres on 31 parcels, tax parcel id numbers:

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|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. 151-009-200-001-05 | 12. 151-008-300-007-00 | 23. 151-009-400-002-00 |
| 2. 151-006-100-004-00 | 13. 151-008-400-001-00 | 24. 151-009-200-002-00 |
| 3. 151-006-300-001-02 | 14. 151-008-200-001-02 | 25. 151-009-400-001-00 |
| 4. 151-006-100-005-00 | 15. 151-009-300-001-00 | 26. 151-009-200-003-00 |
| 5. 151-006-200-003-00 | 16. 151-009-100-003-00 | 27. 151-004-401-001-00 |
| 6. 151-006-200-005-00 | 17. 151-009-300-004-00 | 28. 151-005-100-001-00 |
| 7. 151-006-400-001-05 | 18. 151-009-400-004-00 | 29. 151-005-300-004-00 |
| 8. 151-008-400-003-00 | 19. 151-009-400-003-00 | 30. 151-005-300-008-00 |
| 9. 151-008-400-004-00 | 20. 151-009-200-001-07 | 31. 151-006-200-002-00 |
| 10. 151-008-100-004-00 | 21. 151-009-300-003-00 | |
| 11. 151-008-300-006-00 | 22. 151-009-100-004-03 | |

Mr. Turisk reviewed the background information contained in the staff report.

Ms. Hoffman stated that she would be presenting on behalf of Orion Renewable Energy Group along with her colleagues and experts. Ms. Hoffman stated that she is a Project Developer with Orion Renewable Energy Group. Ms. Hoffman stated that a PowerPoint presentation has been provided to Cheboygan County, and was uploaded to their website for public access.

Ms. Hoffman introduced Michael Cressner, who is the Director of Development for Orion Renewable Energy Group. Ms. Hoffman introduced Andrew Lines from Cohn Reznick and stated that he would discuss property values. Ms. Hoffman stated that Cohn Reznick has vast expertise in performing impact studies. Ms. Hoffman stated that Schoener Environmental has 20 plus years of experience with environmental wildlife risk and impact studies and will answer any questions related to those items. Ms. Hoffman stated that Ken Kaliski is a Senior Director with RSG. Ms. Hoffman stated that RSG completed the sound analysis. Ms. Hoffman stated that RSG has 25 years of experience in renewable energy projects. Ms. Hoffman introduced Matt Zimmerman who is an environmental and energy attorney with Barnum Law. Ms. Hoffman introduced Ryan McGraw, who is the Vice President of Orion Renewable Energy Group and stated that he will speak to the frequently asked questions, safety, construction and operation.

Mr. Zimmerman stated that his office is in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mr. Zimmerman stated that Orion submitted its application in February 2020. Mr. Zimmerman stated that the application package that was submitted included both the site plan review application and the special use permit application and 37 pages of attachments which were the leases and easements that Orion has for the project area. Mr. Zimmerman stated that a narrative was submitted that explained how the project meets all of the ordinance requirements and this was a 21 page document. Mr. Zimmerman stated the scientific studies include a health and safety impact study, some modeling simulation, evaluation report, emergency safety and fire plan, a vegetative management plan and the decommissioning and final reclamation plan. Mr. Zimmerman noted that several of these will be discussed in more detail later in the presentation. Mr. Zimmerman stated that Orion worked with Cheboygan County staff to make sure that everything was submitted that was needed. Mr. Zimmerman stated that they believe that the staff found that the application was administratively complete, meaning that it had provided information addressing all of the standards that the Zoning Ordinance requires. Mr. Zimmerman stated that Cheboygan County staff then set a public hearing on March 18, 2020. Mr. Zimmerman stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Whitmer issued Executive Order 2020-15 which essentially prohibited local governments from holding live meetings and allowed meetings to be held electronically and allowed a relaxation of the Open Meetings Act in order to do that. Mr. Zimmerman stated that order number has since been replaced with order number 48 and later with order number 75. Mr. Zimmerman explained that these orders all essentially say the same thing. Mr. Zimmerman stated that on June 1, 2020 the governor issued order number 2020-110.

Mr. Zimmerman stated that when that executive order 2020-15 was issued, the Planning Commission decided that it couldn't hold a live meeting. Mr. Zimmerman stated that he started looking at different options for holding meetings electronically. Mr. Zimmerman stated that they had hoped to schedule a meeting in April. Mr. Zimmerman stated that the next notice of public hearing was scheduled for May 6, 2020 and that meeting did not happen either. Mr. Zimmerman stated that there was some speculation that the stay at home orders and the emergency orders from the governor would be coming to a conclusion towards the end of May and then in early June there would be a normalization of activities. Mr. Zimmerman stated that didn't happen. Mr. Zimmerman stated that Orion wants to do this live as they want to show everyone all of the information, all of the pages, the reports and the drawings. Mr. Zimmerman stated that based on the new order that came out this week it will not allow that to happen. Mr. Zimmerman stated that they are grateful that the Planning Commission is willing to go forward. Mr. Zimmerman stated that he would like to point out just for everyone else's edification that this meeting is being held in conformance with the Governor's policies through her executive orders. Mr. Zimmerman stated that while the Governor is still not allowing these kinds of meetings to be held live, she has encouraged and instructed municipalities to hold meetings electronically, particularly for activities that are related to the public health and safety. Mr. Zimmerman stated that the Governor's orders encourage meetings that are performed in regards to critical infrastructure workers. Mr. Zimmerman stated that furthering energy production is the type of activity that the Governor wants to see continue during the pandemic, even though it has to be done electronically. Mr. Zimmerman stated they are grateful that this meeting is taking place, even if it has to be done electronically. Mr. Zimmerman stated that most municipalities are having these meetings the same way in Michigan and particularly as it relates to the energy production because it's a very competitive industry. Mr. Zimmerman stated that there are a lot of providers of renewable energy. Mr. Zimmerman stated there is a demand for production, but there are only a few buyers and they have a long line of producers and if you don't have land use approval you can't get in their queue. Mr. Zimmerman explained that it is very important that this meeting take place in one or two weeks. Mr. Zimmerman stated that they are applying for a special land use under Michigan zoning law. Mr. Zimmerman stated that is essentially a permitted use within the zoning district as long as some extra conditions that are listed in the Ordinance are

satisfied. Mr. Zimmerman stated that if the project meets those standards, then it's entitled to the special use permit. Mr. Zimmerman stated that their application demonstrates that all of the standards in the Zoning Ordinance have been satisfied and that the special use permit should therefore be granted.

Mr. Cressner thanked Cheboygan County, Cheboygan County staff and the Planning Commission for continuing to move forward in these extraordinary times. Mr. Cressner stated that they would prefer to conduct these proceedings in person, but they truly appreciate the county's efforts to allow developments to move forward through the process and the public's participation in this new type of format. Mr. Cressner stated Orion has been in the business of developing renewable energy projects. Mr. Cressner stated that Orion has developed over 5000 megawatts of renewable energy projects across the US that are currently in operation and this represents roughly enough energy to power over 1.5 million American homes. Mr. Cressner stated that this year, they currently have over 1400 megawatts of new renewable energy projects that are under construction and will be operating by the end of this year. Mr. Cressner stated that Orion brings decade's worth of experience working with similar communities across the region in states such as Illinois, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Indiana. Mr. Cressner stated that in Michigan, there is a huge demand for new renewable energy projects such as this one. Mr. Cressner stated that this is primarily because of two reasons. Mr. Cressner stated that the first reason is electricity from renewable energy projects is one of the most economical sources of energy in today's market. Mr. Cressner stated the second reason is because of the many environmental benefits that similar projects provide the community. Mr. Cressner stated that their project presents Cheboygan with a few unique opportunities specific to this area. Mr. Cressner stated that first and foremost is that there is economical access to the regional transmission system which is extremely difficult to find. Mr. Cressner stated that the regional transmission system is congested and being able to find a place for their project is necessary for them to be competitive with other generation resources. Mr. Cressner stated their facilities are often located in active agricultural districts and this is a great fit for solar projects. Mr. Cressner stated that what they are most excited to provide locally are the benefits that a \$90 million development such as this can provide to a community for the first 25 years of operations. Mr. Cressner stated that they will provide over \$15 million in landowner payments which will go to support local families and their existing operations and businesses and of course go into the local economies. Mr. Cressner stated that as for the greater community, though, their project will pay over \$7 million in property taxes in the first 25 years of operation. Mr. Cressner stated that this is stable revenue the county can rely on. Mr. Cressner stated that approximately \$2.4 million of that will go to local schools with the remaining several million dollars going to local services such as libraries, roads and emergency services. Mr. Cressner stated they are excited about being able to provide this economic development opportunity to Cheboygan County and for the chance to be a long term contributing good neighbor to the Cheboygan community.

Ms. Hoffman stated that they began out in the area with local outreach to the landowners back in 2017 and then held an open house with neighbors and surrounding community members in Grant township at the township hall on April 10, 2018. Ms. Hoffman stated they were also working with Cheboygan County as they progressed forward with the adoption of the ordinance in March of 2019. Ms. Hoffman stated on February 10, 2020, they held a second open house at the Cheboygan Public Library to obtain additional public input on their proposed site plan. Ms. Hoffman stated that they made some minor changes due to the input they heard at the open house and submitted their application on February 14, 2020. Ms. Hoffman stated that their application was scheduled for a public hearing on March 18, 2020 which was rescheduled due to the pandemic to May 6, 2020 and now to our current date of June 3, 2020.

Ms. Hoffman stated that the project location is in Grant Township and bordered on the north by Black River Road and the south by Ross Road with Twin Lakes Road traversing through the middle of the project. Ms. Hoffman stated that the capacity of the project is up to 91 megawatts with over 1500 acres of privately leased land. Ms. Hoffman stated that roughly half of the leased land is inside the fenced area and the other half is being preserved as the current use (wetlands, setbacks, etc.). Ms. Hoffman stated in the application narrative, approximately 227 acres will be covered by solar panels when positioned horizontally, which is roughly 15% of the total leased land.

Ms. Hoffman stated that per the Zoning Ordinance, all Level III SPV systems are required to meet a 100 foot setback from any dwelling. Ms. Hoffman stated that as you can see on the proposed site plan, they not only meet this requirement with residences circled in red to show the compliance with the 100 foot setback, but also exceed the requirement for every dwelling in the site area meeting at least a 250 foot setback which the teal circle around the residence symbolizes. Ms. Hoffman stated that the Zoning Ordinance also requires the proposal to meet a landscaping requirement for dwellings. Ms. Hoffman stated that landscaping is required opposite any dwelling on the same or adjacent parcel with evergreen trees at least eight feet in height at the time of planting. Ms. Hoffman stated that in their landscaping plan they are proposing all trees to meet the height requirement at the time of planting and are proposing landscaping opposite all dwellings. Ms. Hoffman stated that in regards to wetlands there are blue and green hatched areas on the site plans that are delineated wetlands. Ms. Hoffman stated that these are areas that have been determined to be protected wetlands through the county data, the

national data and their own desktop and field research. Ms. Hoffman stated that these areas are required to have a 40 foot buffer around them and they exceed that requirement by providing a 50 foot buffer as shown on the site plan. Ms. Hoffman stated that they adjusted the fencing to show separate fencing blocks instead of one large area to be fenced to be more wildlife friendly. Ms. Hoffman emphasized that they have not made the project any larger and have reduced the project with these changes. Ms. Hoffman stated that fencing is proposed throughout the project as a 7 foot woven wire fence in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. Ms. Hoffman stated that chain link fence is only proposed around the substation area. Ms. Hoffman stated that the 7 foot height is sufficient to keep people out for safety purposes, but short enough to allow for the passage of deer or others over the fence. Ms. Hoffman stated that the woven wire is wide enough for small mammals to pass through. Ms. Hoffman stated the fencing is shown as red orange lines on the site plan around the solar tracker blocks. Ms. Hoffman stated that they have worked hard to individually fence the separate tracker blocks to allow wildlife to pass through the project easily. Ms. Hoffman provided an example of how wildlife could potentially move through the project. Ms. Hoffman stated that there are a number of existing larger wetland areas that have been left open for wildlife to access as well as the stream corridor moving northwest through the project. Ms. Hoffman stated that in regards to landscaping, the project is required to install landscaping in certain areas. Ms. Hoffman stated that landscaping is shown in detail in the site plan package on pages 3, 4 and 12. Ms. Hoffman stated that on pages 3 and 4, it shows where they are proposing landscaping, including along public or private rights of way and opposite any dwelling. Ms. Hoffman stated that the proposed landscaping includes a variety of trees. Ms. Hoffman stated that the evergreen species they have included to meet the Ordinance requirements are Northern White Cedar, Canadian Spruce, Black Hills Spruce and Balsam Fir, which will all be at least 8 feet in height at the time of planting and will exceed the Ordinance requirements. Ms. Hoffman stated they have also added a variety of deciduous trees including Maple, Dog Wood and others, as well as a pollinator seed mix ground cover. Ms. Hoffman stated that they believe this combination will thrive in the area and will be pleasant to look at and most importantly, provide and exceed the screening the Ordinance requires. Ms. Hoffman stated that they do have a number of permits remaining or are in the process of completing such as Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, multiple permits with EGLE, which includes storm water, land and water permits, a joint permit application with the US Army Corps of Engineers and EGLE for work in inland lakes, streams and wetlands and lastly, a section 401 water quality certification with the US Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Hoffman stated that all of these permits typically happen during or after a zoning permit is approved due to the time, energy and cost it takes in completing these processes that wouldn't be necessary if the project cannot get past the zoning permit process.

Ms. Hoffman stated that the Cheboygan County solar project will be a long term partner to the Cheboygan community. Ms. Hoffman stated this project represents a \$90 million investment in Cheboygan County and is expected to generate roughly 200 jobs throughout the course of the construction, and 2 to 4 four long term jobs during the operation of the project. Ms. Hoffman stated there will be a commitment to local hiring and guaranteed long term revenues for landowners and farmers. Ms. Hoffman stated that in the first 25 years, the project will pay over \$7 million in property taxes. Ms. Hoffman stated this includes amounts of over \$1.7 million to the to the local school district, over \$700,000, typically to the Cheboygan Intermediate School, over \$400,000 to the road district, \$2.4 million to Cheboygan County, over \$800,000 to Grant Township and over \$600,000 to the Cheboygan Public Library as well as others. Ms. Hoffman stated they believe the project brings many benefits to Cheboygan County.

Ms. Hoffman stated that they have submitted a special use permit application and a site plan review permit application. Ms. Hoffman stated that a Level III SES-PV Facility is a listed special use permit in the Agriculture and Forestry Management Zoning District and Lake and Stream Protection Zoning District. Ms. Hoffman stated a site plan application was also submitted and included a waiver request to change the required one inch to 100 site plan scale to a one inch to 400 scale to better visualize the extent of the project.

Ms. Hoffman stated that the application along with the narrative responses to all required standards listed in the code have been made part of the record. Ms. Hoffman stated that all required and supplementary studies and engineering reports are included in their submittal. Ms. Hoffman stated that the PowerPoint presentation was sent to the County to include in the Planning Commission packet and to include on the website for community access. Ms. Hoffman stated that notices of publication, not less than 15 days prior to the hearing, were submitted to the local newspaper 3 different times for the scheduled March 18, 2020 meeting, the May 6, 2020 meeting and the June 3, 2020 meeting. Ms. Hoffman stated that notices to property owners within 300 feet was mailed 3 different times, not less than 15 days prior to the scheduled hearing for the scheduled March 18, 2020 meeting, the May 6, 2020 meeting and the June 3, 2020 meeting. Ms. Hoffman stated that she has provided information regarding their experts in their PowerPoint document.

Ms. Hoffman introduced Andrew Line from Cohn Reznick and stated that he will discuss property values. Mr. Line referred to the property value impact study that centers on testing whether solar arrays negatively impact adjacent real estate values.

Mr. Line stated that this is not necessarily an appraisal of homes in the Cheboygan area or in the proposed site. Mr. Line stated it is an analysis of the impact that existing solar arrays have had and provide measurable indications for us to come to conclusions.

Mr. Line stated that he works for a company called Cohn Reznick which is the national advisory assurance and tax firm that specializes in real estate. Mr. Line stated that he is a commercial general real estate appraiser and also a member of the appraisal institute, which is noted by the MTI designation. Mr. Line stated he is based in Chicago and has experience in evaluating properties in Michigan. Mr. Line stated the basic premise of this comparative analysis is that if there is any impact on the value of adjacent properties, by virtue of their proximity to a solar farm, that it would be reflected by such factors as the range of sale prices, differences in unit sale prices, any conditions of sale and general overall marketability. Mr. Line stated that when comparing these factors for properties near the solar farm to properties locationally removed, they would expect to see some emerging and consistent pattern of substantial difference in these comparative elements. Mr. Line stated that they have established a number of studies across the country, including in the Midwest, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Minnesota. Mr. Line stated that they have studied solar arrays in California, on the east coast in Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia, and they have studied solar farms that are as small as community solar projects of 1-5 megawatts well up to and exceeding 100 megawatts that can take up over 1000 acres. Mr. Line stated that there are no published studies on this particular subject. Mr. Line stated that they interviewed market participants, which include real estate assessors and real estate brokers who have experience with property that is in close proximity to existing solar farms. Mr. Line stated they prepared the paired sales analysis, which compares potentially impacted properties that they call test areas with unimpacted properties called control areas. Mr. Line stated test areas are sales that are located just adjacent to existing solar farms, and they compare them to similar homes that are located next to the proposed solar farms. Mr. Line stated that this methodology comes directly from an appraisal textbook called Real Estate Damages by Dr. Randy Bell. Mr. Line stated that in that textbook, Dr. Bell indicates that if there is a legitimate detrimental condition, that there will likely be a measurable and consistent difference between two sets of market data and if not, there will likely be no significant difference between the two sets of data. Mr. Line stated that they have examined 8 different solar farms in 4 different states which they feel are comparable with this proposed site in Grant Township. Mr. Line stated that they examined whether or not there was an impact and if that impact was negative, whether it was measurable and consistent.

Mr. Line stated that there is a DTE solar farm in Lapeer, Michigan that is fairly comparable. Mr. Line stated it is a little over 50 megawatts and there are a number of homes that are immediately adjacent. Mr. Line stated they examined the median sale prices between the homes immediately adjacent to the solar panels that sold after the solar panels were erected, and compared them with very similar homes in a similar same area, but located more than a half mile from the solar array. Mr. Line found that there wasn't a negative impact. Mr. Line stated the first group that they tested had a difference of 0.24%. Mr. Line stated the second group that was examined had a difference of 3.31% in favor of places that are immediately adjacent to the solar arrays. Mr. Line stated that in both of these circumstances, the adjacent real estate next to the Lapeer, Michigan, solar arrays did not show a negative impact.

Mr. Line stated another solar farm that has a lot of data that and is relevant is in Chicago County, Minnesota. Mr. Line stated that this is probably the largest solar array here in the Midwest. Mr. Line stated it is 100 megawatts and covers over 1000 acres. Mr. Line stated they were able to identify 5 homes that were immediately adjacent to the solar array and examine those in comparison with similar homes in the same way and found that the difference was 1.35%. Mr. Line stated that was positive in favor of the test sale subject. Mr. Line stated that they found data that indicates that there isn't a negative impact to adjacent real estate. Mr. Line stated their interviews with local tax assessors and brokers who sold these homes also indicated that they don't see any negative impact associated with solar arrays on a single family residential property. Mr. Line stated that a county tax assessor has gone on record and prepared his own study that shows solar arrays do not cause a negative impact. Mr. Line stated that the tax assessor's they spoke with said that no one living next to the solar array has challenged their tax assessment. Mr. Line stated that they prepared before and after analysis, which indicate that even before a project is announced that the trends for homes in both the test sale areas and control sale areas are similar. Mr. Line stated that they also looked at annual appreciation rates. Mr. Line stated that they looked at homes that sold again and again next to solar arrays, and found that the annual appreciation rates were similar to or higher in the county averages for annual appreciation rates of the homes themselves. Mr. Line stated that the study of the eight solar arrays, annual appreciation rate studies and interviews with market participants concluded that there are no negative impacts based on real estate data and are included in the report that was submitted with the application.

Mr. McGraw stated that he is the Vice President of Orion. Mr. McGraw stated that he would like to speak about the general welfare of the community with regard to the Cheboygan solar project. Mr. McGraw stated that they take the health and safety of the community very seriously and they commit to building and operating this safe facility. Mr. McGraw stated that this

commitment is reflected in the equipment that they purchase, the contractors that they hire and in our coordination with local officials and emergency services. Mr. McGraw stated that some examples of the ways they will work to ensure a safe project during preconstruction will include working closely with local officials and emergency service providers to coordinate traffic management, plan for emergency situations and provide any necessary training. Mr. McGraw stated that there will be a general contractor that has extensive experience with the installation of utility scale solar farms with robust health and safety program that meets our local, state and federal regulations. Mr. McGraw stated that during the operations, there will be staff on site during normal working hours and these technicians are trained in solar farm emergency response, and they carry equipment necessary to respond to such emergencies. Mr. McGraw stated that after normal working hours, on call technicians are available in the event of an emergency. Mr. McGraw stated that there will also be a remote operation center that will monitor the facility 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, which can detect faults or emergencies and remotely shut down the facility and alert local emergency service providers to any issues that require their attention. Mr. McGraw stated that an emergency response plan will also be prepared in coordination with local emergency service providers and this will ensure that these providers have access to the site 24/7, which includes keys to locked facilities and contact information for operation personnel.

Mr. McGraw stated that with respect to vegetative plantings and management, along with their application, they submitted a vegetation management plan, which shows how they will ensure that this project remains compatible with ongoing long term agricultural use. Mr. McGraw stated that the land will be planted with native vegetative cover for the life of the project, which is likely to improve site conditions for agriculture, through improved water quality and retention, improve soil structure, and replenish nutrients that are often lost from long term agricultural production. Mr. McGraw stated that they plan to use native seed mixes to create a diverse habitat. Mr. McGraw stated that these native mixes promote the use of the area by wildlife which benefit agricultural land. Mr. McGraw stated that regarding sound, communities often want to know whether solar farms are noisy. Mr. McGraw stated that they engaged an independent consulting firm, RSG, to model the sound from the proposed project. Mr. McGraw stated that the Zoning Ordinance has a maximum of 60 decibels at the perimeter of the project. Mr. McGraw stated that RSG concluded in their report that the project will meet and actually exceed the standard. Mr. McGraw stated that the highest sound level at any property line is only 49 decibels, which is 11 decibels below the ordinance requirements. Mr. McGraw stated that Ken Kaliski from RSG is an expert in the field of sound and he will be able to answer questions. Mr. McGraw stated that with respect to glint and glare of sunlight reflecting off solar panels, there is an important distinction between concentrated solar panels, which act as a mirror and photovoltaic solar panels. Mr. McGraw stated that for this project, they are planning to install photovoltaic solar panels, which are designed to absorb light and not reflect it. Mr. McGraw stated that modern photovoltaic panels reflect less than 2% of incoming sunlight, which is less than soil or wood shingles. Mr. McGraw stated that they are planning to install single axis trackers at the project, which are designed to aim the solar panels directly at the sun. Mr. McGraw stated that this means that for the vast majority of the day, light is reflected directly back into the sky. Mr. McGraw stated that if they find that there are problems at specific locations once the project is constructed, they can automatically adjust the pitch angle of those solar panels to alleviate the issue.

Mr. McGraw stated that they have presented the County a decommissioning plan, which requires that the project dismantle, remove and dispose of all improvements and materials, restore and reclaim the land and post financial assurance that the County can draw upon in the event that they do not decommission the project properly. Mr. McGraw stated that they fully expect to decommission the project properly, but these funds are available to the County in the event that they do not. Mr. McGraw stated that they have had independent experts review this project and they have come to the conclusion that this project can meet and exceed all federal, state and county requirements. Mr. McGraw stated that that from the time of preconstruction planning, to the time that the solar farm has been fully decommissioned, they take their commitment to the general welfare of the community very seriously.

Mr. McGraw stated that they believe that their application meets all the standards set forth by the county ordinance. Mr. McGraw stated that Section 18.7 lists eight standards for special land use approval. Mr. McGraw stated that their application details how the project satisfies each of these. Mr. McGraw stated that the proposed project will not create any negative impact on the natural resources of the county or elsewhere. Mr. McGraw referred to Section 18.7.B and stated that it reads that the proposed special land use will not involve uses and activities that create a substantially negative impact on natural resources. Mr. McGraw stated that by avoiding nearly all the regulated natural resources, and by planting native pollinator species, the project is at worst net neutral on the natural resource. Mr. McGraw stated that it is more likely a positive on natural resources, especially when considering the substantial environmental benefits of solar energy. Mr. McGraw stated that the project easily meets the substantially negative impact standard of Section 18.7.B. Mr. McGraw stated that Section 18.7.C also uses the substantially negative impact language. Mr. McGraw stated that solar energy projects once constructed, are unique in that they don't generate traffic noise, smoke fumes, glare, odors and scrap material. Mr. McGraw stated that many uses permitted in this zoning district would potentially generate more of each of these factors than a solar farm would.

Mr. McGraw stated that the project easily meets the substantially negative impact standard. Mr. McGraw stated that the proposed project won't diminish the opportunity for surrounding properties to be used and developed as zoned as required by Section 18.7.D. Mr. McGraw stated that studies of actual solar projects revealed no impact on property values of adjacent developed property. Mr. McGraw stated that solar energy projects are compatible with agriculture and according to Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development they are consistent with farmland preservation. Mr. McGraw stated that the proposed project won't diminish development opportunities for adjacent undeveloped property. Mr. McGraw stated that they are proposing a special land use for a 91 megawatt solar farm, which will be built over approximately 1566 acres of private land. Mr. McGraw stated that of that 1566 six acres of private land under lease, approximately 830 will be within the fenced area and approximately 230 acres or 15% of the leased area will have solar panels. Mr. McGraw stated that the remainder of the land will be preserved. Mr. McGraw stated that the project will include landscape buffering to minimize visual disturbance. Mr. McGraw stated that it will be less than the 60 decibels limited by the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. McGraw stated that it will not create additional traffic once constructed and it will be safe. Mr. McGraw stated that this proposal meets the standards of the Zoning Ordinance for approval and they will continue to cooperate with local officials to ensure that our requirements are met for this project.

Mr. McGraw stated that this \$90 million investment in the community will create around 210 jobs during construction and is expected to create 2-4 full time positions once operational over its useful life. Mr. McGraw stated that the project will pay substantial revenues to local farmers, which is money that can be used to stabilize their future in the county and also be injected back into the local economy. Mr. McGraw stated that the project will pay over \$7 million in property taxes that support key services like the school's emergency services, road district, and library. Mr. McGraw stated that they are committed to building a project that is safe, reliable and beneficial to the community.

Telephonic communication with Chairperson Croft failed and Vice-Chairman Borowicz began chairing the meeting.

Mr. Freese stated that it was indicated that there will be no impervious surfaces in excess of 8,000 square feet within the perimeters. Mr. Freese stated that the step up transformer facility is 52,370 square feet. Mr. Freese stated as far as drainage there is a problem that will have to be addressed. Mr. McGraw stated that before they can obtain a building permit, they will need plan in place, which would include storm water prevention and will definitely take into account all drainage from every single piece of equipment on the project.

Mr. Freese stated that it was mentioned several times that the entire project is 1566 acres. Mr. Freese noted that it was stated that there would be 862 acres fenced and another figure was mentioned of 830 acres fenced. Mr. Freese stated noted that it was stated that 277 acres under solar panels and another figure was mentioned of 230 acres. Mr. Freese stated that he doesn't show how the 277 acres of solar panels was determined.

Mr. McGraw stated that the total leased area in the project is 1566 acres. Mr. McGraw stated that on the site plan the amount of acreage that is fenced in is approximately 830 acres. Mr. McGraw stated that once the project is constructed, they believe that when the panels are tilted horizontally (flat and parallel to the ground) that would amount to approximately the 270 acres under the solar panels. Mr. Freese stated that the areas that are shown in blue, which are the solar panels, are the majority of that 830 acres and the 230 acres is a small fraction of the total. Mr. Freese stated there is something wrong with that figure. Mr. Borowicz stated that the solar panels are not going to be immediately adjacent to one another and there will be space in between them to allow for pivoting. Mr. Borowicz stated that the total surface area is the 276 acres of actual solar receptors. Mr. Freese stated that if you use Orion's diagram of how big the panels are, it is still most of that area. Mr. Germain from Orion stated that the question here relates to something called the ground cover ratio. Mr. Germain stated that they are only planning to occupy one third of the ground and the space between each of these trackers is in fact two open spaces. Mr. Germain stated that only one third of the ground is occupied. Mr. Germain stated that the starting point is taking the 800 acres which is fenced and dividing it by 3. Mr. Germain stated that by looking at the site plan you will notice that sometimes the fence includes a little more open ground and just around the panels so it's not strictly a three to one ratio but it is close to a three to one ratio. Mr. Germain stated that if you catch the right angle of the photographs that were included in the PowerPoint you can see how much open space there is between each of these trackers.

Mr. Kavanaugh asked how brush control will be handled. Mr. McGraw stated that most of the vegetation control and management will be done via mowing and when there are woody structures that are starting to grow, they may do spot applications of chemicals but that will be very rare. Mr. McGraw stated that mowing is sufficient to manage the vegetation on site. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that using chemicals should be included in the management plan.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated that Mr. Line stated that they talked with local brokers. Mr. Kavanaugh asked if that was local brokers in the other project areas or did he consult with anyone in the Cheboygan area regarding what may happen to property values, especially hunting property. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that there will be some change in the migration of animals. Mr. Line stated they concentrated on individuals who had had experience with real estate next to existing solar panels. Mr. Line stated that part of the analysis of looking at actual data is to earmark the difference between what people's general feelings might be and what their initial perceptions might be. Mr. Line stated that this is actual hard data that shows that there is no impact. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that it would be prudent to at least talk to local brokers.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated that there was no review yet by EGLE or Army Corps. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that Orion has talked with the Road Commission and the Health Department but there are major issues regarding wetlands. Mr. Kavanaugh stated looks like some of the wetlands were missed. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that a letter was submitted stating concerns about height information, a stream and wetlands. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that the Planning Commission received a map with some revisions and with no cover letter. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that there are concerns that a soil conservation easement was missed. Mr. Kavanaugh asked who has the responsibility to evaluate these concerns.

Mr. McGraw stated that they have done a wetland delineation, which included a field study and actually did include the parcel where it has been claimed they missed a stream. Mr. McGraw stated that at the time there was no water there. Mr. McGraw stated that they are going to ask their consultant to go back to the field to see if indeed there is a stream that they missed. Mr. McGraw stated that there needs to be a concurrence from EGLE on the wetland delineation.

Mr. Freese stated that parcel number 151-006-300-002-01 was misidentified as being part of the project and the revised site plan was corrected and it is no longer shown as part of the project. Mr. Freese stated that in regards to the issue regarding the USDA easement, there has been a document releasing that parcel that was in question from the USDA easement. Mr. Freese stated another concern was regarding the height of vegetation. Mr. Freese stated that the regulation was written to indicate the height of the screening on parcels within the project containing solar panels that abut the road and require screening with additional height due to proximity to a raised road bed and in this case Mr. Eustice's parcel is located between the parcel that has the solar panels on it and the road. Mr. Freese stated that property line on Mr. Eustice's parcel would only be subject to the internal property line height requirements for screening and wouldn't be measured from the height of the road bed.

Mr. Kavanaugh asked if someone consulted Mr. Hoffman, who has an airport regarding his concern about glare. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that a glare study has been completed and he hopes someone shares that with him. Mr. McGraw stated that they have commissioned an independent study for glint and glare analysis and they don't have the final report back yet, but the third party that's doing this report has initially reported that they're concluding that there are no instances of glare for any houses in the community or on the nearby airfield. Mr. McGraw stated that stated that when they have that final report they will certainly work with the owner of the airfield.

Ms. Lyon asked Ms. Hoffman to clarify fencing. Ms. Hoffman explained that the fencing for the main portion of the project is a 7 foot woven wire fence. Ms. Hoffman stated that it is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. Ms. Hoffman referred to slide number 1 of the PowerPoint presentation and stated that the fencing will look like the fencing in the picture. Ms. Hoffman stated that a chain link fence is proposed around the substation area. Ms. Hoffman stated that the majority of the fencing will be a woven wire fence, whereby wildlife can jump over the top of it, and small mammals can move through it.

Mr. Kavanaugh asked that when dealing with EGLE, could there be a comment on large animal movement and any kind of impact there because most of the concerns he has heard are from the hunters in the area and they are worried about waterfowl, deer and bear jumping seven foot fences. Mr. McGraw stated that Dominick Dipaolo is from Schoener Environmental. Mr. Dipaolo stated that his discussions with EGLE were mostly with the permit with respect to the storm water management and erosion and sediment controls during construction. Mr. Dipaolo stated that unfortunately he really can't answer this question. Mr. Kavanaugh suggested asking that question of EGLE as it will eliminate a lot of problems with the hunters. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that it would be worthwhile getting a comment from EGLE regarding the impact on wildlife. Mr. Zirpoli stated that he is with Schoener Environmental. Mr. Zipoli stated that they have discussed with both state and federal agencies anything related to project impact as it relates to special status or protected species or their habitats, and they had no issues. Mr. Zirpoli stated that in regards to special status protected species, both state and federally, there are no concerns from the agency's perspective. Mr. Zirpoli stated that they expect once the project is developed and things have settled down most of the wildlife will presume their daily and seasonal movements in and around the project. Mr. Zirpoli stated that some will be restricted and some might just be individuals based on individual tolerance. Mr. Zirpoli stated that as animals become more accustomed to it, they will certainly utilize it as much as they can and continue to move through

the area. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that it is important to get that a comment from EGLE as it is important. Mr. Zimmerman stated the agency that would be better suited over these issues is DNR. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that this will eliminate a lot of questions and comments from the public.

Ms. Lyon asked if an insurance policy is necessary in case of a natural disaster. Mr. Freese stated that it is covered in Orion's narrative and they agree that if the project is abandoned that it would be taken down. Mr. Freese stated that the reclamation plan covers that and they indicated if it was a not in operation for 18 months it would be decommissioned and removed. Mr. Freese stated that they also had in their narrative that if it was destroyed, that it would be removed at their cost under their decommissioning plan.

Mr. Delana asked how long it will take to get everything in place assuming all the other obstacles might be cleared. Mr. McGraw stated that construction for a project of this size is typically on the order of 9-14 months and that is weather dependent.

Mr. Kavanaugh asked when is the amount of decommissioning bond determined and who determines the amount. Mr. McGraw stated that the decommissioning bond is done at the time that they apply for building permits. Mr. McGraw stated that they will come up with a decommissioning plan, which will have been vetted with an independent party that will show the costs to decommission the facility. Mr. McGraw stated that they will update that plan every 5 years thereafter and share that with the County.

Mr. Borowicz asked for public comments.

Mr. Gouine asked if each parcel will be taxed for the units that are their property or will the \$90 million be prorated across all of the properties. Mr. McGraw stated that the way they have typically seen it done is once the project is installed, they submit the as built plans to see what is constructed on each parcel and there can be an evaluation attached to the equipment installed on each parcel. Mr. Gouine stated he would like to know how a parcel with five units will be appraised versus a parcel with many units. Mr. McGraw stated that the property tax is based off of the equipment that is actually installed on a parcel. Mr. McGraw stated that based on a \$90 million project each parcel essentially would be taxed in a prorated manner, but if any given parcel has more or less equipment on it, then the tax would fall differently to those parcels.

Mr. Tromble, Tromble Bay Farms, asked if the Planning Commission members have any questions for him. The Planning Commission did not have any questions for Mr. Tromble. Mr. Tromble stated that in regards to hunting, no one is supposed to be hunting on his property except for family and employees.

Ms. Andersen stated her property is directly adjacent to Mr. Tromble's property and they hunt on that property. Ms. Andersen stated hunting is important to her.

Mr. Brown stated that he and his wife own property that is adjacent to Mr. Tromble's property. Mr. Brown stated that they support this project and he believes this project has many more pluses than detractor features. Mr. Brown does not believe it would detract in any way from his property value. Mr. Brown stated that his daughter and son in law live on the south side of Black River Road and she believes that the solar panels would probably be less noisy than Mr. Tromble's cattle and she supports this project. Mr. Brown stated it might curtail some division of the small lots that are split off of these larger farm parcels. Mr. Brown stated it might curtail substandard properties and eyesores that might go in that would detract from surrounding property values. Mr. Brown stated that he supports this project and he believes it is a great thing for the County.

Mr. Bartlett stated that he lives Owens Road which. Mr. Bartlett stated that the proposed substation will be adjacent to his property. Mr. Bartlett talked with Orion representatives at the Cheboygan Public Library in February and asked if he will be able to hear any noise from the substation. Mr. Bartlett stated that the representative said he didn't know, but if there is noise they will build berms. Mr. Bartlett asked if berms will cut down the noise. Mr. McGraw stated that they have now fully analyzed the noise and the sound model from the project including the substation location. Mr. McGraw asked Ken Kaliski from RSG, the independent expert that ran this model, to respond to Mr. Bartlett's questions. Mr. Kaliski stated that he looked at the sound emissions and the transformer is going to be specified as 5 decibels lower than allowed by the standard for that device, it is a relatively low noise transformer. Mr. Kaliski stated that he can't say that you won't hear it. Mr. Kaliski stated that he doesn't know what the background sound level is and how well it masks the transformer sound, but even at the property boundary of the substation, the sound is well below the standard Cheboygan County set and that it is less than 50 decibels at the property line. Mr. Kaliski stated that the County standard is 60 decibels. Mr. Kaliska stated that in regards to a berm, anything that blocks the line of sight would reduce the sound. Discussion was held. Ms. Lyon asked if the transformer

will be a constant noise or is it an intermittent noise. Mr. Freese stated that the transformer will be a constant noise but that power is only generated in daylight, not at night. Ms. Lyon asked if there is any possibility it could be built somewhere else versus right next to Mr. Bartlett's home. Mr. Freese stated that it will be near someone's house no matter where they put it. Mr. Kaliski stated that the sound level from the transformer to the nearest home is 39 decibels, which is 21 decibels less than the standard and it may still be audible. Mr. Borowicz asked for an example of something in the 39 decibel range. Mr. Kaliski stated that the sound of his voice is probably around 60 decibels and the average background sound level in an agricultural area is about 41 decibels. Mr. Kaliski stated that 39 decibels is a little bit less than the overall average night time sound level in an agricultural area. Mr. Kaliski stated that they have measured libraries with an air conditioning system overhead at about 39 decibels so it is relatively a quiet sound.

Ms. Lange stated she is the President of the Cheboygan Economic Development Group and she has been appointed to the EDC and is working with Jeff Lawson to reinvigorate that organization. Ms. Lange stated that she has had the privilege of working with Orion throughout the last couple of years. Ms. Lange thanked Orion for the high level of detail that has gone into their planning. Ms. Lange stated that this has been a very long process and noted that Orion has been very accommodating and they always have thoughtful and intelligent responses. Ms. Lange stated that Orion is eager to answer questions and is open to suggestions. Ms. Lange stated that as a business owner, a resident for one year and also a northerner, she appreciates all of the care that's going into the natural landscape. Ms. Lange stated that Cheboygan County has a tremendous asset in a natural environment. Ms. Lange stated that Cheboygan County has more trail miles than any other county in Michigan. Ms. Lange stated that the inland waterway, world class fisheries on Burt Lake and Mullett Lake, hunting and all season recreation are a part of our culture and it is a very big part of our pride as Northern Michigan people. Ms. Lange stated she is glad that Orion is being responsive to comments. Ms. Lange stated that in anticipation of an approval tonight, she just really would love to congratulate everyone. Ms. Lange stated that this is a big high five moment and it is a big win for Cheboygan County. Ms. Lange stated that the economic impact of this project is truly staggering and especially now during some really troubling economic times. Ms. Lange stated this project is a golden egg for our community and for our coffers with revenues that it's going to generate. Ms. Lange stated that this project puts us on par with some other great communities who are seeing the value in turning to solar, wind, hydro or other alternative energy sources. Ms. Lange stated that she is looking forward to working with everyone and she thanked everyone for supporting Cheboygan.

Eryn Eustice stated that he submitted a 3 page letter. Mr. Eustice stated that he and his wife purchased property last May in section 6 and was formerly known as Long's Sod Farm. Mr. Eustice stated that they purchased property that is zoned Agriculture and Forestry Management because of their desire to pursue a passion for farming and agriculture and to start their family. Mr. Eustice stated that they love the beauty of the area and the possibilities that agriculture offers. Mr. Eustice stated that they would not have purchased this property knowing that they would soon have solar panels on 2 sides. Mr. Eustice stated that the project history was mentioned earlier in this meeting, but since they were not residents at the time they were not informed of the project. Mr. Eustice stated that they received a letter 2 months ago notifying them that this meeting was going to happen. Mr. Eustice stated that the 28 foot height of the planting for screening purposes doesn't apply because it is not adjacent to a right of way. Mr. Eustice stated that he has a hard time believing that the value of his property that was just purchased will remain whole when you look out the windows of his house and all you will see is solar panels if there are no trees tall enough to surround the house. Mr. Eustice stated that he is a new homeowner and has a mortgage. Mr. Eustice stated that he has a hard time believing that he can sell his house for the appraised value. Mr. Eustice stated that there are property value impact studies for areas with a better market for housing, but in this area the housing market isn't as abundant. Mr. Eustice stated that it is hard to believe that he is going to be able to sell his house for \$200,000. Mr. Eustice stated that he would like to hear something from Orion saying that this isn't a concern as this is obviously a huge concern for him and his wife. Mr. Eustice stated that the 28 foot planting is the only way that he will be shielded from seeing solar panels. Mr. Eustice stated it will take 10-15 years for trees that are planted to grow to 28 feet. Mr. Eustice stated that he is being told that a vegetative screening will block every residence, but how is that going to apply to his residence when the elevation of his house is 28 feet higher than the nearest solar panel.

Ms. Dowling stated that she purchased six and a half acres of land in an agriculturally zoned area for a reason. Ms. Dowling stated that she has 27 windows in her home and out of every single window she will see solar panels. Ms. Dowling stated that the solar panels will be located in the front of her home, the side of her home and the back of her home. Ms. Dowling agreed with Mr. Eustice and stated that there is no way she will get what she paid for the home if she decides to sell. Ms. Dowling stated that the reason she bought the property is because it is set back where she can sit on her back deck and watch her kids play and now she is stuck looking at solar panels. Ms. Dowling stated that no one has been able to provide a benefit to the people whose property is being impacted. Ms. Dowling stated her concerns regarding the traffic and the length of time it will take for the construction of the project.

Mr. Eustice asked if anyone could answer his question regarding the screening from solar panels. Mr. Freese stated that the applicant has proposed screening along Mr. Eustice's back property line and the north property line, but they're not going to be 28 feet tall. Mr. Freese stated that 28 foot screening is not necessary to the east and down the hill as it is a flat slope. Mr. Freese stated that Orion will put 8 foot trees along that fence at the back and Mr. Eustice might see the solar panels for a year while the trees grow. Discussion was held.

Mr. Eustice asked that the expert on the property values comment on how he will still be able to see solar panels and also how his property value will remain at \$200,000 and not decrease because no one will buy his property. Mr. Freese stated that during the presentation by the expert he stated that there have been no changes in the property values of homes in similar areas. Mr. Freese stated that they are claiming that in similar areas there is no change in property values and no negative impact. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that he would like Mr. Line to comment on this as anyone who would live next to this project would be concerned. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that maybe there is something that can be done for those 2-3 people to help them out.

Mr. Wendling stated that public comments should be received and at the end and Mr. Eustice's question will be addressed. Mr. Wendling stated that we want to make sure everybody who wishes to speak has a chance to speak during the public hearing.

Mr. Boyd stated that he has property that is adjacent to the proposed solar project and he is wondering what is going to be done with the existing vegetation and trees that are in the ditch lines. Mr. Boyd asked if it will be leveled or will the existing vegetation remain. Mr. Wendling stated that this can be answered at the end of the public comment.

Ms. Andersen stated that there she has and along the south side of the project. Ms. Andersen asked what kind of screening will there be along the easement.

Tom Eustice stated that his son Eryn Eustice lives adjacent to this proposed project. Mr. Eustice stated that he is a state licensed assessor and in his opinion, there is no question that his son's property value will be disrupted with this project. Mr. Eustice stated that his son owns a 15 acre farm. Mr. Eustice questioned if the study was completed for single family residences. Mr. Eustice stated that his son has animals and a pond with fish. Mr. Eustice stated that these solar panels do give off radiation that is going to affect the wildlife on his property. Mr. Eustice stated that these solar panels will affect the view. Mr. Eustice stated that there's no question that his son's property will have functional obsolescence, economic obsolescence and external obsolescence and the value will decrease significantly.

An audience member stated his concerns regarding radiation. He stated he did not know if there was a difference between the transmission line and the solar panels. Discussion was held. Mr. Freese stated that Orion will be able to answer this question.

Mr. Borowicz closed the public hearing.

Mr. Borowicz asked Orion to address the questions regarding the ditch bank vegetation, property values and what can be done to address Mr. Eustice's concerns.

Mr. Line referred to the property value report and stated that in Chisago County, Minnesota over 1000 acres was developed and within the layout of this particular solar array there were five homes that were right next to each other and surrounded by solar panels on four sides. Mr. Line stated that each homestead consisted of five to 7 acres each. Mr. Line stated that the developer thought that there might be a problem so he had each of the homes appraised and individually negotiated with each of the land holders and acquired each one of the homes. Mr. Line stated that he paid premiums because he was forcing people out of their homes. Mr. Line stated that during the process of planning the developer realized that he wouldn't need the homes after everything was developed. Mr. Line stated that the developer put all of the homes on the market at the same time. Mr. Line stated that all of the homes sold for more than they were originally appraised for, including one of the homes, which was reacquired by the original homeowner. Mr. Line stated that this is a good example of how homes surrounded on four sides still are able to sell on the market. Mr. Line stated that in Indiana there was a 10 acre piece that was next to a 25 megawatt solar farm that was erected and after the panels were erected someone acquired the 10 acre site and built a \$450,000 house with a very large backyard swimming pool. Mr. Line stated the measurement from the house to the adjacent panel is 150 feet. Mr. Line stated that evidence would suggest that the market isn't deterred from developing just by virtue of being very close to existing solar panels. Mr. Line stated that when interviewing tax assessors they did not speak to any kind of negative influences caused by the solar panels.

Mr. Borowicz stated that another question was if the existing vegetation within the road right of way will that be removed in the process of developing this project. Mr. McGraw stated that all existing vegetation is meant to stay in place and they will supplement any existing vegetation with incremental buffer to the extent that it's sparse and doesn't provide a strong enough buffer. Mr. McGraw stated that there is no need to remove any vegetation along Ross Road.

Board held discussion. Mr. Freese stated that Orion didn't address the question of radiation. Mr. McGraw stated that that in their application they submitted a report from North Carolina State who did a comprehensive study of health questions relating to solar farms. Mr. McGraw stated that in the study they conclude that the radiation levels of the solar farm are incredibly low and that the levels that are considered safe for humans, according to an International Commission On Radiation Protection would be 500 Milligauss (m/G). Mr. McGraw stated that this study found that magnetic radiation for a utility level solar farm was not greater than 0.4 Milligauss (m/G). Mr. McGraw noted that this is almost zero and is below any level that is considered safe for humans. Mr. McGraw stated that with respect to electric radiation, the level that is generally considered safe for humans is 4200 volts per meter and they found below 5 volts per meter. Mr. McGraw stated that their conclusion is that there is little to no risk of any radiation from the solar farm.

Mr. Kavanaugh asked if Orion would comment on the Andersen easement. Ms. Hoffman asked for the location of the easement. Mr. Tromble stated that this is a 60 foot easement along the river and is located in the southwest corner of his property on Owens Road. Mr. Delana asked if the nature of the question is regarding screening for an easement instead of the property that she owns. Mr. Freese stated that if it is a driveway easement, it will have to be screened. Mr. Wendling stated that can be determined by just looking at the language of the easement and determining if it will meet what is required under the Zoning Ordinance for screening. Discussion was held. Mr. Turisk stated that he does not see that as being screened in the plan. Mr. Freese stated that the driveway/easement is not shown in the plans and it is difficult to see where it is and what it's used for. Mr. Freese noted that Mr. Wendling stated that it will depend on what the easement is described as and if it is a driveway easement for access to another parcel, screening would be required.

Mr. Kavanaugh recommended that Orion visit with Mr. Bartlett, Mr. Eustice and the other person involved with their homes looking at solar panels to assure the property owners that they are going to be taken care of after a few years. Mr. Kavanaugh also recommended that Orion meet with local brokers to see what their perception is because this is a different area. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that there is a licensed appraiser from this area that doesn't agree with Orion. Mr. Freese stated that Mr. Kavanaugh is going on an opinion of an appraiser without any substantiated facts. Mr. Freese stated that there is a study that has been submitted and this is data that the Planning Commission can rely on. Mr. Freese stated that he doesn't object to talking to local appraisers, but unless there is factual data that refutes what has been presented the Planning Commission will have to go on what's been presented. Mr. Borowicz stated that the unfortunate fact is that the local data won't be available until after the project is completed.

Mr. Wendling stated that he will be working along with Mr. Turisk and Planning Commission members who wish to assist to put together the findings of fact based upon the application, the exhibits, the meeting minutes, and materials submitted up through the end of this meeting. Mr. Wendling stated that he will assist in those drafts for the Planning Commission to review, make changes, delete, etc. Mr. Wendling stated that the Planning Commission will have a template to work with for decision making at the next meeting on June 17, 2020. **Motion** by Mr. Freese, seconded by Mr. Kavanaugh, to table the request until June 17, 2020 at 7:00pm. Motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No comments.

NEW BUSINESS

No comments.

STAFF REPORT

No comments.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

No comments.

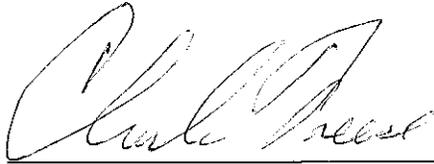
PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Lange thanked the Planning Commission for their efforts working through this process. Mr. Lange stated that she thinks

everyone realizes that every community in Michigan presented with a gift basket like this would be lined up a block long waiting to have a project come through loaded. Ms. Lange stated that this project is full of growth, opportunity and money. Ms. Lange stated that it is clean, thoughtful, conscientious and wise. Ms. Lange stated that she believes it is delivered with a great group that is trying to be thorough and act in partnership with our community and our residents. Ms. Lange stated that the Cheboygan community calls for jobs and more resources for thoughtful growth. Ms. Lange stated that this is a solution to that. Ms. Lange stated that looks forward to a resolution that's positive on this topic. Ms. Lange stated that she would love to be a part of any conversation to help figure out the final details and get this passed. So your two weeks will actually with a special meeting next week.

ADJOURN

Motion by Kavanaugh to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:37pm.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Freese", written in black ink. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Charles Freese
Planning Commission Secretary