

**OTOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2024  
496 5TH STREET  
SYRACUSE CITY LIBRARY, SYRACUSE, NEBRASKA  
7:00 P.M.**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Daniel Hodges. All hearings were published in the Nebraska City News Press. Meeting commenced at 7:02 P.M. and answering to roll call were Howard Bebout, Doug Delhay, Cheri Wirthele, Richard Warner, Chad Neubauer, and Daniel Hodges. Absent was Stephanie Shrader. Present for the meeting were Zoning Administrator David Schmitz, Ann Boellstorff, Chris Meeks and Cale Giese from OPPD, Jim Buchholz, Chuck Hassebrook with Sandhills Energy, Shawn Hermann, Bill Aultz, and Pete Bell.

Chairman Hodges asked if there were any changes to the minutes of the August 15, 2024 meeting, Wirthele stated in the motion to approve Stukenholtz Subdivision that it was seconded by Warner instead of Wirthele, Wirthele then made a motion to approve with the change, seconded by Bebout, with Wirthele, Delhay, Bebout, Warner, Neubauer and Hodges voting aye. Minutes approved.

Communications: Hodges was contacted by Chuck Hassebrook with Sandhills Energy and Schmitz had two letters that were not presented at this time

Hodges and Schmitz were notified that the public hearings dates were wrong as published in the Nebraska City News-Press. Hodges said that the public hearings could not be approved according to the open meetings act and that DISCUSSIONS could be held since there was about 20 or so people present.

The Hermann Subdivision in Section 19-8-13 was discussed as it will be for a new house site. Shawn Hermann was present and stated a new home will be built. Schmitz has a copy of the rural water permit. No official action was taken but the Board stated it should be approved at the October 17 meeting. The hearing with the commissioners should be tabled.

A discussion was held on the conditional use permit for Grid Corp, LLC for a new contractor storage building with office shop and equipment storage on Lot 2, M & M Commercial Park Subdivision in Section 33-9-9. The board was handed out the permit application and Schmitz said it was very well prepared. Hodges said that it should be approved at the October 17 meeting. No vote was taken by the board. The hearing with the commissioners should be tabled.

A discussion was held on the proposed Solar Power Energy regulation as approved by the planning commission at the August 15, 2024 meeting. Cale Giese and Chris Meeks were present and handed out a response letter to the board. Giese went thru several items that the board should address. Giese stated the acreage caps should be removed from the regulations. 2nd item was should all wiring on a solar project be buried. Wiring designs can be addressed during the conditional use permit to approve the projects appearance. OPPD wants the

requirement to place the wiring below ground to be removed. 3<sup>rd</sup> item was on setbacks which at the present proposed regulations are 1000 feet setback to a non-participating neighbor. Their conclusion was to align setbacks with the requirements of visual screening which tends to address the most common concerns while protecting landowner's rights. Also discussed was the 75 foot setback to the solar array which is in the proposed regulations. 4<sup>th</sup> item was how is proper decommissioning assured. Their conclusion is to increase the variety of financial means available to ensure proper decommissioning and require the means to be established within six years of commercial operation. The solar committee and the planning were unanimous in that an escrow account be established not a surety bond or letter of credit. This author does not believe that the planning will change their view. Other notes were included in the letter and will not be addressed at this time. Shawn Hermann does not believe that we need solar energy in the county. Dan Thomsen asked how many panels per site. Bill Aultz asked questions about the 75 foot setback. There is no present agreement with Otoe County for a solar farm. Chuck Hassebrook with Sandhills Energy was present to discuss a possible future project. His main issue was with the 1000 foot setback. Cass County has a 500' setback to a non-participating residence. Should the county exclude river corridors as possible areas of development? Hassebrook also would like to see the amount of land in the county to be possibly used for solar development be increased from 1% to 2 % of the land total. One megawatt could be produced on six acres of development. Hassebrook stated that a million dollars in taxes would be brought into the county on the project. Individual payments were discussed on sites but this author did not record the amounts. Schmitz stated that he believes that about 600 acres of land have lease options on them as well as transmission line easements. Boellstorff brought up several issues with a project like this. The hearing with the commissioners should also be tabled.

**Old Business: None**

**Motion to adjourn @ 8:09 P.M, motion by Warner, seconded by Neubauer, with all members voting aye to adjourn. Motion carried.  
Motion carried.**

**Next Meeting will be on October 17, 2024**

