

Huntingburg Board of Zoning Appeals

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. Local Time

The Huntingburg Board of Zoning Appeals met in regular session on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers at the Huntingburg City Hall. Members present were Dave Schipp, Mike Schmett, Amy Lehr, Allan Bauernfiend and Mike Broeker. Others present included: Dan Worl from the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA), John Reutepohler, Paul Lake, Jacqueline Roos and other members from the community.

As this is the BZA's first meeting of 2016 elections were held. A nomination for Dave Schipp was made by Mike Schmett, seconded by Mike Broeker. Motion carried. Amy Lehr nominated Mike Schmett for Vice President with Dave Schipp providing a second. Motion carried. Allan Bauernfiend nominated Amy Lehr as Secretary with a second by Dave Schipp. Motion carried. Officers for 2016 will be: Dave Schipp as President, Mike Schmett as Vice President and Amy Lehr as Secretary.

Paul Lake spoke to the BZA concerning the Special Exception Request before the board: The Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) proposes to build a solar park inside the City of Huntingburg's 'grid'. Following a public hearing at January 11, 2016 Plan Commission meeting a request to rezone 11.02 acres from R-1 to I2 was approved by the Plan Commission. In addition to the rezoning the property must also have a Special Exception granted pursuant to Section 154.243 of the Huntingburg Code of Ordinances. Paul indicated that a representative of IMPA was in attendance tonight should there be questions. Paul also indicated that tonight's meeting constitutes a public hearing for the Special Exception being requested.

Dave Schipp opened the hearing to the public at 7:10.

Jacqueline Roos spoke to the board. She is a city resident who lives on Anya Court and is opposed to the project. She also provided a handout to the BZA stating that she has already lost property value as a result of this potential project. Additionally, a project such as this also poses other problems to surrounding property owners as hyperactivity, ADD, ADHD and autism are negatively influenced by noise. Jacqueline R said she has already experienced a 40% loss in property value just from this project being proposed. Furthermore, she said is a very easy legal process for a property owner to sue for damage

in a situations like this: Go to court and be compensated for the loss in property value. Then begin the process again for the next property owner. She has found many instances where property owners have collected in such situations. Board member Schmett commented he thought that a legal battle such as this would be quite as easy as she thinks. Mrs. Roos also referenced recent visits to other solar parks by her and her husband. At the solar park in Tell City they could detect a hum/noise but could not determine if it was from the solar park. In her case, the hum from just a fluorescent bulb bothers her and that children are even more sensitive to such noise. She indicated that she has been told by two other committees that their opinion as property owners does not matter.

Board members asked Dan about buffering and why it is important that a solar park be developed close to a substation. Dan responded that the cost of developing a solar park and having to build all new lines and substations to support it with the City of Huntingburg's grid would make a project cost prohibitive. Additionally, after the initial discussion of the solar park in early 2015 IMPA did consider 5 other sites in Huntingburg but each of them fell short of what is needed. Reasons ranged from surrounding tree cover, flood plains, no substation close enough and topography which would make the solar park inefficient. As for buffering: Dan indicated that their site is 11.02 acres in size for this proposed solar park. It would require a substantial amount of additional ground be purchased in order to allow for construction of a solid fence or the planting of natural tree/plant buffering. This would push up the cost of development to the point that a solar park would become economically infeasible. Mrs. Roos pointed out that the Tell City solar park had some trees around it. Dan indicated that the bulk of those trees would be removed this year as they interfere with efficiency of the park.

Other questions addressed by the board to Dan related to the height of the fence which would be placed around the solar park and how maintenance and grass cutting would be handled. Dave Schipp asked how new developing occurring on the adjacent undeveloped ground would impact the solar park. Dan indicated that in other communities the adjacent development is closer than it could approach to this site. A question concerning what type of buffering surrounding property owners could put in place was posed. Dan indicated that property owners are welcome to install their own buffering due to set back requirements.

Amy Lehr indicated she was a little offended by some of the comments this evening. Dave Schipp indicated that people often times fear the worst. Amy asked Dan Work when IMPA installed its first solar park. Dan responded that it was in 2014. He also indicated that in one case the park is adjacent to a school. Sam Stites, a reporter with The Herald,

indicated that where he grew up on the northwest coast of US, solar parks are often only found in the more affluent neighborhoods.

The public hearing was closed at 8:20 p.m.

BZA President Schipp called for a vote to allow/deny the Special Exception being requested by IMPA for the development of a solar park in Huntingburg. The vote was five (5) members in favor of granting the Special Exception and zero (0) opposed. The Special Exception was granted.

There being no further business to come before the BZA, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Secretary

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
President