

The Peach Bottom Township **Planning Commission** met on **June 18, 2019** at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Office Building. Members present Frank Diamond (Chair), David Thompson (Vice Chair), Wesley Carter, Benjamin Hushon, and Todd Steiner.

- **Motion** to accept the minutes as presented was made by Member Hushon and 2nd by Member Thompson, vote 5/0.

New Business

Community Solar

Micah Fuchs representing Dynamic Energy and assisted by Ryan Hohe presented an overview of the company. Located in Chester County, they have been in business for 10 years.

Using approximately 15 acres of leased land they install ground mount solar panels to provide electricity to the community. Home owners can subscribe and receive credits on their electric bills with an estimated saving of 5-20%.

The company needs access to three phase electric power lines and land that is cleared and flat to support the panels. There are no impacts to the soil itself, only steel posts are inserted into the ground. A 15 acre solar panel field can generate 3 megawatts, enough to power 700 homes in the community.

Member Thompson questioned the removal and was informed that it can cost \$50,000 to remove all the equipment and in some areas they are required to provide a bond. A third party engineer determines decommissioning costs.

These temporary community solar projects integrate into the agricultural land with little to no impact to the community. The ground cover is pollinator friendly, grazing livestock will be fenced out of the solar area. Dynamic Energy has completed projects in New York, Massachusetts, and Illinois and has worked with PECO for the last 5-7 years.

The attorney explained that the proposed ordinance is limited to the Industrial Zone.

When asked, Mr. Fuchs informed that lease amounts paid to the land owner depends on the project. They currently have 2 lease contracts on agricultural land in Peach Bottom Township contingent on Township ordinances and approvals. The leases are for 20 years with possible extensions to 30 years. Dynamic Energy will assume taxes and clean & green penalties for installation of the panels.

Steve Strohmer asked who would be responsible for power lines and was informed that PECO handles the transmission of the electricity, they only generate. The subscriber will be billed separately for electric usage, but not billed extra if electric is required during off sun times.

After being questioned about who is the community, Mr. Fuchs stated it is anyone within that power supplier's area, but part of an approval can be offering subscriptions to the local community first.

Ann Forcey, owner of agriculturally zoned land on Bryansville Road, questioned a use that does not damage the ground with no permanent structures, why this would it not be allowed.

The state subsidizes the Community Solar projects under PA House Bill 531. It provides renewable energy and is not a risky form of electric generation.

The attorney informed that the ordinance would have to be changed in order to allow this use in the Agricultural Zone. He explained the current proposed ordinance being reviewed by York County Planning Commission and the process of a special exception.

- **Motion** to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. was made by Member Thompson and 2nd by Member Carter, vote 5/0.