

Minutes - Woodbury County Zoning Commission Special Meeting – January 17, 2024

The Zoning Commission (ZC) meeting convened on the 17th of January, at 5:00 PM in the Board of Supervisors' meeting room in the Basement of the Woodbury County Courthouse, 620 Douglas Street, Sioux City, IA for a special meeting. The meeting was also made available via teleconference.

Meeting Audio:

For specific content of this meeting, refer to the recorded video on the Woodbury County Zoning Commission "Committee Page" on the Woodbury County website:

- County Website Link:
 - o https://www.woodburycountyiowa.gov/committees/zoning_commission/
- YouTube Direct Link:
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eSTtLzBTA8>

ZC Members Present:	Chris Zant, Barb Parker, Tom Bride, Jeff Hanson
County Staff Present:	Dan Priestley, Dawn Norton
Public Present:	David Linn, Genise Hallowell, Kim Alexander, Marty Dougherty, Chris Madsen, Rebekah Moerer, Greg Jochum, Tom Jochum, Deb Harpenau, Elizabeth Widman
Telephone:	Leo Yochum, Grant Fisher

Call to Order

Chair Chris Zellmer Zant formally called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. Corey Meister was absent.

Election of Chair of Zoning Commission for 2024:

Parker made a motion to nominate Zellmer Zant. Second: Bride. Motion carried 3-0.

Election of Vice-Chair of Zoning Commission for 2024:

Parker made a motion to nominate Bride. Second: Hanson. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Comment on Matters Not on the Agenda

None

Work Session for Proposed Utility-Scale Solar Energy Systems Zoning Ordinance Amendment(s).

Priestley offered a summary of the status of the solar debate and discussed the staff report including three potential options for consideration including the use of the 1) Comprehensive Plan; 2) Retention of the current policy and revision of the conditional use permit process; and 3) the establishment of a utility-scale solar energy systems overlay district.

Priestley requested for the Zoning Commission to receive an email document submitted by Naomi Widman concerning "Solar Farms Cause Decline in Surrounding Property Values." Motion to receive Parker. Second by Bride. Approved 4-0. Received item is available in the "Appendix" section.

Priestley stated that the local jurisdictions have been reached out to for comment, but feedback has not been received up to this point.

The Commissioners and Dan Priestley discussed numerous topics related to the siting of utility-scale solar systems. Topics that were discussed include: impacts on incorporated jurisdictions; impact on land value; MidAmerican's existing solar project; federal initiatives for renewable; the comprehensive plan process; comparison with other counties; the overlay district concept; acre caps; megawatt caps; agrivoltaics; the existing conditional use permit process; lack of public involvement requesting solar in the development plan process; transmission lines; utility-substations; ideal locations; lack of information regarding requested locations; overlay limitations including timeline and expiration; leases; separation distances (setbacks); overlay vs. conditional use; the use of conditions for an overlay; impact on personal use; site plan review process carry through Zoning Commission and Board of Supervisors, etc.

The Commissioners welcomed for the public present to offer any comments. The following addressed the Commission:

Kim Alexander (Hornick) stated this is all driven by government and federal incentive and intervention. He inquired about the federal initiatives including the January 12, 2024 meeting conducted by the Department of Agriculture and Department of Energy as referenced by Priestley earlier in the meeting. Indicated that this is not a free market or grass roots initiative and is being supported with government money. Stated there is no need.

Marty Dougherty (City of Sioux City)

Offered concerns about the impact of utility-scale solar on the industrial areas. Dougherty comment on the city's interest in the industrial areas for development. If industrial solar were placed in the GI Zoning District, this could adversely impact industrial growth. Dougherty referenced the partnership with the IDOT for the new interstate interchange project and offered concerns of how utility-solar might impact the industrial growth potential for the area.

Chris Madsen (City of Sioux City)

Discussed Sioux City's general concern over the city's two mile jurisdiction. He discussed other setbacks including FAA setbacks and indicated that they are working with the airport on getting further language for the concerns about solar setbacks. Madsen stated that Sioux City does permit accessory solar. Madsen indicated that they appreciate the larger notification area for potential projects.

David Linn (Correctionville)

Questioned why not expand GI area to accommodate industrial solar. Not a fan of it. Should keep within industrial area. Land value may increase in GI. Should be on land out of site, west of interstate. Inquired about the future land use mapping.

Elizabeth Widman (Sergeant Bluff) Property values could drop as much as 5%. About \$15 per month would be saved on bills by ruining ag land. Money is the incentive and motivation. Leases signed are traced back to headquarters of lawyers' office not around here.

Greg Yochum (Salix) Location is the reason why it's not feasible in GI area. Transmission lines are not there. GI can still have farming, rather a CUP or overlay, not close to highway and land would go back to AP. Is in favor of scorecard/overlay.

Leo Yochum (Salix)

Offered the Commission with some farm economic history during the 1970s and 1980s. Offered a comparison of agricultural economic figures between Woodbury, Sioux, and Plymouth Counties. Offered support for utility solar as an economic benefit.

The following is an attempt at a transcript. Due to it being computer generated, this transcript is not intended to be perfect but is being provided to offer context of the discussion. The transcript may include issues related to grammar and punctuation. The full audio and transcript is available online at: https://www.woodburycountyiowa.gov/committees/zoning_commission/. The direct hyperlink is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eSTtLzBTA8>

WORK SESSION TRANSCRIPT – BEGINS AT 5:06 PM CST

Dan Priestley

yes again tonight's meeting
5:06
is a work session for the continuation of the uh debate uh that has been
5:11
presented to us by the Board of Supervisors uh concerning uh an
5:17
option to look at proposals to address solar energy policy in the
5:22
unincorporated areas of Woodbury County um it's important to point out that the
5:28

current policy in place is for the permitting of industrial assets in
5:34
particular solar panels for industrial uses are geared toward the general industrial zoning district in Woodbury
5:41
County if there was an applicant at this time uh for these type of projects uh
5:48
the eligible area would be in that industrial area which is predominantly uh south of the uh airport Sioux Gateway
5:57
airport and west of Interstate State uh 29 in that respective area so at this
6:03
point that's the only areas where utility solar could be considered um
6:09
the Board of Supervisors have asked uh the commission to look at this in
6:15
terms of permitting it in other uh locations uh such as the agricultural uh
6:21
preservation zoning district and over the course of several months and a
6:26
series of meetings we've collected input uh from uh many land owners and various
6:31
others that have opinions on all different sides of the issue uh We've looked at a good amount of literature uh
6:39
We've consulted with comprehensive plans uh and presented a few options uh for
6:46
consideration one of the options is to transfer this debate as part of the
6:51
comprehensive plan uh the comprehensive plan is at the 11th Hour meaning it's
6:57
pretty much in place uh input has been collected uh and information is uh ready
7:03
in fact we will have a public hearing on Monday uh to kind of present to where we
7:08
are at with the comprehensive plan in nature however the comprehensive plan uh
7:14
remains open to discussion uh for the priorities of the mapping throughout
7:20
unincorporated Woodbury County and that kind of leads to the other uh proposals
7:26
uh such as an overlay district uh which would be kind of considering a
7:32
particular area over AG land with a set of parameters uh that could possibly
7:39
open up uh the ability to permit over there over AG land if uh certain criteria
7:46
met uh that's included within the backup materials and the other option is to
7:52
retain the current policy and revise the conditional use permit process the uh uh
7:59
overlay district is geared toward involving the zoning commission and the Board of Supervisors in terms of the
8:05
level of permitting uh as far as the current policy that involves the zoning commission and the board of adjustment
8:13
uh the uh retention of the current policy with added features would entail
8:18
um adding additional ordinance language with protections uh such as agreements
8:24
decommissioning etc uh where we had left off in the last public hearing
8:29
uh was to um push this out to tonight's meeting January uh to have us have a
8:35
chance to of course collect more uh public input uh more concepts to be introduced into the record those were
8:42
put into uh the backup materials included uh with the packet um
8:47
Additionally the only other uh major item that I had received since the last meeting was a citizen comment uh from
8:57
no Naomi Widman and I uh ask that the zoning commission receive this
9:03
into the record for the minutes uh which would require of course a motion in a second but this is this general comments
9:10
from the public and so

Barb Parker

do you want to do that now

Dan Priestley

yeah I think it' be a good idea

Barb Parker

I'll make a motion that we accept those
9:18

Chris Zellmer Zant

a motion a second second favor say I I Opposed same sign.
9:25
sign okay

Dan Priestley

with uh everything that I've said which is of course a broad
9:31
Viewpoint this is a very uh um uh significant consequential debate on the
9:38
future of Woodbury County I've reached out to the local jurisdictions the uh
9:43
the cities etc and have definitely asked for them to offer input on the
9:50
potential effects with their respective communities I have not received a lot of input uh back at this point but uh
9:57
there's definitely lots of considerations that you could keep in mind for the ordinance as far as uh
10:04
respect for the respect uh local jurisdictions um with that said uh the
10:10
three concepts are laid out within there and so I would basically turn it
10:16
back to the board and ask that we kind of look through at least uh
10:21
those three possible options and so we can all better acquaint ourselves with the uh kind of the details uh the for us
10:30
in a conversational
10:40
format

Jeff Hanson

Dan has there been any previous applications for conditional use permit
10:46
for this use

Dan Priestley

yes Mid-American Energy a couple years ago um uh down by Port
10:52
nail road on the corner uh uh near their campus uh about a 73 acre or so parcel
10:59
located a uh a solar site down there uh they went through the uh protocols that
11:06
the county has at the time uh for the conditional use uh for notifying the neighbors uh actually a notification at
11:13
that under the current rules are 500 ft within the property and the that are notified by letter everything's
11:20
published in the legal section and the zoning commission uh scrutinize the site plan uh the respective uh
11:29
locations where they're going to be on the parcel and uh um looked at potential
11:35
effects that it could have on the area we consulted with a number of area agencies including the FAA considering
11:42
the location there of the airport and took a lot of information into consideration through our typical
11:49
conditional use funnel as we try to investigate all the different aspects of

11:54

that and um it was turned over to the board of adjustment uh they uh our system is designed where

12:02

the commission uh conducts a review meeting and the public hearing is held

12:07

at the board of adjustment level so the commission kind of does the homework as far as uh where the shortfalls and the

12:14

positives negatives all those are transfer that over to the board of adjustment and the board of adjustment

12:20

has that information available as well as the public input at hand and so that information is funneled in and they make

12:27

a determination on how to uh write the resolution and the standards for permitting that respective

12:33

project so that is the one and only project that I I'm aware of since my

12:38

tenure

Jeff Hason

and no pending applications

Dan Priestley

no

12:44

pending

Tom Bride

was there a decommission plan with that site

Dan Priestley

I don't believe so. [Tom Bride: Okay]

12:50

um and that's why uh that's why part of the proposal is is to have direct language in there specific to

12:57

decommissioning

Tom Bride

any other companies that have approached

13:04

the county at all or anything in the general industrial area?

Dan Priestley

we um once in a

13:10

while we get inquiries of course but as far as actually permitting and uh selecting that as a site location

13:19

no

Chris Zellmer Zant

that's 11,000 Acres

Tom Bride

yeah I mean I'm just kind of you

13:25

know there's been stuff talked about that it doesn't pay what it would deem necessary to acquire

13:34

that ground is what I've heard

Chris Zellmer Zant

because of the

13:39

infrastructure

Tom Bride

the general industrial businesses will pay more than

13:45
the solar solar panels so I mean that's just couple comments that I've had made
13:52
to me

Chris Zellmer Zant

and then mid America that they owned that 73 Acres

Dan Priestley

that was that was their private property yeah
14:05

Chris Zellmer Zant

okay so I mean if we start at the comprehensive plan debate which is number one just a couple of things that
14:12
I saw that I highlighted that I thought were significant was even in the 2005
14:18
comprehensive plan we for policy by 2.5 States fully explore alternative
14:24
renewable energy sources so I don't think that's really a debate I think that's
14:31
something that is still exists today but I mean what is everybody else's
14:37
thoughts renewable energy is here to stay

Jeff Hanson

I would agree

Tom Bride

yeah I think
14:44
that's back then and now and more so now

Chris Zellmer Zant

and I think so into the future from what
14:50
I can understand I mean I'm looking at articles from that are portraying
14:55
2050 that renewal renewable energy is just going to expand maybe not to the
15:01
extent that they think it is but and that's something else I found they still
15:07
said coal oil natural gas is going to be our primary energy
15:12
sources well that's even the um guy from mid America and that was his comment it's more of a mix than a one source

Chris Zellmer Zant

One
15:22
Source situation right

Dan Priestley

if I may in the lit review
15:29
uh references the uh this has been uh kind of a a federal initiative the
15:35
Administration has put forward uha priority as far as introducing uh the
15:42
local communities to renewable initiatives and uh there's been
15:48
priorities uh 2035 which was referenced in there and I
15:53
know that they've been carefully watching the communities there's been meetings uh there was a meeting last
15:58
Friday from the Department of Agriculture as well as the Department of Energy that was kind of assessing uh

16:05
where the local communities are what kind of potential positives and negatives there are as far as the
16:11
permitting and trying to understand where communities are with the different aspects of addressing it and as kind of
16:19
coincides with the lit review um many communities there's not one size fits
16:24
all in terms of addressing these respective issues some communities uh do
16:30
it by conditional use permits some do it by allowed use by certain areas
16:36
and uh some have employed the overlay district scenario which is of course
16:42
heavily referenced with Linn and Scott County even though those two are overlay they significantly do it much different
16:48
as one relies much more on corn suitability rating while the other uh has more of
16:54
that rubric aspect but uh uh the point I'm making is uh this this is part of uh
17:00
the economy or the future economy as far as renewable being a part of it and there's a compelling interest at the
17:07
federal level um asking communities to look at this as part of the land use
17:13
measures and as we know a lot of times these unincorporated areas have uh aged development plans that are not up to
17:21
uh where these uh future standards are and if you're looking at uh particular areas or priorities across the board for
17:29
the county to recognize these type of land uses it's more than appropriate to look at the development plan as a way to
17:37
prioritize uh what the initiatives are and where you want to put these assets just uh you look at the history of
17:43
Woodbury County and the nature of our population and U as SIMPCO has worked
17:49
towards this current uh uh draft of the development plan uh we found a lot of
17:54
similarities uh from 2005 as far as as the priorities of where we locate our
18:00
industrial base is where we where we have the priority on agriculture and the
18:05
uh zoning ordinance that grew out of that 2005 plan put the emphasis much on
18:11
the uh um agricultural area or excuse me the industrial areas and kept it off of
18:17
the agriculture land at that time uh lots of debates have been in Woodbury
18:23
County about whether you take the Farmland out of production we've also had quite a bit of debates on uh
18:29
protection of Loess Hills and uh we've ran into a number of issues as far as the uh
18:35
uh the interpretation of of landowner rights however uh development plans are
18:40
put in place on purpose so that we can have a moment to stop and look and see the Innovations of how the world has
18:48
changed in a lot of respects and go back and poll the public so that the public
18:53
understands and can has the ability to present to the to the uh leadership
18:58
on what type of community that we want to be and that's why we label these that's why we say 2040 we're projecting
19:06
forward and as technology grows uh we're kind of here at a juncture um uh these
19:13
um solar assets can definitely take up a significant footprint and so it does
19:18
offer us the question we have quite a bit of ag land out there are there areas that might be suitable to facilitate uh
19:27
uh the permitting of this uh growing technology um it's imperative to
19:33
point out that we have a lot of significant uses that can definitely play affect a footprint on
19:39
agriculture land that are conditional use permitted however the most distinguishing factor is that uh solar
19:47
can take up a lot more acres than any other use that is presented in our
19:52

zoning ordinance they could probably go from 500 acres up to 2,500 3,000 and some
19:58
Acres of agricultural land that could be uh debated within there and I think
20:03
that's important uh as the uh uh community decides if this is a fit uh
20:10
for how Woodberry County wants to be in that meeting uh that I attended it was a
20:15
zoom meeting they talked about nationwide kind of affecting less than 2% of ag land or about 1% kind of
20:23
spreading it out as addressing some of the alternative energy priorities uh uh
20:30
to address the grid in the future and uh they um they pointed out uh quite a bit
20:36
in their presentation about coexistence uh agrivoltaics things that we've
20:41
talked about in some of the previous meetings uh uh where that technology continues to be studied on whether it
20:49
can go further than sheep grazing whether it could coexist with uh crops
20:55
etc but uh that's kind of a growing uh uh thing to look at as well as the
21:00
compatibility and the literature definitely says uh in the uh the the
21:06
proponents of uh adding this to ag land see it as compatible uh depending on how
21:13
the farmer wants to prioritize uh uh their uh their farm operation with this
21:20
uh so the the literature definitely kind of goes across the board talking about
21:26
land values uh it's tough there's various studies out there from Texas Rhode Island Massachusetts that are uh
21:33
placed into the uh um kind of direct comparison Woodbury County is unique
21:39
we're definitely not Rhode Island but we can definitely learn something uh some of the data says that within a half mile
21:47
it could affect land values at 1.5% but then you're talking about housing and so I I cannot consciously
21:54
take that data and 100% apply it or even attempt to apply it to our situation
22:00
but it's definitely helpful to understanding the perception this is a
22:06
lot of a assessment is based on perception how people feel there's some that might uh really value the renewable
22:14
uh aspect and see it as a as a gain as far as having it in your community and
22:20
actually positively affecting we've seen that in some of the literature we've seen that some that have strongly
22:26
oppose it because it couldn't adversely affect things such as viewscape quality of life Etc so what we find is there's a
22:35
significant level of opinions on the aspect of how it affects ground zero
22:42
meaning your own backyard your own respective community and I think that's why um I know that's why we've spent so
22:49
much time trying to carefully consider uh what is an appropriate fit or not and
22:55
going back to the previous determination the citizens of Woodbury County uh
23:01
placed those in the industrial basically labeling them an industrial type of
23:07
activity and that's that's pretty much where the plan is and that's why we put so much emphasis on the development plan
23:15
as looking at does that remain our priority or is there an openness to
23:20
expanding out and if you're going to expand out uh the development plan could
23:25
either back an overlay district or even back the concept of not necessarily spot
23:31
zoning where you can uh maybe address areas that are suitable and prioritized
23:39
for a type of General Industrial Development or even reworking the limited industrial kind of concept as
23:46
well uh then we would have to look at the law of unintended consequences you fix something some way then all of a

23:53
sudden what did you end up doing the other way as far as if you make something industrial but there's a
23:58
desire to continue agriculture um do you handle that with the overlay District or do you uh adjust
24:05
and allow farming in limited industrial and uh the grandfathering rights or uh
24:11
legal non-conforming rights I should say that are applied in our current industrial area mean that the farmers
24:18
can basically continue fully with their operation until that use ceases to exist
24:24
after a set period of time and so if you were to flip a district and allow
24:30
something maybe in a limited industrial do you address it for long-term farming
24:35
or do you have a grandfathering type of scenario so the question is how do you
24:40
look at each unique location and I think the fallacy that I've ran into a staff
24:46
throughout this whole debate is I haven't had any um direct target
24:51
locations which is very helpful for understanding the priority of the county
24:57
and so when we talk about the future development map and looking at it as a
25:02
debate as far as development planning I think it would be helpful to kind of
25:07
know where are some alternative areas if not industrial that could be presented
25:13
to us so that we could understand if it might be a priority and that goes beyond
25:19
the CSR and the various other indicators that we're talking about because we had the question in our last work session
25:25
what about the CSR on Industrial land well you're already an industrial land and it's already a permitted use or
25:33
conditional use so you're not talking about those aspects once you're inside of the industrial land so if you decide
25:40
up front and you have the information before you up front and if something's going to be a future industrial area you
25:47
plan for it ahead of time you lay that out as the priority then you're not
25:52
debating CSR and those type of things you're the public comes together as far
25:57
as an area that they all find appropriate so those are some of the I think the challenges and that's why this
26:04
is strung out so long as uh the debate has been more of we're looking at all
26:10
these options but we don't have okay uh this proposal this proposal this
26:17
proposal when you when you have a set of proposals or priorities it it uh it
26:22
shows transparency as far as okay that might work that might not work and so uh
26:29
that's why development plan is an option
26:34

Chris Zellmer Zant

so I I might be going Beyond tonight's
26:40
meeting and going into the next meeting that we have on com the comprehensive plan there wasn't a lot of feedback from
26:46
the community from the public as far as what they saw in the comprehensive plan
26:52
the time when Simco was developing everything

Dan Priestley

um specific to the the whole
26:58
plan or to solar policy **Chris Zellmer Zant:** solar policy

Dan Priestley

there was not a lot there was actually no major uh um uh submissions
27:06
that I got I would have to uh touch base with Erin more further as far as the
27:11
solar policy but the the meetings that I've been at the they were not uh not I
27:17
wish they were more attended in fact as well but uh um solar was never that you
27:24
know shining uh priority at the time

Chris Zellmer Zant

right yeah I mean we talk about solar
27:29
kind of as a as a whole with the renewable energy sources but I know that includes wind but that's off the you know that's off the table I don't
want
27:35
to include that but I mean there wasn't a lot of push back or a lot of concern about that terminology or language in
27:42
this proposed new comprehensive plan yeah so you know that kind of surprises
27:48
me a little bit too but then we don't hear things until we have a problem and then we hear
27:54
funny that's

Dan Priestley

that's the the one thing as a as a college instructor when I'm
28:00
teaching the students we'd oftentimes talk about proactive policy versus the reactive policy and you can't get more
28:07
proactive than a development plan you're basically asking the community what kind of community do you want to be over the
28:14
long run and that's the opportunity to chime in and show us but most policy is
28:19
reactive you know eventually and we do and that's fine and that's that's definitely a big part of it but uh this
28:26
is one of the most wonderful opportunities that any Community has to to collect on the priorities because
28:33
it's the hope that there's some sort of uh unity as far as the priorities as
28:38
much as possible

Dan Priestley

and the other thing that I see even in this map versus the proposed
28:46
map um there isn't a lot of change but I see around a lot of the towns there's
28:51
transitional Agriculture and solar could potentially feed into those towns and I
28:58
mean we're talking transmission lines and it sounds like that's where the solar wants to be is near transmission
29:04
line we don't know where those are we don't know the key information about
29:09
okay where are they so we can plan around this where is this going to happen it sounds like they want to be within a half mile yeah it's uh what
29:17
I've been told is I mean common sense and practicality is you need to be near
29:24
where the energy is so substations or the transmission lines the literature
29:29
definitely backs that up and uh so you can generally understand where a lot of
29:34
those assets are but it's uh in order to have a priority to have a layout on
29:41
what the expectations are the community would have to come to some type of consensus through mapping on where there
29:48
might be some reasonable priority areas and uh um
29:53
that's that's a good point though energy assets are something that should be
29:59
definitely considered as part of those locations

Chris Zellmer Zant

right and we've gotten no information from those small the
30:04
communities in Woodbur County as far as their interest in renewable energy

Dan Priestley

well the the communities as far as the
30:10
development plan have been consulted and looked at as far as the uh uh their development plans when Erin and Corinne
30:17
have worked on uh putting this together the one of the first things they looked at was the city's future land use maps
30:24
because we want full out compatibility never want to run into any kind of conflict based on the land use there's
30:32
got to be a full out agreements as far as uh and you you look at even our
30:39
normal role regular order and how we handle subdivisions uh the two mile is
30:44
taken very seriously we work with Sioux City on that quite a bit with the subdivisions and and the other community
30:51
uh when we revisited the wind debate one of the things that came up was two mile setback and so to mile setback was
30:58
brought in there not because it was it it was not actually not associated with wind policy or even a section in Iowa
31:05
Code but we went back to the tradition of understanding that two mile territory as far as subdivision and and other uh
31:13
zoning scenarios or cities actually if you County does not have zoning the city still has a compelling interest in Iowa
31:19
Co within the two mile range there so uh yes the cities have been respected
31:25
through the development

Chris Zellmer Zant

right but have they even said that this is what we're trying to plan we might be planning this
31:31
in this area too or we're interested in this so This AG land that's transitional
31:37
we're looking at this for the potential that this might be so that helps us plan
31:42
overall

Dan Preistley

yeah specifically and running these proposals out and and right now
31:48
we're talking in hypotheticals so the cities have basically received information how do you feel about solar
31:54
policy being that General but and that's the fallacy in the debate is we don't have a specific target area so if you're
32:01
talking about an entire district whether it's AP the the citizen or the community leader we're all left with okay it's
32:09
it's possible but we don't know because it gets project specific and that's
32:14
definitely the Challenge from that chasing a policy without a direct
32:20
mapping and so if we get into the ordinance and we start talking about AG
32:25
areas or these other areas we can still discuss setbacks or discuss ways that we
32:31
can protect the cities and their rights within those areas and their priorities for sure

Chris Zellmer Zant

so we're talking
32:37
about 427,000 Acres of ag land AP and yet
32:43
we're supposed to figure out where these solar things are supposed to fit and work with a maybe a conditional use or
32:49

whatever it happens to be without knowledge of what the cities

32:55

are thinking or those transmission

33:00

lines we can narrow the field by using a our two mile you know setbacks we can

33:08

use up some by our csrs that eliminate some of the land slope that can

33:15

eliminate some more of the land so that narrows the field a little bit but it's that going to be enough are those the

33:21

issues that we want to

Dan Priestley

well the the issue is if you're looking at an or

33:27

if you're looking at the overlay specifically where you're trying to facilitate it on agricultural land uh

33:34

you need to know the priorities of what the regulations are um you owe it to

33:40

developers you owe it to land owners you owe it to the public that there's a clear transparent process that they can

33:47

go through and have an expectation uh to meet the permitting requirements by the time they work

33:54

through the ordinance they work through staff they work through other leaders uh uh most proposals should be in shape to

34:00

be feasible typically when somebody calls the zoning office and they try to they they expect you in a sense to have

34:07

an understanding when I know number one thing we say we can't speak for board members we can't speak for appointed or

34:14

elected officials but we can certainly show them a process that has been put into place by the community that is

34:21

clear and uh makes you know hopefully makes sense to everybody uh whether it's a clear setback you can be this far away

34:29

whether it's a a soil standard having uh specific regulations built in there uh

34:37

uh to the point uh we get into the uh larger uh scale of how other communities

34:43

have addressed this uh I've seen acre caps I've seen megawatt caps but if you

34:49

to even put an acre cap on and you still have the whole level of agricultural available that still leaves the

34:55

uncertainty as far as where these uh could be sited and so uh going down to I

35:02

know one of the communities puts an acre cap in and where the supervisors would

35:07

probably have to because it's an ordinance they'd have to go revisit the acre cap if something were to ever

35:13

change and actually debate it through the three typical public hearings on whether an acre cap uh should be at a

35:20

certain level

Chris Zellmer Zant

and that's all 14 counties that actually have some kind of zoning regulations for this out of of the state

35:27

of Iowa

Dan Priestley

and as you can tell through the sample counties that were presented in the report there's a mix but a lot of

35:33

them do rely on the conditional use

Chris Zellmer Zant

some kind of special use

35:40

permitting

Tom Bride

we discussed a little bit on size the

35:45
uh Port Neal plants the there they about
35:50
a 500 megawatt each um that 500 megawatt would would equate
35:57
to somewhere between 500 to 1,000 Acre Site per solar
36:06
depending on how it's done

Jeff Hanson

more than that I think your literature in five to 10 acres per megawatt it's going like

Tom Bride

36:14
I thought that the uh what was the yeah there was a five to 800 acre 500 megawatt site that Mid
36:22
America or somebody currently has in Iowa. **Chris Zellmer Zant:** that's it by Fort Dodge
36:27
trying to think of this I can't remember the name

Tom Bride

and I thought that was a 500 megawatt site and it was 800
36:34
acres right

Barb Parker

this this says 10 acres to produce one megawatt on page
36:40
five

Tom Bride

I just I don't know where the difference would come into play
36:45

Dan Priestley

on it roughly gives you an idea how many acres per a project if they're going for
36:51
a certain amount of megawatts could take out of out of eglant or
36:59
or coexist with
37:05
it find information in here there's a
37:11
lot

Tom Bride

but is that am I incorrect then on that site that's currently a 500 megawatt site with 800 acres have to
37:19
probably go back and look at did that that came out of the work session yeah that was in one of the I think that was
37:25
a question I asked the largest one was in yeah Iowa 800 AC oh that's 100
37:33
megawatt eight yep eight acres for yeah so that fits
37:40
within that ballpark part so that but is that the largest one
37:46
currently in the state of Iowa holiday Creek
37:53
project

Dan Priestley

have to look back transcript
38:01

Tom Bride

so yeah I mean you'd be and that's where the cap I can't remember what it was around 8,000 some acres is was the
38:08
supervisors when we discussed that start with they have the percentage

Chris Zellmer Zant

2,540 it's
38:15
2% I think we talked about that was even too much at one

Tom Bride

that would allow for two
38:21
two sites to if they were full 500 megawatt sites **Chris Zellmer Zant:** maybe three if you get
38:27
2500 acre piece three plus right

Tom Bride

what's that it'd be 4,000 acres for a
38:36
five right okay 500 megawatt okay so if they were to say we're going to replace
38:42
this plant which it wasn't well what I can't think the M
38:49
Americans Will um he said that wasn't that's not what the plan would be and
38:57
uh I mean even so you'd have two sites would meet the
39:03
cap if they replaced every or the whole capacity that mid american currently would
39:10
have on two PL or was it South which ones are
39:18
run south and there there's two right yeah um but I you know he said that coal
39:26
is going to still be part of the picture and it's not going to be taken over by
39:31
solar right um I mean I think the 2% cap I guess what I'm saying is would
39:37
probably allow enough acres to cover what's going to be needed in the short term you know 20 years or
39:45
whatever maybe that'll change down the road

Chris Zellmer Zant

do we want to commit to something like that over 20 years or you want to
39:51
review that like they down here in the industrial area they're going to review it they wanted to review it every four
39:56
years

Tom Bride

and that's the other thing too is if it's if it's left that hey just put it in the general industrial there's
40:03
11,000 Acres 10,000 ACR so you could eat up a big chunk of that if somebody were
40:10
to put that in there so then the other answer is do you expand General industrial um but then where do you put
40:19
it you know how how do you expand that and if if you take away the ability to
40:25
put it elsewhere outside General industrial if you stay with what we currently have and that's the only spot
40:31
for it is it even going to be feasible I mean if nothing's went there now
40:37
nobody's looking at the general industrial site that you're aware of or
40:43
and has and hasn't and hasn't for how many years I mean so I guess it's
40:52
either the way I look at it is right now General Industrial
40:58

doesn't work for solar to the land owner because they don't get the money that they want to get out of it that they can
41:06
potentially get for General industrial use other than solar I mean that's I guess I'm thinking
41:12
the reason why it hasn't gone there yet and like I said I've had a couple individuals say I'm not going to take
41:20
that payment because it's worth this much it isn't enough but

Chris Zellmer Zant

it didn't sound like M American was really even a
41:26
player as far as the solar goes I got the indication that a

Tom Bride

there's um the
41:33
options that are being bought right now are I'm assuming not Mid American
41:38
purchasing them that's what I'm guessing I don't know we don't we don't know those answers but uh somebody's out
41:44
there looking somebody's got options on ground land
41:50
but none of those are within the general industrial currently so I'm assuming either they looked and
41:56
they realized it was too costly or they just didn't look there I don't know what the answer is on that
42:03
but right now our plan only allows for it in that area so I would think that they would have at least looked there to
42:09
start with right unless there's a different reason that I'm not seeing why it doesn't work in the general
42:15
industrial

Dan Priestley

well the um I think we got to be careful with hypotheticals and what
42:21
what uh folks might Envision I I do think that the literature speaks to the fact that they're they're looking for
42:27
the most feasible locations they're not Nationwide probably when the when this
42:33
kind of comes from you know a nationwide priority and you have
42:38
developers uh um finding it very lucrative to get into uh industrial
42:45
solar and uh they're they're going to look at various factors on where the
42:51
most suitable locations are of course zoning would likely be a factor uh but
42:57
uh you're going to always try to find the path of least resistance I'm sure they would love to line up the zoning
43:03
perfectly but there's times that uh you gotta you got to tell the local community that we've got this you know
43:11
this endeavor here that might be lucrative and um your zoning may not fit
43:17
up exactly right and so uh the burden is on them to demonstrate to the community
43:23
on how uh this will fit uh with that area and that's that's really what a rezone application does is it shows the
43:31
very public way on whether that this is a suitable priority and going back
43:36
through normal order and development plans and mapping all of those things can be helpful to backing up a
43:44
particular project but uh I think there's a number of reasons why or why
43:50
not folks may have considered uh an industrial area not an industrial area
43:55
there's on the the other hand folks will argue that industrial areas are not a good location because uh you might take
44:03
other uh economic activity that could be placed in the industrial area that uh
44:08
solar may not do so well for well those

Tom Bride

that activity won't fit anywhere else

44:13

but it would fit there and the economic gain is going to be high and I guess the other thing when Chris was talking about

44:21

um transmission lights those those we can't

44:27

it's it's a Federal Regulation we can't put a map out there with them drawn

44:32

through and say oh these are the areas in Woodbury County that we should be looking at because you can't do that so

44:39

so that makes it was that well they know where they are but we can't put together that map and put it in our plan and say

44:45

well here's these correct

Dan Priestley

yeah a lot of the um um utility asset things there's

44:52

there's knowledge of them obviously Planning Group

Tom Bride

people know where they are but we can't put that map in our

44:59

plan in our public you're not going to get down to specific foot and then go

45:04

out and say okay here's an area that's you know there's transmission lines through here this is suitable this is an

45:10

area we would

Dan Priestley

but I I do think if you're a developer and you're looking at you know the the key assets and why you want

45:17

a project in a certain spot you're that's going to catch your eye and you're going to definitely go for it and

45:22

that might very well be the case on why there's some areas out there I'm just saying kind of through the planning

45:28

process without having a a good grasp on what those areas are I we you can always

45:34

uh track options like but you know with the recorder's office you can generally understand where those options are as

45:42

was reflected in the packet at certain points but uh not knowing the full scope

45:47

uh makes it much more challenging as far as uh uh the priority of uh which lands

45:54

that you take out and this debate is very much centered in on um doesag go

46:00

in does Egan go out we're concerned about uh corn suitability rating we know

46:05

that it's uh it's heavily went into the debate of CSR one csr2 Etc but uh which

46:12

csr2 is of course the current metric across the board uh from assessment but

46:18

uh um like with Scott County Scott County basically says we're using the

46:23

csr2 but when you do use the csr2 it does limit uh depending on the quality

46:30

of the soil limits those available acres and so that's that's where this is kind

46:36

of goes back and forth and uh again if we uh had a better understanding on what

46:43

some of these particular areas are it would definitely be helpful for for the planning process it's sort of sort of

46:49

like the theory you get a rezone application we all know what happens with that you get a rezone application

46:55

we bring it in do they meet the criteria we look down the criteria and I know the

47:00

the first thing that we run to right away is that a spot Zone run into the spot Zone and that that's what's kind of

47:07

hindered the process right now from the developer standpoint uh because they know they could submit an application it
47:13
could come to you tomorrow uh they'd go through and then they'd run into that criteria they'd have the CSR to look at
47:20
but then they would have your spot Zone to look at and the commission depending on the fact that you glean out of all
47:27
the proceedings and everything might recommend to the Board of Supervisors you know that's a nice project and
47:32
everything but it just does not fit with the letter of the law right now uh within the ordinance and so you make
47:38
that recommendation to them and that's the overall effect and so you go back to the looking at this process the
47:45
question is how do you address those metrics for whether the area of land that
47:53
footprint is suitable or not and because it's on ag land that's that's why we're
47:59
in the midst of this the overlay is a way of um uh your original
48:05
recommendation to the supervisors back in May and June was to go the conditional use route and I think that
48:12
the commission at that time really highlighted you look at the area you scrutinize the area you look at the
48:18
application you look at the surroundings you run it through each of the criteria you come up with a determination and
48:25
then you send that over to the board of adjustment um uh I know you're very well versed and used to doing that that was a
48:33
result of the recommendation it's sort of like when you go to the overlay how do you replicate that in a sense but
48:40
involve the supervisors with some type of criteria and you'll see in the the proposed
48:46
option there in the packet there's sort of some red ink in there that kind of highlights the similar process
48:52
that you do for the conditional use on scrutinizing in the area uh some of that
48:58
U scorecard that Linn has adopted is in there to kind of mitigate some effects
49:05
uh but uh it sort of amplifies the conditional use process in a sense I kind of call it a super conditional use
49:11
because it involves the supervisors but um and involves the the public hearing proceedings and everything at maximum
49:18
level with the three and then the the zoning commission but um
49:24
uh it's so if you're going to go with a solar policy or a solar proposal you
49:29
need those clear goal posts on what constitutes that area as being
49:36
acceptable or not it's just that if you run that through the existing right now
49:41
on ag land to switch it to Industrial I mean that's that's what you we would do
49:46
right now to try to facilitate IT staff would tell them you know that's not suitable because there's no C in the
49:53
column and so uh they could try for the rezone and then
50:00
run the application here and then maybe run into that brick wall because of that
50:05
criteria so

Jeff Hanson

in your overlay option and I apologize if these questions have been
50:11
answered this is my first meeting so trying to get caught up to speed on all the work that you guys have put into
50:17
this but on the overlay option have you looked at limiting that overlay in the other zoning districts have you said the
50:25
overlay is allowed in AP D LI or have you looked at those additional
50:30
parameters of limiting it elsewhere?

Dan Priestley

yeah um so the overlay could be conditioned

50:36
for only a specific zoning District so you could uh say that it's only eligible
50:42
on AP land and uh some counties some jurisdictions have actually put setbacks
50:47
from the overlay from other zoning designations as well to kind of create a
50:53
buffer in there from it but yes um the the way that it's kind of presented in
50:59
here is the overlay becomes an ordinance option and it gets confusing sometimes
51:04
when you say you're creating an overlay District I think the public might think that you're laying a district over top
51:10
the map right away when it's approved but what it is is the it's an available
51:16
tool that the county has the commission supervisors have uh to approve an area
51:23
where you're virtually creating the overlay for the project footprint so that district is being created at the
51:31
time to facilitate that project on that respective District so yeah you could
51:36
say no it can't go nowhere near suburban residential it can't go near agricultural Estates uh if you even went
51:44
that far uh agricultural Estates is our most dense District in terms of the two
51:49
acre lots and density land density so um that's really kind of how the overlay
51:56
can be used and in a sense it it has the feeling of a conditional use because you
52:02
you're dealing with a footprint of land on a conditional use as well uh but as
52:08
far as a zoning overlay District we would end up with a legal description basically defining what this new overlay
52:16
district is and we have we have all kinds of overlay districts out there we do have a pre-existing one which is the
52:22
flood plain it sits out there it is a fun District that that coincides it's
52:27
just that we we create a recognized area for an additional use that's created to
52:34
innovate that is not allowed underneath the base District basically and the
52:39
the overlay um has a bit more flexibility than a standalone um zoning
52:45
District because uh if you go and rezone to General industrial the way it's written right now or limited industrial
52:52
you're going specific to that use and any use that's available within that District which can create other concerns
53:00
the law of unintended consequences but the overlay could be geared toward uh
53:05
okay here is this use and uh but you retain your full agricultural rights and
53:11
everything that the rights and privileges of agricultural preservation underneath and so that's definitely the
53:18
I think the compatibility that uh um Scott and Linn County have seen as far as
53:24
their proposal and it's a smart kind of smart planning type of principle to if you're going to
53:31
go into overlay is to again go into the development plan and maybe reference
53:37
those type of uh Concepts so that there's some something to hang the Hat on as far as a policy and the use of
53:46
those things and this is something that would be very new to Woodbury County we don't have uh um we we have language in
53:54
there overlays for conservation and other uh uses but they're they're not they haven't been actively employed or
54:01
re rezoned to and so it's it's not a regular process for us

Tom Bride

and other thing
54:07
that could or would limit is if there was a cap and you have that two you know
54:13

if it's X Acres that's really the only way you can limit the because you don't
54:18
know where it's going to go or where where people are going to want to put it in AP so you just have to acres and once
54:26
that caps it then that's it yeah

Chris Zellmer Zant

and once once the use is done like your your
54:31
lease or your contract is up the overlay disappears in your back tag and this you
54:37
would

Tom Bride

change that CH Zing classification for that property and end up with this
54:42
General industrial out in the middle the spot zoning that we're trying to stay away from

Dan Priestley

and it depends on how you word
54:48
the overlay ultimately in the ordinance what the rights and privileges are of the overlay uh what the decommissioning
54:56
situation is what the when the youth stops uh what are the expectations there
55:01
for that respective District we've got our countywide regulations on things but if you're going to get specific you're
55:09
going to want the overlay to cover a lot of those options and uh again I I would
55:14
my recommendation would be everything that is considered we immediately go to the law of unintended consequences
55:21
because this is one of those things right away that you make one adjustment here and you may not realize oh we're
55:27
affecting it over here so we've got to be very very careful as far as uh how
55:33
those could be if if an overlay is something that's uh desired for
55:51
recommendation

Chris Zellmer Zant

so condition wise I know we've talked talked about condition we already had flood zone or the you know
55:57
the flood zone that's kind of a condition that we use typically we talked about csrs they have an impact on
56:04
what we approve and what we don't approve as a condition in my reading I've read that
56:11
they're looking for areas within a half mile of transmission lines and so do we make that one of our
56:20
conditions mean that narrows the field that much more
56:29
I mean I don't want to be too restrictive but you lose 5% in the transmission lines as it is of solar and
56:34
solar's already 20% efficient you know so it's like we're
56:40
kind of playing with their rules ideal rules maybe a little bit
56:47

Dan Priestley

again it kind of comes down to generally mapping I think that's definitely kind of a very helpful ideal as far as
56:57
placement I do think that you know there's there's land out there that may
57:04
may very well fit some criteria that we're looking for and I think that there's uh industry standards where they
57:11
where they want to be located and uh I'd like to know much more from the developer side you know what what is
57:20
what is your ultimate goal on these spots why would why would you seek out
57:25

certain areas certain land owners and see that be the prime ground on on put
57:31
putting it at that location I think that's that's helpful I think the more that becomes transparent I think that
57:37
makes their their process even more smoothn other counties because
57:43
it uh gives a sense of understanding and what folks are looking for

Chris Zellmer Zant

but on the
57:49
flip side that can be used against them so I can see where they're trying to
57:54
protect that information information

Dan Priestley

competition

Chris Zellmer Zant

competition yeah

Tom Bride

I mean I guess to answer your
58:02
question is put it putting the restriction on the distance for a transmission line I I think they're
58:08
going to do what they're going to do that's going to work better for them for them [Chris Zellmer Zant: absolutely] so and if it is the case
58:14
that their half mile is their limit or their unless they put in their [Chris Zellmer Zant: ideal
58:21
Standard] or whatever you know a different transmission line you know I I think that'll fix
58:27
itself for that just that part of it I mean they're going to go where it's going to work best right and to say well
58:33
that has to be within a half mile of that I don't know that that's [Chris Zellmer Zant: necessarily has to be put in
58:40
writing] I I guess I don't know what that's going to fix okay because it still might be in an area where people
58:46
don't that you know the neighbor don't want that anyhow right if they're within that half mile but if they're outside
58:53
the half mile maybe the people are fine there and and they can go a little further I I don't know

Dan Priestley

I would probably
58:59
suggest to you all uh more scrutiny on separation distances those are more of
59:06
the feasibility things I think that the public has a a a greater understanding
59:12
for they know how far they want to be away from things that are affected in their neighborhood we've seen a number
59:19
of debates that come down directly to setbacks and separation distances we've
59:24
seen the center of rural Affairs offer us different ranges from 200 to 300
59:30
there some of the most uh counties that have had on the far end have used a 1000 foot setback specific to residential I
59:38
think if we're going to start kind of parsing specifically each area we're
59:44
going to want to look at how far do they need to be from a single family dwelling a house how far do they need to be from
59:50
the corporate line uh from the cities uh the cities uh offer us more detail on
59:57
that if they're in support of that or not that'd be helpful the uh we looking
1:00:03
at the wind ordinance that we did we had uh I think airport uh separation distances there was uh separation
1:00:10
distances from cemeteries uh from uh um conservation

1:00:15
areas and uh I know that the speaking a setbacks the conservation board did send
1:00:21
us it was in the back of the packet a recommendation of a mile setback uh from
1:00:26
the respective conservation areas so there are groups out there that want to
1:00:31
have a input on how far away they are from things and I I think that could be
1:00:38
helpful to the debate as well on when you know that okay I can only be so far
1:00:43
away from uh these respective points that offers us a bit more clarity as far
1:00:48
as citing where these can be as well so I I do think that the debate should
1:00:54
discuss if an overlay or if another form is adopted that we need to go into each
1:01:00
one of those setbacks specifically and decide which ones are the most
1:01:05
appropriate because setbacks are a mechanism used to try to create compatibility that's the whole goal of a
1:01:12
setback is to try to you know give you the ability to be there and give you the
1:01:17
ability to not be so impacted U generally so

Tom Bride

well it offers the
1:01:23
protection for the people who are already there that
1:01:33

Dan Priestley

yeah the the center of rural Affairs definitely offers something that they they promote as being reasonable um and
1:01:41
some may say they're not reasonable and I just want to highlight both ends of the debate because we've we've
1:01:46
definitely seen that

Jeff Hanson

one issue I see on the overlay
1:01:55
is and it can be fixed with the parameters that are established as part of that ordinance Amendment but is
1:02:02
setting the timing of the installation of the solar panels because I think it would come down to an issue where you
1:02:09
may have vendors apply for an overlay to get to the cap whatever that
1:02:15
cap may be established and then it never gets built for two three four five years whatever it may be I think a discussion
1:02:21
needs to be had in those parameters that if you request overlay it goes through the appropriate process it's approved
1:02:27
and you have X amount of days whether it's 365 days two years whatever may be
1:02:33
and then it becomes null and void to release that cap if if that's the
1:02:39
direction from the board supervisors to have an established cap because I can see someone just coming in and
1:02:46
grabbing so it has to be connected with the development

Tom Bride

and that could be tied into also the per you know like a permit
1:02:54
you have X time and if you don't start then you got to start the process
1:02:59
over again and that's a good idea so that somebody can't just lock it all up
1:03:04
and say oh there's nothing else available we got it you know yeah

Dan Priestley

and that you want that
1:03:11
enumerated with along with this versus relying on the building
1:03:18
permits

Chris Zellmer Zant

that's good point I don't remember seeing that in any of the other
1:03:25
development criteria that we went through I think I crossed it on one of
1:03:30
them did you 14 think 14 of our drop that down make sure it's in there
1:03:37
yeah yeah lot of other stuff
1:03:45
but project timeline yeah the yeah that was page 83
1:03:52
who's is that who did we use or a lot of a lot of the criteria
1:04:00
that's in here yeah combination of the counties that have a policy or have a have an
1:04:09
this was an overlay District utility skill system has her policy in
1:04:18
place project timeline is 6a [Dan Priestley: yeah that's within the proposed
1:04:26
overlay language]

Jeff Hanson

and what I'm thinking is you actually set start time you don't allow
1:04:33
for the flex you don't allow them to set their time I mean it's part of their application hey we expect to have this
1:04:38
constructed within x amount of months and then if it's not then

Chris Zellmer Zant

but we can
1:04:43
hold them to that too I mean without it actually being in writing we can say okay it's part of your application you
1:04:50
have to start it on that day and I think it could be done as part of the
1:04:55
the actual over

Tom Bride

overlay that that's the condition that when they apply apply
1:05:01
that that that's overlay it's 12 months and if you haven't I don't know if I
1:05:06
would say upon approval yeah upon yeah upon approval and then you and then I
1:05:11
guess you probably have to set if it hasn't if you haven't started by this date then this goes back to AP and you
1:05:20
have to start over again you lose and [Jeff Hanson: it'll it will still say AP just the
1:05:25
overlay right] right I mean it goes back it it's it loses the overlay Y and and
1:05:30
your bit your back with done yeah so that that's pretty important
1:05:36
that something like that's put in if if that's the route that
1:05:41
that's and I I mean I think if it's project and they're going to go forward with it it's reasonable to ask that you
1:05:48
know you don't start it within this timeline then you're back and then because like
1:05:54
you said somebody otherwise could just tie up all the land and not do anything do anything
1:06:00
or have the Monopoly on it well

Dan Priestley

if you look kind of in the 89 and the
1:06:06
operation and maintenance plans and kind of decommissioning plans you'll see
1:06:11
various checkpoints they have to have a relationship the county and have tabs
1:06:21
on

Chris Zellmer Zant

yeah you know we're reporting in verification
1:06:35
scheduling

Dan Priestley

well again I would probably uh suggest you know uh you got the three
1:06:42
options there and it's kind of it's up to you as far
1:06:47
as uh what you're thinking as far as is an overlay feasible or is it uh uh the
1:06:55
other option was to strengthen the conditional use language uh from the existing district or move it over to the
1:07:02
development plan if uh you're to do something with this overlay though I would definitely suggest that uh the
1:07:09
language be kind of focused in the way that we want with some of these added concepts but brought into the
1:07:16
development plan as part of uh justifying
1:07:22
overlay

Chris Zellmer Zant

I know before when we talked about it the overlay was appealing because it had so many sets of eyes on
1:07:29
it had so many different [Tom Bride: yeah reviewed by all three] approval yeah supervisor Board of
1:07:36
adjustment Mission [Tom Bride: and then it can be condition specific to that area right]
1:07:43

Dan Priestley

you got to be aware that um you can run into lots of redundancy too and you've
1:07:49
got to have everything be uh practical feasible and many of these jurisdictions
1:07:55
that do the overlay um the overlay becomes the allowed use inside of so the overlay is
1:08:03
Project Specific so um I I've tried to find an area where you put a conditional use
1:08:10
inside and double it up but there's it seems that the practicality and feasibility of
1:08:17
um you go to this permit criteria you go to this permit criteria and it becomes
1:08:23
very cumbersome as far as running through the process and those other jurisdictions like Linn
1:08:28
once you get through the grinder going through the zoning commission approving
1:08:34
the Board of Supervisors approving the overlay that would ultimately authorize the use so the conditional use would not
1:08:41
be a part of that so the the overlay would basically authorize that use and
1:08:47
so yes you would still have a level of public involvement but that would likely
1:08:52
remove the board of adjustment I'm just not seeing a clear pathway to do a
1:08:57
conditional use after you approve an overlay I think that that's probably way
1:09:02
too much from what I've read in some of the literature and I haven't found a jurisdiction but up because I originally
1:09:09

was thinking yeah we could probably do a real trim overlay District but then how
1:09:16
do you divide the responsibilities between the board of adjustment and from
1:09:21
the Board of Supervisors if the Board of Supervisors feel that this is good in this way and then the board of
1:09:26
adjustment we could run into a problem uh between both boards and so an overlay
1:09:32
is truly designed for the zoning commission and the board of of
1:09:38
Supervisors to kind of come to a conclusion whether that fits or not and
1:09:44
so I I think ultimately what would happen is uh you would have a public
1:09:49
hearing uh scrutiny full level at the zoning commission level and that this would be brought up to the three public
1:09:56
hearings at the Board of Supervisors level so you would you would be at the four for sure on that or we could put
1:10:03
another mechanism in there if you wanted to have a multiple zoning commission ones but uh as far as uh pulling the
1:10:11
board of adjustment in I think that they might actually be out of the equation as
1:10:16
far as the the overlay District but if you were to continue with our current
1:10:22
policy um the other proposal in here um if the community is all set on it being in
1:10:30
industrial areas and not on the AG land I think it would make sense to have the
1:10:35
Zoning commission's Board of adjustment continue to do the hitting with added features if it's specific to industrial so
1:10:44
that's that's where all of these Concepts and proposals get kind of cumbersome

Chris Zellmer Zant

yeah
1:10:52
confusing m well that takes kind of the interesting
1:10:59
part of why we like the overlay away is that it had an extra set of eyes on
1:11:06
it does that change well it's it's I mean but I
1:11:12

Tom Bride

understand what you're saying just means the overlays got to
1:11:19
make sure everything's addressed and at that point once they [Chris Zellmer Zant: it doesn't make a
1:11:25
it's a major change as far as whether you think that's an effective] what does that allow if if the over you basically
1:11:31
have your conditions with overlay um either they meet them or they don't um
1:11:39
versus the conditional use site specific where maybe this is a little bit
1:11:45
different than this other one because it's it's a different piece of property
1:11:50
so there was some conditions you had to apply here that didn't by here how do you accomplish that with the overlay or
1:11:57
you

Dan Priestley

I think it could be very similar as far as the um the application process of
1:12:03
scrutinizing the neighborhood and having the ability for the supervisors to impose conditions that are recommended
1:12:11

Tom Bride

so those recommendations could still come from the zoning board then and and be applied to that overlay District
1:12:19
differently than maybe a different overlay District that was

Dan Priestley

yeah and if if
1:12:24
you all have a process and we'll use the conditional use for an example you find
1:12:29
a deficiency or something that could be improved or meet the requirement based
1:12:36
on a condition we usually have a condition for the purpose of bringing an application up to par to be compatible
1:12:42
with the uh area and so um the zoning commission identifies anything that they
1:12:49
find that might be needing a condition worthy of a condition and uh present
1:12:56
that in the ultimate final report to the Board of Supervisors you are all doing an investigation for the Board of
1:13:03
Supervisors and a recommendation capacity to tell them that here is the
1:13:09
determination of this commission we feel that this is suitable for this area
1:13:14
however this item needs to be addressed this item needs to be addressed and um then they can have the ability to impose
1:13:21
that

Tom Bride

the ability is still there it's just that you don't have that the board of adjustment they basically are doing
1:13:28
the work of the board of adjustment

Jeff Hanson

okay I think one we address that too in the overlay
1:13:33
proposal is to add the requirement for site plan review and approval at prnz at
1:13:38
planning level and the the Board of Supervisors So Not only would you have to meet those criteria that next level
1:13:45
not going to the conditional use permit would be through site plan review so this body could actually review a site
1:13:51
plan make the addition conditions as they see fit depending on the neighborhood the location the other
1:13:58
factors that come into play and also your public comment you're going to get public comment on each one of these that
1:14:03
are going to be differing right and so that site plan would then follow the overlay throughout the process yeah and
1:14:10
you wouldn't be dealing with the the legality of treating one different than the other because you

Dan Priestley

ultimately we
1:14:16
could have them sign off and do the building permit to and uh ultimately put it up as a board item to to really
1:14:23
assure the public and confirm that this is where the project is at this point
1:14:28
and they would they would basically approve it through a vote basically we could you know uh you have them be the
1:14:35
permitting body for that as well

Chris Zellmer Zant

so that was part of I with additional use it gives you that much more latitude and
1:14:42
flexibility with each application that's the beauty of it we don't want to lose
1:14:47
that so

Dan Priestley

but I will get back to and we're talking about this in theory but we're
1:14:52

still going to have to have that grand criteria right right what what it is
1:14:58
that will be the heart of a overlay District what threshold do they have to
1:15:05
meet

Chris Zellmer Zant

so included section 5.08 on page 55 in here and that's just ability scale
1:15:13
solar energy systems conditional use which is what the industrial

Dan Priestley

yeah let me explain page 55 and
1:15:21
forwarder um sorry show late leave early no page 55 and forward this this is an
1:15:30
amendment to keep the exact same process and the exact same area and keep the
1:15:35
zoning commission the board of adjustment permitting inside of General industrial okay that was one of the the
1:15:41
options available was that we've had concerns to uh strengthen the
1:15:48
conditional use of further criteria it allows the commission and the board of of adjustment to ensure that they do
1:15:56
things such as impose uh um decommissioning and and various road use
1:16:02
agreements various other agreements ensure that those get built in by en
1:16:08
numeration okay and so that that's the rationale behind uh the utility solar
1:16:14
scale conditional use okay so that that's separate from the overlay okay that's what that's another option for
1:16:20
your recommendation

Chris Zellmer Zant

which is 76 is the utility scale Energy System overlay districts and then it goes into kind of
1:16:27
a different format but it covers a lot of the same types of things and you had the other thing red type in here

Dan Priestley

the
1:16:35
other thing while I still have it up here is um inside of the overlay
1:16:40
District you'll see some references to Battery Systems too and that's something that should be on the radar in terms of
1:16:47
um um maybe having as part of a recommendation so whatever path you take
1:16:53
on a a solar you might want to consider that as far as facilitating the the
1:16:59
permitting of these batteries so I would strongly suggest considering a form of
1:17:04
that language as part of the recommendation because we know if you're dealing with solar you're going to to very
1:17:10
likely be dealing with batteries

Kim Alexander

please forgive me for interrupting but you know what time
1:17:16
you're going to allow public questions

Chris Zellmer Zant

when we're done just
1:17:23
discussing I guess or we can do it whenever what do you guys want to do you
1:17:28

Do?

Barb Parker

you want to go now that'd be great yeah

Chris Zellmer Zant

I've got bit wind down are we ready to wind

1:17:35

down yeah I'm fine okay do we have more questions or something that's pressing okay I just wanted to clarify that we

1:17:42

had conditional language here use language and then we had the overlay language you're not suggesting

1:17:47

conditional use first part for just the industrial area and then this part for

1:17:53

Dan Priestley

I'm I'm my my S my suggestion is that we carefully examine what the public has to

1:18:00

say about um the priorities on solar as

1:18:06

far as the development plan I think it's been very apparent throughout the course of the debate and uh I think that the

1:18:13

development plan needs to coincide with this and so I I think ultimately you

1:18:19

could have multiple recommendations possibly routes they could take

1:18:24

supervisors could take and so I think that the the input is imperative as far

1:18:30

as potential areas I I think that uh we're we're of course being monitored

1:18:35

and being watched by developers and I and I and I encourage uh folks to

1:18:41

contact staff uh to to respond to our requests for comments because uh we need

1:18:47

more information as far as uh what kind of County we want to be and so

1:18:53

uh development plan needs to be a key part of it but I also think that uh um

1:18:59

you you have the ability to um strengthen the conditional use permit ordinance the problem is if you do go

1:19:06

for an overlay how do you handle Industrial in the future too so are you going to be left with a different set of

1:19:13

policies for the industrial and so we're going to have to find a way to marry these two items together guess that's

1:19:20

what I was asking are we having two different policies for two different yeah

Dan Priestley

so if you're doing an overlay

1:19:26

and you're doing the the other one you're going to have to have something that mirrors it but it's suitable for

1:19:32

the industrial area um if you're doing agricultural mitigation you're probably not going to worry about it so much on

1:19:38

Industrial land so we we've just got to be able to keep everything prioritized

1:19:44

and divided

Chris Zellmer Zant

so okay easy what did you say Okay you may

1:19:53

speak now great yes

Kim Alexander

my name is Kim Alexander I farm at Smithland and I

1:19:58

appreciate y'all's public service and doing this you could not pay me to do your job uh but I do appreciate what you

1:20:06

all are doing and I just want to ask a couple questions two or three questions
1:20:12
backing way up to the beginning on the fundamentals of this thing uh and and it
1:20:17
was very hard to hear I want to say that I appreciate the gentleman in the red shirt I could generally hear him but the rest of
1:20:23
you it was tough but so if I ask something that's already been answered please forgive me so uh gentleman said
1:20:32
something about a meeting with the Department of AG and the department of energy and they were
1:20:37
assessing communities and how they're coming along with their uh setting up
1:20:43
the framework for this whole uh green energy deal is that yeah um

Dan Priestley

basically as
1:20:50
you all know there's been some federal initiatives as far as this this renewable energy a lot of the literature
1:20:58
talks about the closing of the coals plant or uh plants and the replacement energy
1:21:04
and um one of the things uh that occurred at this meeting was uh they
1:21:09
wanted to um kind of understand concerns that we may have had from the local
1:21:15
level about the implementation of uh solar in the communities and this isn't
1:21:21
entirely a fresh brand new thing it's it's been out there for years but uh
1:21:27
they they want to know generally um what some of the challenges are whether it's
1:21:32
taking AG out of commission and placement Etc I understand so this is
1:21:37
this is first and foremost a topdown government intervention is that accurate
1:21:44
I I can't really directly say that as far as saying that um uh we we know that
1:21:52
there's information out there that there's a there's a compelling interest in Renewables for a future energy policy
1:21:58

Kim Alexander

especially from the government right and so the other question I so this is not
1:22:04
premarket Enterprise if I understood correctly again I apologize you're being so hard of hearing um this is not free
1:22:13
market uh Grassroots demand for this this is a another top down government
1:22:19
uh intervention in rural America rural Iowa uh and so I would submit to yall
1:22:28
The Challenge and the difficulty and again I appreciate what you all are doing you could not pay me to do your
1:22:35
job so I appreciate you all doing this uh I would submit to you that that the
1:22:40
biggest part of the challenge is trying to create something that there is no
1:22:46
grassroots demand for it is the is the problem that we can't make enough energy
1:22:52
from coal or natural gas no the problem is Big Brother government doesn't want
1:22:58
us to have that option and that ladies and gentlemen is a
1:23:04
recipe for disaster we're seeing these electric cars I read it a headline today
1:23:11
uh these electric cars in Chicago or wherever these big cities they they are frozen
1:23:17
robots premarket demand will take care of what we need not top down government
1:23:23
boondoggles paid for with non-existent tax money because they're just printing the stuff so um again I appreciate what
1:23:32
yall are trying to do but uh we do not need this there is no demand grassroots
1:23:39

demand for it it is government boondoggle and government uh to quote
1:23:44
that great western philosopher I think his name was Ringo Star he said everything government touches turns to
1:23:51
crap and that's what's going to happen folks if if you if you try to thread the
1:23:57
needle for big brother so any questions for me

Barb Parker

no thank you very much great thank
1:24:04
you all I appreciate it

Chris Zellmer Zant

thank you thank you check check do we have anyone [Barb Parker: what sorry I
1:24:13
Took] no no no you can say whatever you want whenever you want you know that
1:24:18
anyone else from the public want to comment
1:24:27

Marty Dougherty

Mary city city city plan the city city plan so we
1:24:34
and that go a little bit about this and we we just wanted to listen for a while
1:24:40
and be make a few comments on behalf of Sioux Cityum he's the expert planer so I I I do
1:24:48
Economic and Development so but um
1:24:53
I I'll just start off Chris can had technical comments I guess but but
1:25:00
uh I do want to say thank you for the work we're doing obviously I'm impressed by how much detail depth we've gone into
1:25:06
here for for this getting some of the materials wow you guys spend a lot of time
1:25:13
studying this so know a whole lot more about it than than I be sure but um uh I
1:25:19
understand correctly the current process is in Woodbury County it's uh allowed solar these
1:25:25
large solar systems as a conditional use in industrial areas looking at AG and
1:25:33
you're looking at the whole thing so um and from the standpoint of the of
1:25:39
Sioux City Our concern is that and been brought up here a couple of times two mile area around the city is usually
1:25:45
where you have some interesting in jurisdiction in some areas Chris can explain but not in own we have some
1:25:52
things um subdivisions and so on and um we have been working very hard and
1:26:00
actually want to say um we don't necessarily U we're concerned with just
1:26:08
having it in industrial areas as well and and uh and I say that because in the
1:26:13
South we call the Southwood area which is the area south of the airport Port NE
1:26:18
um we city has actually worked for the county uh and we put a lot of infrastructure a
1:26:24
lot of investment in the area um we don't we're not growing like Des Moines or
1:26:30
something but we we have steady growth and that's an area we identified for industrial growth and uh we put a lot of
1:26:38
investment into water plants and streets uh water sewer utilities and so
1:26:44
on um and our concern is not necessarily the case but it's possible that if you
1:26:51
have thousand of Acres or hundreds of Acres going to solar um that will lose the
1:26:57
opportunity for other types of industrial growth um I don't want to say things I'm not know a a lot about but I
1:27:05

don't think there's a lot of jobs we're trying to build a you know factory or facility of some kind that employs
1:27:12
hundreds or thousands of people and and that's hard to do it doesn't happen overnight but we've been diligently
1:27:19
trying to to have land available for them that I would also mention that the
1:27:24
C of su City Sergeant Bluff and wber County have gone in on the Interchange
1:27:29
which is taken several years to study and is now under design the cooperation with the Iowa DOT
1:27:34
of the I right in that same area which we think will lead to more industrial
1:27:40
growth um and we have some concern that a lot of that area was went to uh to
1:27:47
large solar Farms or large solar system arrays I'm not even sure the right terminology but that
1:27:54
might uh sort of impact what we think is going to be tremendous opportunity not
1:27:59
only for suity but for the Woodbury County and the whole region to see some significant growth um and so when you
1:28:07
say industrial ask you to consider different types of industrial growth um
1:28:14
energy production is one type but a lot of other kinds of of uh industrial
1:28:20
growth with kind of leading most concerned about so um and I also share
1:28:26
some concern of use of agricultural land uh Sioux City is we're larger City but
1:28:35
we're driven by Agriculture and that that's that drives our economy here Rich industrial Rich agricultural
1:28:42
land lots of livestock a lot of businesses industries that City and
1:28:47
majority I think are food production food related and so we have some concerns
1:28:52
too just in general about about taking really high quality farmland or
1:28:57
something that maybe should maybe maybe the solar and is not the highest best use of that land so so again I'll let
1:29:04
Chris comment a little bit on something may more technical but but our I
1:29:10
appreciate your consideration of this and um take into account not just City
1:29:16
but the other cities in Woodbury County and how they how they may we would likely be
1:29:21
impacted some of the residential areas too we've had again we're not growing as fast as Waukee or Ankeny or something but
1:29:27
we do have some good residential growth occurring um around the outskirts of
1:29:33
Sioux City we like that we' like that to continue as that we think without more
1:29:38
housing you don't have the people that don't have the job creation so I think it's vital to our whole
1:29:46
region

Chris Madsen

I think our main concern would be with the utility size that within two miles of a city's jurisdiction that
1:29:53
either those would be prohibited such like the wind uh turbine um I know that
1:29:58
was noted in your right up as well there's also some comment about a five mile or at least a FAA review within
1:30:07
certain distance of the airport we're working with our airport to get what their language would be on that with
1:30:13
their proposal they didn't know the five mile was really necessary just as long the
1:30:19
FAA um one thing that we do allow wind or solar energy in city as an
1:30:26
accessory that's something that obviously we would be in favor of if that's something you guys want to continue I'm not sure how your ordinance
1:30:33
addresses that infirm is accessory use or just the utility scale principle use
1:30:38
within miles is our major concern U we do appreciate the larger notification

1:30:43
here as well the one currently is about just a little over a mile outside city so we weren't aware of that one was
1:30:51
proposed but all that increased notification would being
1:30:56
for yeah

Marty Dougherty

on the airport deal we have talked to M CL airport
1:31:01
director we have we're going to submit a letter to you is that is that okay 'll
1:31:07
probably signed by the mayor he's been interested in this asked us to look into it so um but uh do you want to make sure
1:31:15
we express the concern about the airport because um uh within a certain distance
1:31:20
of runways it can affect planes probably not big planes with
1:31:25
smaller ones pilot provide there are some rules there where we'll get those to you into what what their concerns
1:31:34
more specific it is there are some some new some approvals
1:31:39
that have over this
1:31:45
type cause issues

Chris Zellmer Zant

with I think that was uh with the mid- americ we spent a lot
1:31:51
of time evaluating that information and making sure that was accurate we did have the FAA
1:31:57
fation yeah we had their blessings yeah so we wouldn't have moved forward on it if we hadn't
1:32:04
so that's a big that's a big issue

Jeff Hanson

to answer your question Chris and Dan can
1:32:10
you clarify this does not impact any accessory use or personal use of solar
1:32:15
right so anyone that's currently or plans to or has pending applications to
1:32:21
energize their personal property with solar this is not directed towards that
1:32:27
use correct

Dan Priestley

yeah this uh just for the record this uh debate ended up split in
1:32:33
August uh we had a original proposal that went through that uh treated this
1:32:39
as a conditional use originally on AG land and uh we addressed the accessory solar
1:32:45
in fact we kind of uh U we were more restrictive than Sioux City on Accessory
1:32:50
we' had it as a conditional use permit and uh you have it as a permitted accessory and we we went back and uh we
1:32:57
amended our ordinance uh to have the same designation as Sioux City has uh we did put some language in there for uh
1:33:05
limited net metering opportunities uh because the way when when we ran it through the county attorney's office uh
1:33:12
uh we wanted to make sure that um you could not convert an accessory situation
1:33:17
into a utility uh situation so to up based on the definition and so um uh we
1:33:26
do have a permitted accessory for use if somebody put one in the house or off City at this point

Chris Madsen

I guess from our
1:33:33
stance we would be only really concerned with the utility scale within that two miles there were accessories within two
1:33:44
miles thank you thanks

Chris Zellmer zant

anyone
1:33:50
else question

David Linn

1:33:56
Eastern sh really curious why or if you guys
1:34:02
discussed just expanding the general industrial to
1:34:08
accommodate these industrial scale
1:34:13
solar arrays whatever you want to call I mean if we just had more room South C
1:34:20
obviously I should obviously I'm a farmer out in the county and I really I'm not a big fan of solar I wasn't a big
1:34:27
fan of sold leing but it seems to me like the best way to accommodate all of
1:34:34
this stuff would be to keep it within an industrial zone area that would be a simple thing now I understand that
1:34:39
there's going to be people down there within that industrial zone that probably don't want to be zoned
1:34:44
industrial but the way it sounded uh even the farmers that are
1:34:51
already there there that may actually increase it value what he was talking about earlier so
1:34:58
why don't we just consider increasing to so well we already know
1:35:03
that transmission lines are there and and leave the rest of us

Chris Zellmer Zant

I think one of the things that had
1:35:10
come up in our discussions too was that because when you changed that zoning to Industrial there's a lot of other things
1:35:17
that can happen in that Industrial Area not just solar [David Linn: that's right] there's a lot of things that aren't necessarily as
1:35:24
well compatible as they might be the farther you get away from that industrial area that we have right now I
1:35:31
mean we look at it when we have growth and we see that that's e that's definitely happened but right now well
1:35:37
but are some of the examples Dan that we have that go in industrial zones that may not be a priority

Dan Priesley

construction
1:35:44
contractor yards borrow pits all sorts of

Chris Zellmer Zent

heavy petroleum storage you know oh
1:35:52
don't we have room within the county I don't know sound like there's about 10 11,000 Acres 11,000 Acres now currently
1:35:57

David Linn

now currently it's in it's all West the of the interstate is is there is there
1:36:03
more Farmland just because that's less popular we have more ground in Woodbury
1:36:11

Chris Zellmer Zent

County out of s to the South and Highway 75

1:36:17

the there's a map yeah we got our m that's

1:36:22

why I have my paper clip on it maybe I can find it before you can you turned right to it before I did there it is

1:36:29

right there which one would you like existing

1:36:34

they V for either one

Dan Priestley

this is tough to see but the green

1:36:41

area there's predominantly all the ag L this is what's General industrial right

1:36:46

now actually it's a purple that that's south of the airport there okay I see

1:36:51

good yeah and so this

David Linn

this area right here would still be available it's west of the interstate it would be delineated

1:36:58

by the interstate or what well the and it's primarily agricultural land

Dan Priestley

the plan the plan right now as historically

1:37:05

referenced that it's open space or recreational uh under the is that the

1:37:11

Chris Zellmer Zant

green stuff yeah yeah that's all it's kind of that's all BRS

Dan Priestley

yeah yeah so

1:37:18

conservation areas and all those things have been in mind for that type of zoning designation and so we're trying

1:37:25

to preserve that ground down here and keep it away from industrial it appears so

1:37:31

David Linn

yes that's that's what they're trying to I'm from right here like I said I've got Farm here down here in whatnot and I've

1:37:38

got Farm ground right within that green area that that the concentration board keeps trying to buy from okay and

1:37:44

they'll never get make sense of that designation I

Chris Zellmer Zant

1:37:49

better hide my jacket

1:37:57

David Linn

but it just seems to me that would be

1:38:04

best and just uh

Dan Priestley

again that's definitely a good development plan discussion right

1:38:10

absolutely y I'm sure we'll hear that again too

Chris Zellmer Zant

yeah yes thank
1:38:16
you anyone else

Elizabeth Widman

well I wasn't prepare to talk
1:38:21
tonight I didn't realize people can say anything because last time we had work session it didn't allow people to say
1:38:26
things but I know there's a there's a a form in there I believe my son submitted
1:38:32
has talking about property values and it said overall if you consider the whole United States putting in silver facility
1:38:40
does affect your um value of your property but there were three um you
1:38:47
know and that was considering if you put it around urban centers on the east coast didn't affect anything but they
1:38:53
said there were three criteria that if you had it would decrease your property values 5% and that was um and I'm not
1:39:02
looking at it right now I don't remember exactly but it was the size of the project that um was going to be put in
1:39:08
and if it was in a rural setting and there was one more and I don't remember
1:39:14
if it was just in the midwest I don't remember what the third one was but on there somewhere and it says it'll
1:39:20
decrease your and um I appreciate Mr Alexander when he
1:39:26
said this has not been pushed by anybody and says he we're not getting enough energy um she looked up something on her
1:39:33
phone you're going to save \$15 a month by ruining all this ag land put in put in
1:39:40
solar it's very inefficient um and it's this has just
1:39:46
been pushed by people who have an economy who have a money incentive to do this
1:39:52
and there weren't those of us in the the AG community that said hey we want our AG taken away so we can have solar um
1:40:01
and I I just think it's really ironic that you want to take away ag
1:40:06
preservation land so the word preservation means you need to save it and and I think the the main uh one of
1:40:14
the the main Treasures of our county is the people and we don't chase away people
1:40:22
that want to live out in the in the county and people don't want to live by
1:40:27
these big sell of things and I have a vested interest because they want to put this down in my area where I've been and
1:40:35
and um I I love the country I love to see the country and I also have a
1:40:40
question you talked about well these things could have ag uses now if they sign a lease with the company and I
1:40:48
understand um I found out um you could look online on things this
1:40:54
company that um the big one they want to sign up with if you look up their
1:41:00
headquarters it's a lawyer's office in Ohio somewhere this isn't even like a
1:41:05
business you know whatever and um
1:41:11
forgot um sorry ag uses something about EG
1:41:19
uses oh yes if you have ag uses so if you're sign if you're signing an agreement with a company they're in
1:41:27
charge of what's going to go on the farmer is not going to say oh I signed this with you you know several years ago
1:41:34
I suddenly want to put make sure that it has an ag purpose well that person's
1:41:40
not in charge of it anymore my understanding is when you sign an agreement company they're the person

1:41:46
that's in charge of it so I think all this discussion about well it's going to fit with a and the farmer wants to
1:41:53
have it a it's not the farmer that's going to decide these things it's that company that they've signed sign an
1:41:59
agreement with unless I'm misunderstand this but I don't see how the farmer has any say once you've
1:42:06
signed an agreement with the company

Chris Zellmer Zant

I don't have firsthand experience but my thought is that because of the contracts
1:42:12
that they use a lot of these issues will be addressed in those contracts but we
1:42:18
can't control those the only way we can control it with what we do with ag I mean what we do with our zoning ordinances I
1:42:25
mean that's all we can do contract these contracts or contracts there's another
1:42:31
outside of us option sign options options already been signed yeah and uh
1:42:37

Elizabeth Widman

so I have a concern about this discussion about well fits with that because we're going to do this well um
1:42:44
you know these companies don't live here they don't you know they don't have a
1:42:50
concern with how our turned out so that's my on spot two sound so
1:42:57
sorry thank you and you're Mrs Whitman yeah I'm sorry I'm Elizabeth Whitman yes

Chris Zellmer Zant

1:43:02
yes thank you anyone
1:43:08

Greg Jochum

else um Greg Jochum um just wanted to uh um the old
1:43:15
saying location location location um there's purposes for uh why they didn't
1:43:22
go to General industrial um it's the transmission lines if the infrastructure is there um
1:43:29
it's already there for them to to use transmission lines um General industrial
1:43:35
does not have any transmission lines up in that area um that would double the
1:43:41
cost it make it makes it uh um not feasible for them to be in the general
1:43:47
industrial um the comment that um one of you said that you know General
1:43:55
industrial we don't have to worry about it because it's already Zone General industrial um you can still farm the
1:44:00
general industrial um I gu I'm farming ground in the general industrial but I also have
1:44:08
ag preservation ground I would much rather have a conditional use or the overlay for that than have you know
1:44:16
ground in the you know not close to
1:44:22
the highways the interstates and all that being deemed General industrial for
1:44:27
a project you know your spot I don't I don't see where that that be very
1:44:33
detrimental because ag preservation is good because in when the leases are up
1:44:39
and they decommission it to take everything out it goes back to farming you're not out anything whereas if it
1:44:45
goes to General industrial General industrial then it's stuck there and you know a concrete PL a
1:44:53
you know Warehouse can go up and there's nothing that anybody in the can do

1:45:01
can you know I I think if uh you know looking at you know going with
1:45:07
the the utility scales the scorecard uh you know that is something
1:45:13
if you go with an overlay or something using that uh which is it's designed for
1:45:19
the preservation and incentives gives you lots of options and lots of ways for them to score how these
1:45:25
projects are cited because you know obviously when it's done it goes back to the ag
1:45:36
production and and I think Linn County use the scorecard where we got that example
1:45:45
yeah and thank you for everything you guys do like Kevin
1:45:51
said it's t

Chris Zellmer Zant

but we appreciate your participation
1:45:57
in your comments and your thoughts and your ideas because it makes us think maybe outside the box too we haven't
1:46:02
thought about it you know it hasn't come up so if you don't say something we don't know your participation is greatly
1:46:10
appreciated surely anyone else uh

Leo Jochum

can I can I speak
1:46:18
[Chris Zellmer Zant: who who is speaking okay] this is Leo Yokum 1691 250th Street at seix and I I
1:46:28
kind of want to talk about Farmland the history what we had in Woodbury County and I'm going to back up
1:46:37
to what we had in Woodbury County Farm economy of the 70s we had a county that had a robust
1:46:45
live livestock industry it was supported in every small town in the county had a co-op elevator
1:46:53
farm machinery dealers livestock equipment dealers fuel Distributors local veterinary services
1:47:00
just to name a few this all fed into Sioux City and that
1:47:05
area had the major livestock yards had five or six slaughter houses and it also
1:47:11
brought along with it a tremendous amount of support businesses
1:47:17
now when the farm crisis of the 80s hit very few of these livestock
1:47:23
livestock producers in the county survived I know because I lived it and
1:47:29
at that time I was president of the Woodbury County pork producers our producer and Associate
1:47:36
membership went from over 300 members to under 30 in just three years that's how
1:47:42
fast and furious people were losing money as a result of that we had we had
1:47:51
some officials in Woodbury County and Sioux City that were really on the ball and today we have to applaud our
1:47:57
County and city leaders in the 80s and right up to our present time for their insight their proactive response to
1:48:04
recruiting and attracting new businesses to offset the loss of the Agricultural
1:48:10
Revenue I want to share um I have some facts here from the
1:48:16
food and agricultural industry economic impact study and this study is put on by the United
1:48:26
stat States Department of energy along with the food and agricultural department and these facts are
1:48:34
considered in Congress they've got them now and it's considered for the new farm bill and I'm going to just touch on just
1:48:41
a three things this stretches out over every
1:48:48

county in the United States it's also broken down by the state each
1:48:54
County and I took Iowa all 99 States but I just separated out Woodbury Plymouth
1:49:01
and Sioux mainly because Plymouth and Sioux County was brought up as being strong ag just like Woodbury the difference is
1:49:10
I want to take a look at ag jobs Woodbury has in 2023 this is
1:49:17
2023 at 348 direct ag jobs Plymouth County had
1:49:24
1572 ag jobs Sue County had 3,000 ag
1:49:29
jobs Woodbury County ranked 85 out of 99 counties in the ag jobs Department ag
1:49:37
wages Woodbury County 12,932 Plymouth County
1:49:45
7,283 Sioux County 17 I mean I'm I
1:49:51
got to back up 12,932 for Woodbury for Plymouth
1:49:58
7,283 mil Sioux County 176,50
1:50:03
195,000 compare that Sue County had 176 million to woodbury's 12 million in ag
1:50:10
wages ag output this is money coming from all of
1:50:16
the ag area that's Hogs cattle swine sheep Dairy and
1:50:23
crops Plymouth County had uh Woodbury yeah Woodbury County had
1:50:30
99,197,000 Plymouth County had 933 million
1:50:37
10 times the amount Sioux County had 1 billion 730 million
1:50:46
327,000 now to close this this impact study also showed that Woodbury County ranked real high very high in the
1:50:54
top 5% in manufacturing jobs and wholesale jobs in the
1:51:00
state that's direct correlation to the
1:51:06
leadership we had with the city officials and the county officials that saw how ag was
1:51:12
falling through no fall of its own but just through the ag economy it was tough Farmers went broke
1:51:20
Woodbury County needs industry so keep that Southbridge area for industry
1:51:26
open we also need other ways in the county in the ag economy in the ag
1:51:32
preservation area to bolster that we can bolster that with renewable energy with
1:51:40
utility solar it'll fit well we may be
1:51:45
we may be bringing agrivoltaics right into this it's it's a new one it's it's coming on but the tax revenue coming in
1:51:54
the extra jobs that are going to be coming in from that on a normal basis after it's going after it's in operation
1:52:02
there's going to be eight very high paying jobs and there's going to be related businesses that are going to
1:52:08
have to help to maintain the grass maintain the equipment maintain the fences it's going to be a it's going to
1:52:15
be a plus for the economy it's clean it's efficient and it's very good for
1:52:20
the environment I I think the renewable energy lay overlay should be considered
1:52:27
and I think uh there's contracts out there that are very
1:52:32
solid and I I know you want to know where it's at but I know that once it's listed
1:52:41
where it's at it's a commitment you can't do anything about it once it's a
1:52:46
commitment just like somebody wanted to have a timeline on it
1:52:52
um if all of a sudden that company is in and has a contract going and they're ready to build it and all of a sudden we

1:53:00
get hit with something similar to covid then all of a sudden you got to
1:53:05
back up and you lose everything so we need yes put stuff in there that's
1:53:13
reasonable and I think we can have a very good um I think utility solar can
1:53:19
be very very good for the community uh it's safe
1:53:26
and I think it will just be good in general thank you

Chris Zellmer Zant

thank
1:53:35
you anyone
1:53:41
else no Commissioners no going once
1:53:47
going twice all right I think that is going to
1:53:54
conclude our work session got all your notes yeah okay

WORK SESSION CONCLUDES AT 6:53 PM CST

Public Comment on Matters Not on the Agenda

None

Commissioners Comment or Inquiry

None

Staff Update

Priestley pointed out that the fourth Monday of the month conflicts with holidays such as Memorial Day and recommended an alternative date should be put into stone to ensure the Commission can review applications during the month of May.

Priestley reminded everyone about the Zoning Commission public hearings on Monday, January 22 at 5:00 PM. Public hearings will be conducted regarding utility-scale solar energy systems and the Comprehensive Plan for 2040.

Adjournment

The meeting was declared adjourned by Chairperson Chris Zellmer Zant at 6:56 PM CST.

APPENDIX – INFORMATION SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Daniel Priestley

From: Naomi Widman <naomitoenies@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2024 11:05 AM
To: Daniel Priestley
Subject: Solar Farms Cause Decline in Surrounding Property Values

CAUTION: This email originated from **OUTSIDE** of the organization. Please verify the sender and use caution if the message contains any attachments, links, or requests for information as this person may NOT be who they claim. If you are asked for your username and password, please call WCICC and **DO NOT ENTER any data.**

Dear Mr. Priestley,

Could you please pass this information on to the Woodbury County Zoning Commission so that they have it for their work session meeting tomorrow evening? Or could you please give me an email contact so that I can send it to them? I could not find any contact information for the commission. I know my husband has sent information to you in the past concerning this so I thought I would contact you first.

Thank you for your time and attention!

~Naomi Widman

Attention Zoning Commission:

Here is some information to lend insight regarding how solar farms negatively impact surrounding property values. I have included links to articles and have highlighted specific information from those articles. I hope this is helpful as you consider what the best course of action is for Woodbury County and its residents.

1. <https://www.ecowatch.com/property-values-of-homes-near-solar-farms-appraised-in-new-study.html>

A study of six states found that on average home prices decreased 1.5%. Most importantly, "**significant differences in property values were observed for homes near solar farm sites previously used for agriculture (average 3% decrease), rural locations (average 4.2% decrease) and solar farms with larger areas (average 3.1% decrease).**" All three of these factors are present for the land that currently has solar farm easements signed in Woodbury County. One of the areas studied was southern Minnesota which found declines of 4% in property values. When properties were 2-4 miles away from solar farms, their values were not significantly impacted.

Solar farms should be placed in or near industrial areas where they are less likely to negatively impact surrounding property values or placed greater than 2 miles from home owners so those property values are not impacted.

2. <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/15032023/solar-property-values/#:~:text=The%20Solar%20Industry%20reacts&text=%E2%80%9CThe%20report%2C%20which%20found%20no,country%20also%20show%20similar%20conclusions.%E2%80%9D>

This article also discusses the most recent study about solar farms and their negative impact on surrounding property values.

3. https://eta-publications.lbl.gov/sites/default/files/lspvp_journal_article.pdf

This is a link to the most recent study that is referenced in the aforementioned articles.

–

Naomi Widman, DNP, RN

Email: naomitoenies@gmail.com

Phone: 612-437-2603