

June 14

May 25, 2022

Dear John Schauer and members of Milan Planning Commission,

I am a resident of Milan Township and have been for 15 years. I was relocated to this area due to my employment and had previously lived in a farming community in southern Ohio. I have many family members which are still farming in Ohio today.

I made the decision to send you this letter after watching the last Planning Commission meeting via Zoom. I feel the need to express to you how terrible I feel with how the situation regarding the Solar Farms is being handled.

It is clear to me that there are 3 primary residents which are opposing Solar and these residents have succeeded in convincing the members of the Planning Commission that they are not educated enough to make decisions on a proper Ordinance for Solar or Renewable energy for Milan Township. I do not agree. I have reviewed the current ordinance and see that this was done with full intent of protecting the township which it will do.

2 of the Naysayers came knocking on my door a few months back requesting me to sign a petition against Solar. I was told that this Solar Farm would do the following:

1. My basement would flood due to the drain tile in the fields being damaged.
2. My lawn and garden would burn up due to the heat radiating from the panels.
3. My property value would greatly decrease due to the eye sore of the panels.

I thanked them for stopping by but explained that I would need time to review and research this myself.

After this visit I have taken the time to research Solar and believe that this will NOT cause any of the terrible things these two individuals were telling me and in fact have learned about benefits having Solar Farms in Milan township will do. First and foremost the Community will greatly benefit from the Tax revenue generated. Having additional funds can lead to many Community wide benefits- a local Ambulance Service dedicated to our area, improved Roads and bridges, a Township Park with paved walk ways which will reach out to all residents, young and old – these are a few suggestions I would like to express.

Having close family involved in Farming I understand what a difficult business making a living as a Farmer is. I do hope that at some point in the future they will have the opportunity to diversify their income by leasing for Solar or Wind and if and when that day comes that the community they reside in will support them and not cause the situation Milan is in today.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Milan Township Resident

June 7, 2022

Milan Township Planning Commission

Re: Solar Farm Ordinance – Recommendations

Set backs – No more than 100 ft. from any building/house/road. This could be worked out with landowner/homeowner. There are some locations that may not require a 100 ft set back and can be 50 ft if agreed upon with landowner.

Screening – Staggering fast growing pine trees (if this is the recommended screening with 7 ft fencing, prefer no chain link). Get the tallest recommended screening. Flexible location of screening (i.e. if set back is 100 ft, but landowner has no problem with screening being closer to road or home)

PA116/Quality of soil – I believe this should not be a factor at all. Townships or counties do not dictate what crop is planted or if you have a pig farm, or barns property line to property line etc, as long as it follows legal rules and regulations. PA 116 program, if correctly understood how it operates, should be double insurance the land will be taken care of properly since it has it's own guidelines already in place. And the State of Michigan has deemed it ok for Solar Farms to be placed since it is a form of farming (harvesting the sun). If a landowner chooses to harvest solar, they are protecting their land by laying idle. There is no difference if a landowner chooses to participate in the CRP program and gets paid by the state to do so or if they just choose to just not farm it. Townships do NOT regulate those decisions by the landowner. It is a fact (Successful Farmer magazine) that the United States has 2 million acres enrolled in the CRP program and wants to have 3 million. This should debunk fears of taking good farmland needed for food. Land laying idle properly is a good thing. It also is being studied that the heavy equipment used for farming is permanently compacting the soil. A gas pipeline was recently put in under farmland and where was the outcry?? It has the potential to leak or explode as one recently did near Flint, Michigan. Therefore, I find some of those arguments hypocritical.

Location of Solar Farm – I believe that putting it all into Industrial would be a mistake, some yes but not all. Solar Farms do not need access to water hook up. If a business were to be interested in our current industrial area, which has access to highways/train systems and they would be bringing many job opportunities to our area, it would be a shame if we have it all filled with solar farms. The industrial area we have is in the correct spot of the township for it's access and ability to hook into systems from Dundee. Keeping it available for other businesses to potentially come in, would be logical and diversify the Township.

Limitation and location of Solar Farms in Township – I am in favor of no more than 10 % of farmable land in Milan Township to have any form of renewable energy. While it may be impossible to keep it all close in one area, I believe the solar company should try to keep it as much as possible in one general area, i.e. some in north area of township, some in west, some in south etc.... would be undesirable.

Public comment – I believe that public comment has controlled and delayed productivity at several meetings. It should be strictly limited to one person commenting only for up to 2 minutes, strictly timed. It should not be a question and answer period. If a question is presented, a board member should write the question down for planning commission to discuss and answer (with no further discussion from public) during their meeting. This will prevent constant repetition of concerns and issues. If there are those with concerns, you have repeatedly encouraged those concerned, or have recommendations or comments , to be submitted to your commission for your review and discussion.

Structured meetings with goals - Because I feel there has been little to no movement forward to amend the ordinance, partly because of the pressure to open the Master Plan, I would recommend that the wording to add renewable energy into township Master Plan be decided on and sent to the board for final approval of wording. Then table the finalization process of Master Plan until after the Solar Farm ordinance amendments are completed. There may be other changes in the Master Plan that you want to review but trying to complete that task will take months. Once all changes are made, then proceed with finalizing the master plan at a later time.

Landowner investment - We would like to keep our property in the family for future generations. My family has owned property in Milan Township since 1899. Contrary to some rumors, our family cares and has cared deeply for our land

and this township. As we know farming is unpredictable especially when it comes to what mother nature does, and most of farming income goes to property taxes. Therefore a landowner/farmer should be able to diversify their investment to have some guaranteed income. I do not believe a township, residents or county should have a say in how we manage our investments. If they feel they have a right to do so, I would like their investment information, so I can have a say in how they manage their investments, it is as simple as that. We would prefer not to have an investment company come in with deep pockets and possibly with ideas of making it more residential and solar farming will keep that from happening. Otherwise our future generations, may not be able to afford keeping the property in the family.

Moratorium – It was approved to have a 6 months moratorium, if there are goals to complete, needed steps to get the final amendment recommendations, I feel a month to month moratorium extension is all that may be needed when the time comes. Of course, if things move along, a moratorium can always be lifted.

Meeting preparation – It appears that members are not able to be as prepared for the meetings as they could be. Having the necessary paperwork ahead of the meeting seems to be an issue. By having information needed prior to meeting time, would allow members to review, make notes and recommendations to bring the day of the meeting to discuss and make decisions. Each meeting should have specific goals of what will be discussed so members can be prepared to obtain that goal and make decisions to move forward. I would like to think that all Planning Commission board members are following the meetings of Milan Township Board and London Township Board and London Planning Commission since solar would be connected in London Township.

Opposers of Solar Farms – While there are always those that are not in favor of such a project, I am encouraged that we do not “fill the house” with those that are opposed. I have talked with more residents that are not bothered either way or are feeling it is the right time to do a project such as solar farming. Very few negative comments. Some residents have been approached with incorrect information and false information creates fear. There IS climate change and I would like to be a part of saving our earth. When a few people say “I am looking out for the future generations”, I feel that is a play on emotions because I feel that we ALL want what is best for our future generations. As for decommissioning worries, those same few do not have a crystal ball that says it will not work, just like I do not have a crystal ball to say it will work, so again, a play on words and emotions. I believe you are working your very best to prepare as much as anyone can to assure the best ordinances for our township and the future of solar farms. I believe the support in our township is there to make and continue to improve upon renewable energy as we move forward. Change is scary, but I feel with the ordinance either as it is or with amendments, we all have our planet’s best interest in mind. Our daughter and her family will potentially have solar panels on 2 or 3 sides of their home. Our grandchildren and their parents are excited as the younger generation is learning about climate change and renewable energy at school. They feel “looking at it” will be a good feeling, knowing it is contributing to helping our planet. I suspect that to be the trend from our youth. So often if the parents have an opinion against it, so will the children, that is too bad. There are no guarantees in life, but I feel you are and have been doing what is best for our township and our planet. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Himes –

Milan Township homeowner/landowner

June 14, 2022

Planning Commission

1. Ordinance needs to say that property values will be guaranteed for those within 2 miles of the project.

2. Project will limit solar panels on 20% of a parcel.

Olga Mancik
Milan Township resident