



**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**May 08, 2017**  
**7:30pm**

ATTENDANCE

Jeremy Irrthum  
Larry Runyan  
Mike Tix  
David Peine  
Molly Weber                      Clerk

Meeting was called to order by Jeremy Irrthum at 7:30pm.

SoCore Energy – Andrew Dahlen – for a Conditional Use Permit for a Solar Structure  
406-270-4288  
[andrew.dahlen@socoreenergy.com](mailto:andrew.dahlen@socoreenergy.com)

SoCore Energy is working with Dakota Electric and Great River Energy (who provides Dakota their wholesale power) to develop distributed solar projects throughout their service territory. This project will produce 2MW of electricity and cover approximately 15 acres in size. They proposing a location across Donnalley Avenue from Dakota Electric's new substation, on parcel number 17-03100-75-011. This project is sized to the local energy demand of the area, so the energy would be consumed locally and no major transmission upgrades would be required. They are also working with Prairie Restorations, Inc., to plan pollinator gardens at the base of the array. Not only does this improve storm water and erosion control conditions, but provides vital habitat for bumblebees and butterflies. Andrew presented pictures of the type of flowers they plant at the meeting. The panels would be single access, north and south and would track east to west each day. At noon they are flat around 5 feet off the ground. At maximum tilt they are about 7 feet. It would take 3-4 months for construction. There are a lot of benefits to the tracking technology, one being that it can be cheaper since you get so much more energy from it. They size of the array maximizes Dakota Electric's electrical capacity for this installation. Craig Knudsen from Dakota Electric was present. He said they check with their members to see if they want renewable energy and they pursue what they are asking. Great River Energy provides energy to Dakota Electric. Great River is teaming up with SoCore Energy for installation.

The site will be secured by a locked chain-link fence. Electricity will be transmitted to the adjacent substation by a pole and line over the road or line bored under the road. There will be structure on the site. The land is leased from the land owner. It would be monitored remotely by SoCore & SoCore has a team that does the grounds-keeping. The life cycle is 25 years. They replace the panels as needed, though the material used my be different. The lease transfers with the land if there should be a new land owner. After 25 years SoCore returns the land to the way it was prior to installation.

Planning Commission reviewed the Ordinance on page 85, section 630. Article III – Ag Preservation, section 301 part B, number 6: Building Integrated Solar Energy Systems and Roof-Mounted Solar Energy Systems. It was mentioned that this seemed like it would be commercial since it is so big. The question was asked what others have done – is the land changed to commercial, then back to AG when the 25 years is up? Andrew said it depends on the way the Ordinance is written. Our Ordinance does not specifically call out a size of solar system or a size limitation. If we didn't want these built we would have called it out in the ordinance. They size it to the maximum of what a substation close by can handle. The Planning Commission agreed.

**Jeremy Irrthum made a recommendation for approval to proceed with the Conditional Use Permit Application for this Solar Structure. Larry Runyan seconded. Unanimously passed.**

Process if approved would be:

1. Planning Commission review
2. Town Board discussion
3. Public Hearing
4. Town Board review for approval

*Blake Otte*

507-291-0196

Requesting a Building Permit to remodel one of their barns at 26829 Donnelly Avenue

It is a free-stall barn for cattle that he wants to make wider. They are going to take the roof off of the 20 year old structure and make it 60 feet wider for a total of 108 feet wide. They will tunnel ventilate it so it is "air conditioned". He will have 27 - 55" fans pulling air in producing a 9mph wind in summer and 5 mph wind in winter. They are going to try to block out light to cool it down. MPCA is coming to look at the proposal. It will have to be the size he is proposing. It cannot be any smaller.

1. Blake will still be under his limit of 992 (with this set up he will have 580 + 80 hutches of baby cattle, who then go to a different farm. 80 will be a maximum which = 16 big cattle).
2. He is within the set back of 60 feet
3. He has 148 acres

**Larry Runyan recommended that the Board approve construction of the AG building for Blake Otte. Dave Peine seconded it. Unanimously passed.**

**Larry Runyan made a motion to adjourn at 8:18pm. Dave Peine seconded it. Meeting was adjourned.**