

MIDLAND TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 6, 2024
PUBLIC HEARING

RE: ESA SOLAR - BESS Special Land Use application and Site Plan

Call to order at 7:01 pm

Board:
Deb Braeutigam
Andrea DuBois (arrived at 7:04)
Robin Holt
Tim Mott

Guests:
31 Guests (see attached paper)

Approval of February 7, 2024 meeting minutes as they stand; moved by Robin Holt, seconded by Tim Mott. Minutes approved as they stand.

Opening comments by Planning Commission:

Robin Holt explained our purpose tonight. She explained the role of the planning commission when considering Special Land Use application and Site Plan. BESS projects have been researched by planning commission for at least 4 months.

We have contacted our township attorney.

We also see a need for township planning consultants to review the application for compliance. Spicers will provide report and guidance.

Pending Spicers Group report, no action will be taken tonight. Tonight's public hearing will be for public input only. Comments and concerns will be passed on to Spicers as well.

Motion to open Public Hearing: Motion to open public hearing made by Andrea DuBois, seconded by Deb Braeutigam and Tim Mott. Public hearing opened at 7:09 pm.

Public input

ESA Solar presentation: review points covered at previous meeting.

Question: Lower or increase electricity rates? No definitive answer

Question: Do you have an agreement with Consumers, yet? Not at this time; it is in the works, time consuming endeavor

Question: Battery storage units in MI? No

Question: Where are there projects? Massachusetts and California, Arkansas, Texas, Florida
Robin Holt reported comments/concerns that she has received via email.

Question: One Midland Township resident "heard" that these systems "kill vegetation." Some trees will be taken out and some vegetation killed when putting in the system. None other than that is anticipated.

Question: Decommissioning? ESA will provide a decommissioning contract.

Question: How long has the company been around? Since 2017, track record is quality work.

Question: Where does the power off the substation feed-HSC? This energy is fed in all

directions, fairly industrial users. Transmission substation, broader region than just Midland. Power will go anywhere needed.

Question: If one of the batteries catches on fire, will the fire departments know what to do? Yes, before breaking ground, ESA will train/inform local fire departments on the workings of the battery system and how to deal with fires/explosions (let it burn itself out).

Concern: Live right next to proposed entrance. How about resale of property/house if this goes in. This is a community... Is there another alternative for access? ESA will look into this.

Question: Have there been field tests regarding lithium batteries and their burning/exploding? Yes, there have been controlled tests involving these battery packs.

Question: Is site building contingent on Consumers approval? Not necessarily.

Question: After construction, what kind of traffic will residents expect? Biannually, there will be one or two trucks to check things out and clean stuff up. Maybe 1-2 days.

Question: If there are questions about the system, will there be contact information? Yes, there will be a number to call to assist with problems. It is common place that there will be local groups to be contracted by ESA.

Question: Could the industrial equipment come in on trains instead of putting strain on Bus Rd.? Not easy to deal with CSX, but will look into this as a possible solution.

Question: Are there vents off the top to help with cooling? Yes, there are gasses that could come off the battery pack. When it exhausts, there is disbursement.

Concern: Wants the township to know the stress that this area is in. Dow has dumped stuff in the ground. Well water, not city water. Many retirees in the area. Much deception.

Question: How is this going to affect property values? Might be a good idea to investigate into a third party property analysis.

Question: Benefits for the township? Will not require schools, added police, etc

Question: Are there lights at night? No

Question: Are there audible alarms? Yes

Question: Are these batteries similar to the lithium batteries used in homes? Yes...just like those batteries.

Question: In looking at the plans, is this all the bigger this plant will be? Yes, this is all that the Township will allow.

Concerns: Can rail cars in a derailment travel as far as the battery station? Train derailments—ESA will research.

Question: In the event of a fire/leak, will the ground water be contaminated? A vapor barrier can be installed to eliminate the contamination.

Motion to close Public Hearing: Motion to close public hearing made by Deb Braeutigam; seconded by Tim Mott. Public hearing closed at 8:23 pm.

Closing comments by Planning Commission: Robin Holt thanked the public for coming. No further business on this topic until we receive word from the Spicers Group.

Other Business: None

Adjournment: Robin Holt adjourned the meeting at 8:27 pm; seconded by Andrea DuBois. Meeting adjourned.