

Randolph County Commissioners

March 16, 2026

The Randolph County Commissioners met at their regular meeting at 9:00 AM in the Commissioners and Council Room in the Courthouse with the following members present: Board President Gary Friend, Tom Kerns and Missy Williams. Also present was Randolph County Auditor Laura Martin, Sheriff Art Moystner and County Attorney Meeks Cockerill.

Pledge of Allegiance

Art Moystner and David Daly – Transport of inmate funding

Gary said alright good morning ladies and gentlemen. We'll open up this morning's commissioners meeting. First on our agenda, we have Dave Daly and Sheriff Art Moystner. The honorable prosecutor. Good morning.

Art Moystner said I'm Art Moystner, sheriff of Randolph County.

Gary said inmate transfer?

David Daly said yes.

Art Moystner said we had contracted that. I believe I'd sent everybody a copy of that contract and the cost. And it's not something that's routinely budgeted or a line for it so it comes out of a commissioner's line. So, we're just here to ask for those funds.

David Daly said I think my experience from a couple of years ago when we did the Monte Cook trial, we needed extra funds to pay for transporting people in and I think there was a line item in the commissioners' budget that was for the transfer of prisoners, specifically, but would allow my office to use those funds and so, I think that's the reason why we're here, is to see if we could tap into those funds for the sheriff to reimburse him.

Art Moystner said correct.

Gary said yeah, I think you are correct, yeah.

David Daly said Mr. Wilson is, has been returned back to Randolph County so, he's now bonded out, but they did, were able to successfully transport him back.

Gary said okay. Do you know what the request was?

Art Moystner said what the amount?

Gary said yeah.

Art Moystner said \$4,025.00.

Gary said yeah, there it is, okay. Alright.

Missy said I'd make a motion that we approve the \$4,025.00, I say that right Art?

Art Moystner said yes.

Missy said for the transfer of the inmate back to Randolph County.

Gary said out of the appropriate commissioners' fund.

Missy said out of the appropriate commissioners' fund.

Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Gary said anything else?

David Daly said no, thank you.

Gary said thank you.

Art Moystner said thank you.

Council's update

Gary said council update. Good morning Todd.

Todd Holaday said Todd Holaday, county council. Just from the agenda last, two weeks ago when we met, Chris Shaneyfelt gave us an update similar to what he gave the commissioners. There are 4 openings, 3 or 4, depending upon applicants he's had that were for the dispatch position. He had done a salary study polling different 911 directors from adjacent counties, presented that information. We did take a look at the area where the four openings were. The salaries comparatively really weren't that far off for that one position, but we need to look at that at budget time, bring those numbers back. The Purdue Extension staff came. Julie Wilson, Zoe and Amy and they explained the reorganization letter that went out a month or so ago. There's a pilot project going on by the Purdue Extension office and there are two pilot programs. One involves two counties and one involves five. And we're in the one involving five. So, Randolph, Jay, Blackford, Wayne and Henry are all part of an aligned group now with the Extension. And what they're doing is taking the employees who teach in the three different areas, Ag and Natural Resources, Health and 4-H, and they're allowing them to specialize a bit. So, the concern was that we were paying perhaps for staff to go into other counties. But, in reality, in this pilot project, it goes both ways. So, Amy who, for example from our county

specializes more in commercial farming, will be working more in that area in our county and others, while bringing some staff in from other counties into ours. So, there was a follow up meeting a week ago that Missy and Laura and Mike Stine and I attended and they explained it further. It was a dinner at the 4-H grounds. So, it seems like an interesting approach and not a detriment to what we have. William Greer came from Parker and talked about the Parker House, I believe it's called, that, which is a private effort to take a sort of historic building in Parker and make it a community center. He went over how that's working. He's basically, leasing that from private individual for 15 years or something I believe, around that timeline and is doing a lot of renovations and it will be available for groups of up to maybe a 100 or so to use and, good for Parker. The funding for that, we really didn't see an opportunity for that from you know, the council's perspective, but we did point him, Scott Fisher appointed him towards the Randolph County United group and also another opportunity, and I can't remember the name of it, but it had fathers or founding or something.

Missy said forum of founders. There's a meeting with that group tomorrow.

Todd Holaday said so, it seemed like a good project, but it's really not maybe aligned with what we can help with. We approved under additional appropriations several smaller items with the bigger ones where the 2nd year appropriation for RAZ32. I believe that completes our obligation to that, which is a, RAZ32 is, I can't remember if it's rural or regional alliance zone. It's the 3 schools along 32 in Randolph County that are cooperatively working together to do industrial arts types of training. And then the other one was the, you know, the appropriation of the large amount of money that we had from the bond for the jail project. In comments, Greg went over the 2nd floor renovations that are being thought through. Looks like we'll be hopefully spending considerably less than we had maybe originally thought by using some sort of cubicle approach versus a build out. That's all I had. Do you have any questions or anything I missed?

Gary said nice report. I tend to agree with the council's thinking too on the building in Parker. I didn't at first, realize that it was a public, I mean a private venture because he wasn't able to make it to our meeting.

Todd Holaday said yeah, he missed it. He wanted to come to your meeting and just missed it by a day.

Gary said a good report. Tom?

Tom said no. Thanks, Todd.

Todd Holaday said thank you.

Gary said Missy?

Missy said nope.

Gary said thank you.

Steve Hall and Randy Dunnick- Town of Albany funding for firetruck

Gary said next up, Steve Hall, Randy Dunnick, town of Albany, funding for firetruck.

Steve Hall said good morning. I am Steve Hall. This is Caleb Halsema, our Albany fire chief. He came with us this morning in the event that you might have specific questions that he would be able to answer that we couldn't.

Gary said is the fire chief, also EMS director.

Steve Hall said no.

Caleb Halsema said no, that's the county, EMS director.

Steve Hall said we are here today asking for some funding for a firetruck. We have 2 firetrucks that we are retiring. One is from 1989, the other one is 1992. One is a pumper truck and one's a rescue truck. The truck that we want to purchase will serve in the capacity of both. The share for Albany to purchase that truck is \$390,000.00. The rest of that truck is estimated to be about 650,000, will come from the Delaware County trustee's office.

Missy said how much did you say again? I'm sorry.

Steve Hall said I'm sorry?

Missy said how much from Delaware County?

Steve Hall said the Delaware township. I'm sorry, I said county but it's Delaware township, would be the difference between 650 and 390, so about 160.

Missy said okay.

Steve Hall said and we are hopeful. We know that you have a lot of fire departments here in Randolph County. We're not asking you to just fund that for us. We know you have a lot of other needs. When Mr. Wickersham was a commissioner, he once mentioned to me that Albany's fair share of like EDIT money is about 11,000 a year. What we're really asking for is an advance on that money for the next 5 years, not quite 55, we're just asking for 50, so that we might be able to go ahead and purchase this truck. We are just about \$70,000.00 short now on what we need for Albany, but by the time the final payment of this would come in, we would have enough to pay that. So, that's our request. Caleb does have run information, how often we come into Randolph County if you, I think we sent that to you.

Gary said I believe we all got that information.

Missy said yeah.

Gary said for the last 2 years.

Steve Hall said right.

Gary said I think what I'd like to do if the other 2 commissioners would agree, that we don't address this as buying firetrucks, but we address this as paying a fee for services for medical ambulances because the county doesn't involve itself with firetrucks.

Steve Hall said okay.

Gary said but we do however, pay for ambulance coverage. So, if you've got \$50,000.00 through a different avenue like four years of advance or five years of advance payment or ambulance services out into Green Township, wouldn't that get to the same purpose, for the town council, would have the money come in?

Steve Hall said if it comes to the town council, we would apply that to our rescue, which is, runs with the ambulance services.

Gary said but can you apply that money to helping with the firetruck?

Steve Hall said I would have to check to make sure that's proper. I can't answer that sir, without checking, but we, that's what we would intend it to be.

Gary said yeah.

Tom said I think it would be EMS controlled by the county, that might not work.

Caleb Halsema said yeah, I believe they're a separate contract from the county to county, I believe.

Gary said okay. I'm a little shy about getting into buying firetrucks or even helping with 10 fire departments of our own I think we have.

Steve Hall said if we were asking for that to be an advance or our EDIT money?

Gary said EDIT runs out in 2028.

Steve Hall said okay.

Meeks said so you could for 2026 and 2027, for \$10,000.00.

Gary said yeah. Eleven.

Tom said eleven.

Meeks said is it eleven? I thought it was ten. We provide \$10,000.00 to every.

Gary said not to Albany Heights, do we?

Meeks said not to Albany, I'd have to look.

Gary said I don't think we ever have to Albany.

Meeks said no, it's the other towns.

Gary said I want to help you. I just want to structure it to we're not buying any firetruck with, to the departments that would have the same reasonable ask. What are your thoughts at the moment, Tom?

Tom said I like the EMS direction, but I don't think they control that. That's a tough one. That's the direction I was going, so, we talked about the last time. I think at a minimum, we can give them the two years with EDIT dollars. I don't know, since we haven't been giving them EDIT for their, whether we would be willing to go back another year or so in the past, where we're given other.

Gary said is Albany Heights incorporated?

Steve Hall said yes.

Gary said that's a good thought. Missy?

Missy said have we helped any other cities and towns in Randolph County with paying for firetrucks?

Gary said no. That's why I want to stay off of that and stay on the EMS.

Tom said but we do give all the other small cities and towns EDIT.

Gary said \$10,000.00, yeah.

Missy said right.

Gary said so if we were to give you \$50,000.00 in EDIT funding, two years of the future and a little because we haven't ever given Albany Heights any funding before, I guess there's another way to look that we did help with the splash pad in Albany.

Steve Hall said you did.

Gary said so it's not like we don't, ignore Albany Heights.

Steve Hall said no, we're aware of that.

Gary said but I would like to make sure that when we're done with this, that there's no argument about covering Green Township with ambulance services.

Steve Hall said no, not at all.

Gary said you have a connection with them.

Steve Hall said we have a good relationship with them. Caleb can tell you we make about 50 runs a year into Green Township. This truck that we're purchasing, we think will enhance our ability to do that, because we'll just have to take one truck, one crew. So, even during the day, we can respond much better when we have limited number of firemen available.

Gary said so, if we were to send the money to you on behalf of Albany Heights, because that's the power jurisdiction.

Steve Hall said correct, and that is why we're here, because Albany Heights is part of our town.

Gary said right, yeah. Okay. Meeks, what do you say?

Meeks said I'm seeing if we give them any money. I'm trying to find that, our EDIT plan. I cannot find our EDIT plan.

Gary said I don't think so.

Tom said the splash pad was the only time.

Meeks said I think it's, that was the only time.

Gary said yeah.

Meeks said but it's an EDIT funding mechanism if you do anything. It would have to be through EDIT funds, I would think.

Gary said yeah. Okay. I think I could be okay with sending \$50,000.00 of EDIT funds to Albany Heights and they'd do with it what they see fit.

Missy said 50,000, total or what's your total?

Gary said total is what I'm thinking.

Missy said okay.

Gary said and basically, I would hope that that would make sure that we don't, we always have coverage, I mean, I do know that you guys come out to 1 and 28, which seems to be a wreck magnet out there. Plus, Green Township is what, another 3 miles to the east, 600?

Caleb Halsema said yeah, we go to 600 West.

Gary said we want to keep Green Township covered, is what this whole thing is about. Could you tell us, the county doesn't pay for any fire coverage? Who pays you for Green Township fire coverage right now?

Caleb Halsema said the Green Township trustee.

Gary said the Green Township trustee. That's the answer to the email that went through?

Caleb Halsema said yes.

Gary said okay.

Tom said and you do have a contract with Green Township, right?

Gary said not with Ridgeville?

Steve Hall said we do have a contract. There have been some questions right. It's not with Ridgeville. Each department has its own individual.

Gary said yeah, okay. Good, wanted to know that. Would that satisfy your need?

Steve Hall said yes.

Gary said and would we find ourselves in the next 4 or 5 years in a match, why we don't have coverage, ambulance coverage? You can just come on over. You guys can work that out with Delaware County?

Caleb Halsema said yes.

Steve Hall said yes.

Gary said okay. Missy, what are your final thoughts on it?

Missy said I can go with it if it comes out of EDIT. I have some questions on the 390 from Randolph County versus the 160 from Delaware County.

Steve Hall said no, I'm sorry, the 390, is the town of Albany's responsibility.

Missy said okay, okay.

Gary said what's the cost of the truck, a million dollars?

Missy said yeah.

Steve Hall said 600 and.

Gary said in total?

Steve Hall said about 640.

Gary said oh, okay.

Steve Hall said between 640 and 650.

Gary said so, Delaware County is giving you half of that?

Steve Hall said just the Delaware County trustee. Albany sets in Delaware township.

Missy said have you asked the Delaware County commissioners?

Steve Hall said they have helped us with some other projects and we were told at this point, that they don't have that funding.

Missy said okay.

Gary said they're probably worried about the same things all counties are worried about.

Steve Hall said yeah.

Missy said I'm in favor of this, theoretically.

Steve Hall said oh, I know.

Missy said I am. But, I also have some concerns about Ridgeville, some of our other areas do need a new fire or need new fire radios, because everybody's changing up to that high frequency. So, it's not that I don't sympathize and want to help. It's just that I want to make sure we service Randolph County. And that is a portion of Randolph County. I get that, so.

Steve Hall said we agree with that. When we started out, we were saying we know you have other departments and other needs, so, we can appreciate that.

Missy said thanks.

Gary said Tom, anything else?

Tom said no. I'll make a motion that we give them 50,000 of EDIT and not necessarily to Albany Heights.

Meeks said so, Albany Heights or the town of Albany?

Steve Hall said it's the town of Albany. They're incorporated in the town limits.

Tom said so, how's that, we have to give it to the town of Albany?

Meeks said the town of Albany, if that's who's buying the truck.

Gary said yeah.

Steve Hall said okay.

Meeks said that's who's buying the truck, right?

Steve Hall said yes.

Tom said to the town of Albany representing Albany Heights. That needs to be in there some way.

Missy said yeah.

Tom said and 50,000 EDIT dollars.

Gary said which includes the next 2 years?

Tom said yes.

Gary said 26 and 27.

Tom said I wasn't even, I was going to put it kind of not necessarily including years, if that continues, that we're going to give it 29, 30 year or anything like that. I just wanted to, as a lump sum.

Gary said yeah, we know what we're doing, yeah. Okay. We have a motion to give the Albany, the town of Albany, \$50,000.00 out of the EDIT fund. Do I have a second?

Missy said so what's our total going to be on that after we pay them all the payments?

Meeks said \$50,000.00.

Gary said 50, total.

Missy said total of 50, okay. Yeah, I second that.

All aye votes. Motion carried.

Gary said there you go.

Steve Hall said thank you very much. We appreciate it and we appreciate the relationship

Gary said I personally, would like for you to feel like this is because we appreciate the ambulance service and fire service, so we don't want to get in a matching, we just want the fire service. Thank you for your service to Randolph County. Appreciate it.

Steve Hall said thank you, Commissioners.

Greg Fisher- Union Township Trustee property next to fire station

Gary said Greg Fisher, Union Township Trustee property next to the fire station.

Greg Fisher said good morning. My name is Greg Fisher. I'm the Union Township trustee, Randolph County. I'm here this morning to see if you guys can help us get our building project off the ground. We are expanding the Modoc fire department, combining the township with the fire department to own a building that's going to be a municipal building. It's going to have the township trustee's office in it. It's going to have a 30 by 40 meeting room and then 2 additional truck bays for the fire department. The truck bays are larger than the existing ones. Their trucks currently, they're pumper trucks, barely fit in the building and they need a little bit more room. The problem we have is the building stretches across into, onto the county owned property. There's a little parcel of land that you guys own next to the fire house and the ball diamond parking lot. So, the most economical way for us to build this building is to build it to the east, attach it to the existing building, but it stretches, if you look at page, the last couple pages of that, stretches onto your property. So, what we're asking is the county to consider donating that property to the town of Modoc.

Gary said I would, yeah, is there a basketball goal on there?

Greg Fisher said yes. There is currently, we're going right across the basketball goal area and that's got to be removed. But yeah.

Gary said are we going to have an issue with the children wanting their hoops back?

Greg Fisher said there's a pretty big lot there for us to do something in the future.

Gary said okay. Well first of all, I didn't know the county owned that until you made me aware of it, which me personally, I don't think the county needs to own those types of property. The more we can give to the towns the better. Tom, do you?

Tom said I agree.

Gary said Missy?

Missy said I agree.

Gary said so, would somebody like to make a motion that we form a resolution to transfer that property to the town of Modoc for free?

Tom made a motion to approve. Missy seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Gary said we'll get the resolution made out.

Greg Fisher said okay. Thank you very much.

Gary said no problem. Thank you for building down there.

Other Business:

Art Moystner, Randolph County Sheriff

Gary said next, other business. Sheriff. Is there anybody from LEAP here? Okay, is Joseph in today? Could you phone him up here?

Art Moystner said I've had communication with him already regarding that situation.

Gary said could you fill us in?

Art Moystner said I can. Like I said in the email, it wasn't anything trying to pick a fight with anyone, however, that's a secure system, and we have obvious concerns of people having access to that system. I think there was a miscommunication on his part. My concerns come in the fact that this is the 2nd time it's happened in a few years because we had the same thing when we put cameras in probation and the EMS building. They were added to our system. There're a couple things that I question. I know there's a storage system here at the courthouse. So, I wasn't sure why they weren't added to that. Not only do I want to make sure individuals don't have access to our secure system, I don't really need access to theirs.

Gary said can both the server in the sheriff department's unable to satisfy another category and not?

Art Moystner said say that one more time.

Gary said the server in the sheriff's department is not able to keep you secure and also keep EMS in a category all of its own? It's the same server with two different houses inside?

Art Moystner said it's the exact same program. So, they're being added to my program.

Gary said okay.

Art Moystner said it's not the server. It's the program.

Gary said alright.

Art Moystner said and they're being added to that program and we limit what people can and cannot see, what they can access, and what they can play back, because I don't want to have, everybody having access to our building cameras. They don't need it. That's a security issue.

Gary said we're going to call Joseph up so he can help us to, what did he tell you he was going to do?

Art Moystner said right now, they've got it, he has it to where it is limited so that the individual that does have that access only has access to those cameras. So, it's only the fire department that they have, or the EMS building that they have access to.

Gary said EMS, that's kind of what I thought in my mind.

Art Moystner said the issue is when you add it, my people have access to all those cameras that work there. So, they're being given access to those cameras also. So, I have to go in there and individually take that away from them.

Gary said okay.

Art Moystner said and the problem is, in having that shared system, which is why I don't understand why we're not putting some of these on the same internal system the courthouse has?

Gary said I don't know.

Art Moystner said it's the same setup. So, I'm going to talk to Joey more about that, but my concern is, this is the 2nd time that IT has added something to the system at the sheriff's office without any conversation. And I think there needs to be a conversation.

Gary said yeah. The fact that we wanted video and we wanted it stored is without question, but I understand.

Art Moystner said I agree with you wholeheartedly. I just disagree with where they necessarily put it or how it was done without conversation when it involved other office holders especially one that has security concerns.

Gary said okay. When Joseph can make it up here before the meetings over, we'll speak to him about what needs to be done there to keep that from happening.

Art Moystner said okay, sure.

Gary said what else you got?

Art Moystner said the only other thing I have is the resolution.

Gary said oh yeah, for the property?

Art Moystner said for the property and then I have titles for you here.

Missy said Sheriff, I agree with you a hundred percent, and I think it needs to be looked at countywide, who can see what is happening and others that might be confidential that may have

individual citizens involved that should not be out there with everybody else to be able to see. So, I think that's been a little problem in the past.

Art Moystner said well we have, we obviously, have the security concerns at the sheriff's office that we want to keep the building secure.

Missy said yeah, sure.

Art Moystner said I also don't I mean, those other departments, I shouldn't have access to them either.

Missy said right, well.

Gary said one minute. Missy, I don't think there's any instance, if there is, please correct me, that a citizen can get into our servers.

Missy said not a citizen, but there have been office people who worked in the courthouse who have been watching other offices that I don't think that's appropriate.

Art Moystner said correct.

Missy said they're not the over sight.

Art Moystner said and one of the issues you have is the more passwords that you have that are accessing that system, the more chance there is for a hack or somebody's data to get, if they get into somebody else's system that has access to that server and they go through that system, then you're giving them a roundabout way to get into that server. And I want to keep that from happening because that's where we store everything.

Missy said particularly if they use their phone for their, on sight or away from their workplace.

Art Moystner said I don't disagree.

Missy said that really opens it up.

Art Moystner said I think it creates an opportunity for a security breach.

Gary said well, we'll get Joseph, we'll begin the process. As far as who has access we, I think we're going to turn that over to the security committee. We have addressed that 2 months ago about who should have access and who should not. It may have been something the commissioners need to determine.

Art Moystner said well I would also share with you that if it's a system that pertains to the jail statutorily speaking, the sheriff is the only one that has the authority to grant access to those systems.

Gary said yeah, I wasn't even talking about the jail.

Art Moystner said okay.

Gary said yeah, I know that.

Art Moystner said and that's the situation we're at. It's dealing with the systems at the jail.

Gary said let's get it taken care of. I'm glad you brought it to our attention. Joseph is not up here yet, so. We might as well move on.

Art Moystner said perfect.

Gary said we have a resolution, right?

Art Moystner said we do.

Gary said before I move on though, Tom, do you have anything to add to that?

Tom said no, just wait for IT.

Gary said Missy?

Missy said nope.

Art Moystner said I guess Gary, what I would ask is maybe we can have a conversation with Joe, yourself and me outside of public purview to resolve this situation instead of doing it in a public meeting.

Gary said if it takes, if it takes a motion.

Art Moystner said I don't disagree, but I don't think we're going to resolve that today, and I would rather you bring that information to the other commissioners, because as I've stated before, I think we can have a more blunt conversation outside of a public meeting, and then if we need a blunt conversation in the public meeting, we can do that, but I don't think that's where we should start.

Gary said I don't think we need a blunt one. I think we understand where we're at.

Art Moystner said perfect.

Gary said right. But as far as making decisions outside the other 2 commissioners.

Art Moystner said no, I know you can't do that.

Resolution 2026-05

Gary said and don't. So, okay. Resolution 2026-05, it's two vehicles, right?

Art Moystner said it is.

Gary said and then some.

Tom said EMS.

Art Moystner said and there's EMS stuff.

Gary said EMS stuff in there. So, it's Motorola repeater station, Motorola base station, VHF duplexer/filter, Motorola UHF receiver, Motorola intermod/filter panel, Rackmount power strip, Astron power strip, Rack shelf, Motorola interface tray, Motorola console interface card cage, Raytheon JPS voter panel, Motorola console radios, Motorola XTL 2500 mobile radio, GE 6-foot cabinet, miscellaneous associated cords and wires, and then a 2020 Dodge Durango, two 2020 Dodge Durango's. That's part of this resolution, surplus property for disposal. Somebody like to make a motion to pass Resolution 2026-05?

Missy made a motion to approve. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Gary said anything else, Sheriff?

Art Moystner said that's all I have unless you have questions for me.

Gary said I do not.

Missy said I have one question.

Art Moystner said yes ma'am?

Missy said Sheriff, on that storage cabinet that's listed in there, is there anybody else in the county who might need that for something?

Art Moystner said the storage cabinet?

Missy said yeah.

Gary said 6-foot storage cabinet.

Missy said 6-foot storage.

Gary said that's from EMS I think.

Missy said okay.

Art Moystner said yeah, I was going to say, you can have Gary ask around, but I'm not, not that I'm aware of off the top of my head.

Missy said yeah, okay.

Art Moystner said thank you.

Gary said you're welcome.

Art Moystner said I'll just leave this up here with you. I'll pick it up when we're done with the meeting today.

Gary said okay, thank you.

Minutes of March 2, 2026

Gary said Minutes of March 2, 2026. Everybody should have those emailed to you. Somebody like to make a motion to accept them?

Missy made a motion to accept. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Regular Claims \$1,720,334.38

Gary said regular claims, \$1,720,334.38. Somebody like to make a motion to approve the regular claims?

Missy made a motion to approve. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Joseph, Leap IT regarding storage of Sheriff's security camera's

Gary said Joseph, come on up. Sheriff, would you like to come back?

Joseph Baldrige said good morning everyone.

Gary said identify yourself Joseph, please.

Joseph Baldrige said yes, my name is Joseph Baldrige and I'm with LEAP Managed IT.

Gary said on the camera, you and the sheriff have had discussion on it?

Joseph Baldrige said yes.

Gary said so, that being a secure server over there, in the sheriff's domain, do we have to put those images on there or do we have room elsewhere?

Joseph Baldrige said so, unfortunately, I believe that's the only server that we have enough licensing to hold the cameras, because I know on the, I think there's only two left on the courthouse one, then there's only a couple left on the other sheriff's servers.

Gary said what do you mean by that?

Joseph Baldrige said so, with the, how the camera server works, is it's licensed based on the number of cameras. So, the current license we have for the courthouse, it only holds about I believe, 13 cameras and there're 11 right now.

Gary said okay.

Art Moystner said so, did we purchase new license to put them on the system at the sheriff's office from SAS or were those existing licenses?

Missy said I think you did in June or July, last year. I remember something about that.

Joseph Baldrige said I know we, I know we had purchased the services from them to install the cameras. I don't recall a license upgrade being on part of that.

Missy said okay.

Tom said what would it take to upgrade the license here?

Joseph Baldrige said we would need to get back with Security Automation Systems and they would be able to provide us with a quote for an updated license to be able to add those.

Gary said can you do that before the next meeting?

Joseph Baldrige said yeah, yep.

Gary said so, could you be here for the next meeting?

Joseph Baldrige said uh, yes.

Gary said then we can go over this. We can, because it sounds like we're going to crowd the sheriff's department on licensing too, right?

Joseph Baldrige said yeah, yeah, I think they have about one or two cameras left as well, after the EMS cameras.

Gary said do we actually buy license per camera?

Joseph Baldrige said yes. So, it comes, it usually comes in a group. So, I think this next license will probably also give us like 2 extra after we add the EMS cameras.

Gary said okay. Is there a server in either one of the EMS stations?

Joseph Baldrige said uh, no. Both EMS stations right now, go back to you, the sheriff's servers.

Missy said do you think that should be separated, they have their servers in the EMS station and not with you, or is that a problem?

Art Moystner said no, I think it should be separated because right now, I have access to theirs. I shouldn't do that.

Gary said the only thing to confuse me, why one box can't have your security on one side and on the other side, EMS, I mean like if it's run out of the same basement, which different purposes?

Art Moystner said sure, it's the same program is the issue you have.

Gary said that's right. You said that. That's right.

Art Moystner said it's the same program and instead of buying a separate program, it makes sense to use the same program. But we had the program in the courthouse and we also have it at the sheriff's office. So, I think it would be easier if you just put them into the courthouse and then I don't have access to their stuff either, which would make sense to me.

Gary said okay. Could you get us some information on that, Joseph?

Joseph Baldrige said yeah, yep.

Gary said send us an email with a little detail of what's going on, on it.

Joseph Baldrige said okay.

Gary said also, I think we need to probably address who does have access and who doesn't.

Missy said absolutely.

Tom said let's say if that goes into the courthouse, the other departments in the courthouse, there's a way so that just the EMS has access to their?

Joseph Baldrige said yes.

Gary said yeah, and the current access has a different discussion who's got what, we, I think it's a little liberal right now.

Missy said because confidentiality across the board both, particularly with EMS and the sheriff's department is extremely important and not criticizing anyone, but if you have employees here coming in who are not officers and they see something and they want to tell, guess what I saw, you know, that can't happen. Also, there should be some procedures or protocol here for this courthouse that not everyone, can I get on there, no. Okay, do we have that all taken care of now?

Joseph Baldrige said yes.

Missy said okay.

Joseph Baldrige said yeah, we've been more restrictive on giving access.

Gary said but we haven't taken any away that was already granted, right?

Joseph Baldrige said no.

Gary said so, we still have the problem.

Missy said yeah, we need to see who's on that, who's been granted and why do they need the access, and to see them?

Gary said we've already had that. I think we get that reinitiated, take action with it.

Missy said yeah, yeah.

Gary said are you on board? Understand what we're doing?

Joseph Baldrige said yeah.

Missy said you do a great job. We appreciate you.

Gary said well we're talking about it, I think, of course, you have elected officials who need to know, with the courts, prosecutors and all that, but when you've got department heads, I think a department head needs to be in charge of going on that server, not just whoever works in the office, any office, not one office particularly. Tom, anything more to add?

Tom said nope.

Gary said alright, we'll get this going. Thank you.

Joseph Baldrige said thank you.

Gary said thank you, Art.

Art Moystner said thank you.

Treasurer's Monthly Report

Gary said treasurer's monthly report. Somebody like to make a motion to accept the treasurer's monthly report?

Missy made a motion to accept. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Leap- One drive back-up approval

Gary said Leap-One drive back-up. We should have kept Joseph. I don't understand it.

Missy said well, it does cut down on the protocol for a lot of it, not everybody can get, I just think it got a little bit, you know, way out of hand on people who should have known and had the right to see that. So, that email basically straightened all that out. I think it outlines everything. I was fine with, and I'm glad we had that verbal, just to make sure everybody understands that you can't just be going down and asking, that you want to keep an eye on the courthouse when on the, you know.

Gary said this one drive back, that's a different situation though, isn't it?

Missy said yes. It is, but you can partition, he can partition that off into numerous. You might have to identify and say I'm going to have this many terabytes or megabytes go in different sections, but that's plenty big enough to do that. He can add more to that. So, I think it's, I'm satisfied with it now.

Gary said Tom?

Tom said I don't have anything to add.

Gary said I don't either. Would you like to make a motion to the one drive approval?

Tom made a motion to approve. Missy seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Gary said okay, that's the end of this agenda. Wouldn't you know? Missy, do you have anything to add?

Missy said no.

Gary said Niki?

Niki said no.

Gary said I do, for everybody that's here. When we're done here with this short part of this agenda, we'll be going into a recess. We will reconvene the commissioners' meeting after the public hearing, which begins at 11:00 o'clock. Tom?

Tom said nothing.

Gary said Meeks?

Meeks said nothing.

Gary said anybody in attendance today have anything to bring forward to the commissioners? Seeing no one come up, I'd like to make a motion that we go into recess at this time until after the public hearing, which begins at 11:00 o'clock.

Missy made a motion to approve. Tom seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Gary said we are in recess.

Public Hearing for Riverstart Solar Park II - 11:00 am

Gary said alright ladies and gentlemen, I'll stand up so you can hear, we're all live now. We're going to open up the public hearing. Everything is recorded now for the open-door policy in Indiana. So, if you, please we need to have said first, there's 3 minutes for each person who wants to speak. You will see that there's a tablet up there. We need you to write your name and your address down on that tablet when you come up to speak. Everybody is allowed to come through and speak once. Got to caution everybody it's a small room with a lot of people in it, any across the room talking is just going to be destructive and you can't call forward or anything, you have to be on the cameras to even be recorded. The commissioners are here to listen. The commissioners won't be responding back or they don't have to. I guess somebody could, a commissioner, they could speak for themselves, but we're here to listen. Our attorney, Meeks Cockerill is going to go to the statute that is in play today for this. So, as we get started here, we'll get started after Meeks gives us a briefing on everybody a briefing here on what's going on.

Meeks said well this is for River Solar Park II. The Randolph County ordinance can be found in Article 19, and so this is one of the steps to get a permit to put in a solar project. So, specifically, under 19-6-2-11A, prior to the application for a commercial solar energy system permit, the applicant shall notify the director of Area Plan of the location of the proposed site including the legal description and a map. That has been done with the Area Plan. Under Item B, upon receiving that notice from the applicant, the director of the Area Planning Commission will notify the commissioners. And the commissioners are here. They have been notified. At that time, the commissioners have 45 days to consider, will hold a public meeting and to consider whether the proposed site is appropriate and whether it should be approved. Under Item C of that section, the applicant shall provide written notice of the time, place, date and location of the public hearing by certified mail to all property owners within a 1,000 feet of the proposed site. At least 20 days prior to the public hearing the notice shall include the legal description and/or a GIS map describing the area of the proposed site. That has also been done, and that's why we are here today. The commissioners shall provide the director of the Area Planning Commission with written notice of their decision within 5 days of the public hearing. That means within 5 days, the commissioners would need to make a determination. The commissioner meeting this morning was recessed. I imagine they will go into a meeting after this meeting to discuss it. They do not have to approve it today. They can have another time, another place within the next 5 days. And that has not been decided as of now. The applicant for the permit must obtain approval of the proposed site from the Randolph County Board of Commissioners prior to the execution of certain agreements. And those agreements include a road use and drainage agreement, decommissioning agreement, and or an economic development agreement. Any such agreement which is executed prior to the approval of the proposed site by the commissioners shall be deemed null and void. There has been no agreements yet of those three. The approval of the proposed site by the commissioners shall not guarantee the issuance of a permit. The applicant must meet all other requirements of the unified zoning ordinance in addition to this section prior to issuance of a permit. That would include those, obtaining those approvals for the agreements and anything else that they must do under the zoning ordinance. I don't have anything else, Gary.

Gary said okay. With that, who would like to be first to come up for this public hearing and have their say? Yes.

Nicole Cowan said good morning. We're Andy and Nicole Cowan. Thank you for the opportunity this morning. We appreciate it.

Gary said somebody please sign up while you.

Nicole Cowan said sorry. This is too important for our livelihood. I wanted to make sure I had the notes all in front of me to make sure that we cover everything we wish to address with you all this morning. Our family lives in Union Township within the proposed Riverstart Solar project area. Our home sets directly within the proposed solar footprint between A1 and AL, agricultural zone shown on the map. If this project is approved as proposed, our property will effectively be surrounded by 360 degrees by a utility scale solar infrastructure. So, that's a very important part, as you're all aware. It changes the size, it's utility. Under Indiana Code 36-7-4, zoning decisions must promote public health, safety and general welfare, while protecting property values and insuring compatibility with the surrounding land uses. Projects of this scale as proposed, require careful considerations under all those standards. First, I would like to address the property value concerns because that topic is often discussed in hearings like these. Research examining property values near both wind and solar energy infrastructure, has produced mixed findings. Some studies have found little to measurable impact while others have identified price reductions for homes located very close again, to large energy installations. For example, research conducted by Lawrence Berkeley National Lab examined homes near large solar facilities found that properties located very close to these solar installations sometimes experience measurable price reductions. You won't find that in all the studies. While homes further away generally did not. So, as you're evaluating studies, please consider proximity because that is one point that is very valid. Because of the research variations depending on distance, visibility, and local conditions, we believe it is reasonable to also in all of the prerequisites that you've requested, to request a property value guarantee for non-participating home owners. Residents who do not participate in solar lease agreements receive none of the financial benefits of this project. Yet, we are going to experience the greatest impact of this project. Living next to or surrounded by industrial energy infrastructure of this size for the next 30 to 40 years, that is the anticipated residual value of our life. Sometimes developers note that they're temporary or that the research shows minimal impact to some areas, while that may be true in certain cases, a 40-year project represents a significant portion of our life, as I previously stated. A property value guarantee simply insures that us, all of us nearby residents, for the next 30 to 40 years, secure our investment.

Gary said hey ma'am, that's 3 minutes, but you can continue, there's 2 of you, for 3 more.

Nicole Cowan said okay, perfect, thank you. Second, we're concerned about drainage and agricultural infrastructure. Our property has already experienced significant ecological damage from the wind turbines. I have pictures that I'd like the opportunity to share with you. So, prior to the wind turbine, you can see a picture of our prospering land with all of the trees. We suffered significant flooding, drain tile damage from the wind turbine. So, we have significant

effects if the additional construction is going to significantly damage the integrity of our land. May I pass these around.

Meeks said if you'd like to give those to the commissioners, that's perfectly fine, at the end of you?

Nicole Cowan said okay, perfect, absolutely. Thank you.

Meeks said or any other thing you'd like to submit.

Nicole Cowan said and I did hear that you were going to do drain and surveys prior to, so that is one of our requests is that you do require drainage and agriculture infrastructure stability through the studies prior to approval. Third, we ask the county to consider long term financial responsibility. I do believe he addressed that. Fully funded decommissioning bond that covers the total cost of also removing the solar panels, foundation and the electrical infrastructure. And that bond be reviewed periodically. So, we would like that to be added so that the cost of doing so is evaluated over the time of the contract. Fourth, we respectfully ask the county to consider reasonable acreage limits for solar development. Many Indiana counties have adopted acreage caps or percentage limits to maintain balanced land use and protected agricultural communities. Establishing limits on the amount of land converted to industrial solar use helps insure that large scale energy development does not overwhelm our townships. Finally, I would like to respectfully ask any member of this board that has a financial interest in this project or in business that may be benefit from its approval? Under Indiana Code 35-44.1-4-1 public officials must avoid participating in decisions where they may benefit financially. If such relationships exist with anyone voting on this project, we respectfully request that those individuals refuse and recuse themselves from the decision regarding this project. Before closing, I'd just like to leave with 2 questions that we believe are important for the community. If the project changes ownership over the next 40 years, will commitment be made for this community to remain legally binding for the future owners and if the property values decline, who will compensate the residents who did not choose to participate in this project? We're simply asking the county to insure responsible development does not become at the expense of the residents. Progress should not mean surrounding existing homes with industrial-sized infrastructure without meaningful protection. That also includes our road integrity. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gary said thank you. You just got in.

Nicole Cowan said thank you.

Gary said thank you. Next?

Meeks said ma'am, ma'am, is there something you'd like to give?

Nicole Cowan said yes.

Meeks said sorry, I didn't want you to leave with.

Missy said ma'am, could you verify where your property is?

Meeks said she has it right here.

Nicole Cowan said yeah, I'll show you.

Missy said okay, thank you.

Gary said yes ma'am, you're next.

Neda Lester said my name is Neda Lester.

Gary said and have you signed up?

Neda Lester said yes sir.

Gary said thank you.

Neda Lester said my name is Neda Lester and I'm here today standing opposed to this solar project. I'm here to make you see my perspective. My husband and I work hard to raise our family on the farm. I still believe it is a wholesome place to raise a family and instill values of hard work and respect. Our farm has been in the family since 1837. It was named a Hoosier Homestead in 1983. Our family's heritage stretches back to when properties were deeded to individual from the government. My husband passed away about a year and a half ago. The next generation of my family is trying to carry on that tradition. Land values and cash rents have been driven up by the land being used for solar farms. That has made it much more difficult to grow large enough to be sustainable. That is a battle being faced by most of their age. What was one an opportunity for those who homesteaded and cleared land for agricultural uses has changed to opportunities for energy companies. Our ancestors would be appalled to see the farm ground covered with solar panels. Community was once necessary to complete farm tasks. Neighbors worked side by side. It seems that attitude has been replaced with the race for greed and profits. Allowing huge corporations to tie up thousands of acres in our area is pitiful. What was once a place of desire has become a place of emotional distress. If you grow up living your life working in the soil, it is hard to see fields you drive by every day covered with solar panels. It makes me depressed every time I pass them and they begin to surround us on every side. I understand my families would want to move away. Why would you want to look at panels every time you go anywhere? Unless you understand the satisfaction of coming home with soil stained clothes and dirt on your hands, then you cannot understand being a farmer gets into your blood. That connection to the land becomes a part of you. This project is close enough to me that I'm afraid pretty soon there will be solar farms in any directions I go when I leave my house. When is it going to stop? Why not now? Are dollar signs all that matter? With this outpouring of concern, it appears to me community does still matter. Neighbors are standing side by side, once again, coming together to tackle a problem. It seems to me, the real question is who will go home with dirt on their hands today? Thank you.

Gary said thank you.

Brad Dilger said morning. Good morning. My name is Brad Dilger, serve as the lead project manager for EDP Renewables.

Gary said who's with you?

Tom LoTurco said Tom LoTurco, executive vice president for EDP Renewables.

Gary said thank you.

Brad Dilger said project for EDP Renewables, North America's projects here in Randolph County. And today I'm introducing Riverstart Solar Park II, a 125-megawatt project proposed in Union Township. In accordance with the updated Unified Zoning Ordinance, certified notices were mailed to those within and 1,000 feet beyond a broad project area. We have an executed interconnection agreement with construction expected to begin in spring 2027 and an operational date of November, 2028. We're still securing additional land and detailed design will begin in the coming months. Randolph County has become a leader in clean energy production with 2 phases of Headwaters Wind and 3 phases of Riverstart Solar. 848 megawatts of renewable energy are now being delivered to the local and regional transmission grid. Previous Riverstart phases have shown that Solar operates as a quiet low impact neighbor with most activity limited to construction with minimal traffic once operational. Our operations teams have been part of this community for over 15 years, and we're proud of what we've built together. Renewable energy has brought approximately 20 million dollars to local government, including 4.3 million dollars from earlier phases of Riverstart. The most recent solar phase resulted in over 2.4 million in local construction spending, directly supporting Randolph County businesses. We've also established the Union Township utility assistance fund, \$1,000.00 for residents facing hardships and the Riverstart Union Township endowment which distributes \$20,000.00 annually to local organizations. But before closing, I want to address a few common community questions. Property values, multiple independent studies, including one specific to Randolph County found no consistent measurable decline in home values near utility scale solar. We'll be using the updated 500-foot setbacks and will continue to use vegetative buffers to protect views. Land use: Randolph County is approximately 242,000 farmable acres. Across all Riverstart phases, about 4,200 of those acres are 1.7 percent, will be used for solar. According to a recent economic analysis comparing Randolph County's economic conditions to a comparable Indiana County, since wind and solar projects came in, corn and soybean production is 19% higher than it was in 2013. With that information in mind, Randolph County saw either no negative impact or significant gains in production since solar projects have entered the county. Roads: And as with previous phases, we'll execute a road use agreement, or repair or resurface roads impacted by construction at our expense. Drainage: We map tiles, avoid them where possible and repair any damage at our expense. EMF health, EMF levels from solar are extremely low, similar to household appliances and drop to background levels within short distances. End of Life: Randolph County requires a decommissioning and restoration plan with financial security and EDPR has closed the loop program.

Gary said that's 3 minutes, Brad. You want to continue with your second person?

Brad Dilger said yep, okay. Close the loop program is your steel aluminum panels are recycled through reputable partners. In closing, I understand these decisions shape your community most. Our commitment is to listen, communicate openly and follow through with transparency and accountability. If permitted, Riverstart Solar Park II will provide long term revenue, quiet clean energy and responsible land stewardship. Thank you for your time.

Gary said thank you. You can continue.

Tom LoTurco said yeah, I would just answer a couple of things. So, one thing is that Riverstart II, this is the last project that we can do in this area. The interconnection is completely, well, it's going to connect to the existing transmission line. And so, the interconnection is completely full after that. And so, for those who are concerned about additional expansion, we can't expand beyond this one. I know there are some questions about what panels we're going to use. It's public knowledge we use panels that are made in Toledo, Ohio for solar, is what we would expect to use here. So, it's a very positive thing, domestic content. On the property values, we offer neighbor agreements and so those who are participating can actually participate without hosting infrastructure on their land. And then, I did want to also talk about the drainage. Well, Brad talked about the drainage, but then the question of legally binding requirements if the project changes ownership, all of the project agreements go with the actual project LLC. So, they stay valid no matter owns the project. But I'd just mention that we've been here with all the other phases for the last 15, 16 years, and we've remained the owners. We're an owner, operator, and so we expect to be here continuing to operate right out of Winchester. Thank you.

Gary said thank you. Next.

Dan Freer said hello, I'm Dan Freer. I stand opposed to this project. You'd cited the regulation section 19-7-4C where it states that in this.

Gary said Mr. Freer, could you have?

Dan Freer said oh, I'm sorry. This is my sister and co-owner in some of the ground that we own in the area. Lisa Blount is her name. I'm sorry.

Gary said thank you.

Dan Freer said I'm sorry. Thank you. As I stated, the section of the regulation, it states that the, whether the proposed site is appropriate, and whether it should be approved. In this instance, I think the would appropriate is really important. That section places a subjective responsibility on each of you to determine if the project is proper for the proposed area. Is placing a new project within a third of a mile of 48 houses appropriate? Union Township, at my count, has lost approximately 13% of it's tillable acres to energy. Is making that 17% appropriate? Is placing a project across the road from a school appropriate? A portion of the county's visions states that solar technologies should resolve in no net loss of prime agricultural land. Does that, does this project meet that vision appropriately? We all stand here as a community today, neighbors pulling together to support one and another and stand for each other. For the reasons stated and others, I feel and we feel this project is not appropriate for the proposed site. As you well know,

the decision is in your hands today. Our system of government suggests that individuals can make a difference when they stand together. We're asking, has that been replaced by bowing to companies promising tremendous dollars to the county? Do we as a community, even make a difference? It seems our township has been excessively burdened by the energy projects that are currently in place in the one that's proposed. Nearly all the solar at this point, is constructed in our township. Are we too far from Winchester to matter? I'm grateful for every neighbor who took the time to come today, as a sacrifice of their time. Does it matter to you, or is it a waste of our time? Are we only cowering to energy companies in the lure of greed and power? Is governance only about dollar signs? We'd like to think not, but we may be blind, excuse me, we may be blinded by the glare from the solar panels currently in place. Many of us answer to a higher power and are called to treat your neighbors as yourself. If you lived in this area, would you consider this project appropriate? It's your call, your decision and your responsibility. The current language does not require you to approve this project, but it does compel a decision based on its appropriateness. You, as a group, are charged with responsibility within the current ordinance. If you feel that falls outside of the scope of your duties as commissioner, then the current ordinance is.

Gary said sir, that's 3 minutes. Do you want to continue?

Dan Freer said yes, I would please, thank you. If that, if you feel that falls outside the scope of your duties as commissioners, then the current ordinance is drafted improperly and void. If that's the case, a moratorium must be placed on all solar projects, both approved and before you today. A thorough review of the current ordinance must take place to allow additions and corrections to properly comply with an approval process of public discourse and accountability from some sector of local governments. Does it seem more palatable to integrate our community then to say no to EDP? We nearly have a commercial corridor that spans from border to border in Union Township with little breaks. Do we want to add another one to that in that same area? I can sleep at night knowing we tried our best. We fought a fight. Making appropriate decisions requires consideration to the consequences to our communities. That may last generations and change families forever. Whose history are you re-writing today? May God guide you in making the appropriate decision today. Thank you.

Gary said you have time ma'am. Would you like to go?

Lisa Blount said I'm just overwhelmed at how much of the area in our community is being, they want to appropriate for solar panels or any other, like the wind turbines also. They said, like when they put up the wind turbines, oh, it's not going to affect you, everything will be fine. As of now, we have no tv reception without cable. When they sometimes come to work on the wind turbines, which is, seems like every day we can count there's 3 not working in our area, and when they go to work on them back and forth, it tears up the draining systems in the farms, and makes problems for the farmers. I mean, that's just a start. Everything seems like it affects, they say oh, it's not going to affect you. It does. It affects the farmers. It affects the people that live there. We just need to be heard.

Gary said thank you. Next? Please sign up.

Jonathan Edwards said I'll begin by saying thank you to you as a board of commissioners for giving us this time to express our thoughts, for hearing us. And I also want to thank those who have already spoken in opposition. I would have to say that I concur with every point they have made, for the record.

Meeks said you need to tell us who you are.

Jonathan Edwards said oh, I wrote it down. I thought that was sufficient.

Gary said thank you.

Jonathan Edwards said okay, well does that mean I get to start over now?

Gary said yeah, go ahead.

Jonathan Edwards said okay. My name is Jonathan Edwards, 5597 West 700 North, Ridgeville, Indiana. And I would like to focus primarily on asking of you, the board of commissioners, one request, based on 2 conditions. The request is that you would put a pause, I didn't say moratorium. I'm not opposed to moratorium, but I'm only asking for a pause on the issuance of this permit and any others. We recognize there are some that have already been issued that have not even been acted on. Let's finish those, but the conditions why I'm asking for that pause is for 2 conditions, and I'm only going to address one because of limited time. The one being, we need some limits. We need some caps we need to establish. I would have to disagree with the man who spoke for EDP in reference to the small percentage. Now that may, it may be accurate based on the entire county, but it's certainly not accurate based on Union Township. You all have the same access to US Census data that I do, and there are currently, if I understand correctly from US Census data 32,340 acres, tillable acres in Union Township, and we have already covered 6,000 with approaching, if this is passed perhaps, and I know this is a little bit estimate or conjecture, but 8,000 acres, you do the math, that's close to 25%. I want to remind all of us of what the definition of agriculture is. It is, by definition according to the dictionary, the science or the practice of farming including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food, wool and other products. I would have to clearly state that to my second condition, is based on rezoning. This has to be done. There has to be a change of zoning. You cannot call black solar panels agriculture, and they're being placed in an agricultural zone. I'm not blaming anybody for that, but simply stating that has to be changed. It's not, it's not accurate. It's not appropriate. It doesn't fit into that. By the way, some are opposed to CAFOs, CAFOS do fit inside the definition of agriculture. But we currently have, am I out of time?

Gary said 10 seconds.

Jonathan Edwards said oh, well.

Gary said no, we started over.

Jonathan Edwards said we need zoning. We need rezoning. We have a quarter along 28 right now that is, does not allow new CAFOS, and I'm no opposed to that, but it's okay, it's zoned accordingly. We need rezoning on solar panels. They are not agriculture.

Gary said alright, next?

Lilith McCullough said hi guys. Thank you so much for letting us speak. We're probably some of the youngest ones in this room today.

Gary said please identify who you are.

Lilith McCullough said I'm Lilith McCullough. This is my fiancé Luke Shore. We are residents of 8041 South 850 West in Modoc, Indiana. We're within a 1,000 feet of the solar panels. Now, EDP has done a lot for our community, and we thank them for what they've done for our community. But, I want to talk to you guys about opportunity for us as the younger generation. No offense, love you all. But, at some point, when these solar panels need to be taken care of and the contract's up, a lot of people aren't going to be here anymore, and we will. We're going to be the ones that are dealing with it. And we are second generation homeowners of the property. And our goal is to have our own farm. We would be first generation farmers. And this would be taking away a lot of opportunity for us to be able to buy in our area and be able to have an opportunity to build for ourselves, to create generational wealth and create a family for ourselves. We only have 12 acres now and we'd love to expand. But I really want you to think about us younger generation and how it's going to affect us in 50 years. I mean, what's going to happen then? Can we really talk about that?

Lucas Shore said I think you pretty hit it right on the head. The only thing I'd like to add is money is temporary. You know, all this money everybody is getting for their ground, you know the solar panels are going to be junk one day. That ground will still be there and people are only going to be here. You know, people aren't going anywhere. Solar panels will. So, just keep that in mind. When you guys are dead and gone, I'm still going to be here. The solar panels are going to be junk one day.

Lilith McCullough said and we'd love to still be where we are. I mean this might start driving out the younger generation to be able to build up our community and our county even more. I mean, at some point, when are we going to realize that we're driving out the younger generation? We're the youngest ones in our entire block.

Lucas Shore said I think I'm the youngest dude sitting in here.

Lilith McCullough said and we both, we took time off out of our day and our money that we use to pay for our property, to come here and fight against this and say please, just think about you know, how much of our area, we drive down 36 where we live, and there are solar panels everywhere. At what point are we going to realize dang, we're taking the opportunity away for people to come in and build our infrastructure even more. I mean, I know EDP gives us a lot of money and we're thankful for that, right? But, at what point are we going to realize oh, there's a

different part of the county that might also need to be developed as well. Like, at what point is it going to be our area?

Lucas Shore said what's the limit?

Lilith McCullough said it's just going to drive us out. What's the limit? So, I want you to think about us as the younger generation, please, as the opportunity, really think about how it's going to affect us as homeowners and as people who want to build a family. In 50 years, what's it really going to look like for us and our families that we've tried to build? Thank you.

Gary said thank you.

Missy said what did you say your address was? I'm sorry, I didn't catch it.

Lilith McCullough said 8041 South, 850 West, Modoc, Indiana.

Missy said thanks.

Gary said next?

Macrady Lester said Macrady Lester.

Gary said please sign your name down, sir. Okay.

Macrady Lester said I'm hard of hearing. I haven't heard much of anything that's been said. And I'm assuming the reason the people have come today is because they oppose it. I don't have anything scientific to say. I'm a 5th generation resident of Union Township. Me and my brother are currently raising the 6th generation and I would like the deciding party to maybe take the money side of it out of your decision and if you think it's still best, I'd like for the township or the community maybe to concentrate on making it possible for the 6th generation to maybe want to stick around. There's not much left out there. I figured out a way to generate a living and make a living and stay and raise my family. But, so, that's what I wanted to say. I recognize 2 people here that I'd call a neighbor, but other than that, and I guess it's at my fault, don't get out a whole lot. I don't recognize anybody else sitting up here. So, but yeah, I'm going to be out there, kind of in the middle of it. Don't really want to be. But I'd like for everybody here to take the money out of the equation. A lot of decisions are made on money, based on money. I make them. But you try to make the best decision. It involves a lot of people, not just one person. That's all I'd like to say. Thank you.

Gary said thank you. Next please.

Melissa Ogden said hi.

Gary said please introduce.

Melissa Ogden said Keith and Melissa Ogden. We live at 9187 West US Highway in Modoc. First of all, it's our 35th wedding anniversary, and I didn't expect to be doing this today.

Gary said congratulations.

Melissa Ogden said thank you. We have spent a lifetime supporting renewable energy. Never thought I'd be on this side of the table. There's a very real threat you guys could flood me right out of my home. We're at the bottom of a watershed. We fight flooding every year. Last year we had knee high water in our barn. On the other side of our property is a creek that catches all that water. It's not gone above the embankment. It will if you compact the soil. It will if you bust the drainage tiles, and you will flood us right out of our home. It's been a lifelong dream for us to come out here and live in this community. We were 50 years in Muncie. We came here because it's beautiful. We came here so we could raise our own food. And everybody's here for that same reason. We don't want to lose it because you want to gain money from solar energy. We're surrounded by it. We've had enough. You talk about planting trees around these properties to blind it out. You're using fast growing evergreens, not native species. Those fast growing evergreens have shallow roots. They don't stop soil erosion. Also, something we're fighting every day. We lose a couple feet every time it rains. You are endangering our lives, all of our lives, all of our livelihood, generations of lives with this project. Just consider that please. We don't have the money to move. We don't want to move. We came here for our lives, for our children's lives, and we're asking you to consider those in this project. Thank you.

Gary said thank you. Would you like?

Keith Ogden said I would also like to say that we have the benefit of having the first phase of this project to look at, and it doesn't look good. I mean, you drive down there and those trees they put out to make the, spruce it up, looks kind of pathetic. I mean, honestly. It's like hanging one Christmas light on a Christmas tree and saying I've decorated the tree. It's pretty ridiculous. So, that's really all I've got to say. She said most of it. We are, of course, opposed. So, thank you.

Gary said thank you. Next? Please identify.

Ryan Chalfant said I'm Ryan Chalfant, and I oppose this project. I've been a lifelong resident of Randolph County. My family has farmed land in this county for decades and my wife and I have worked hard to pass that legacy of love for the land on to our children. This county was once known for being heavily rooted in agriculture and now seems to have shifted to being one of the most green energy accepting counties in the state. Rich land has been taken out of production and turned into solar. We stand before you today to plead that you spare these acres from being taken out of production. Our county has already given up so much, and we really don't know what things will look like in 10, 20 or 30 years. What we have already done may be a huge burden for the future generations to come. It seems like we are just one wind, tornado or hailstorm away from being a major issue. All this has been done to line pockets of few, yet our roads are still potholed and our property and energy taxes are some of the highest in the state, while our income tax rate is the highest in the state. It seems like few see any benefit from these investments, yet our local government has continued to hurt very hardworking people that live

and work in this once beautiful county. Every time you add to these projects, it cuts profit from local farmers and will eventually cause some to give up farming as a whole, if it hasn't already. Hard working citizens that lived here their whole lives are being surrounded by solar panels without a choice because as landowners around them take the money that's offered to them. When will enough be enough? They have taken so much from us already and have given us very little gain. We have to do something for future generations to come. I don't see many wanting to move here and live and work in this place when you're just another day away from being surrounded by solar panels. If you really care about the future, stop this project and let our future generations be able to have more opportunities. Think about the hardworking people you are hurting. Would you want solar surrounding your home? Would you want to lose a large percentage of your income because a local government decided the future of your business opportunities? So, few of you are deciding on so many peoples' futures. I pray that you understand what allowing this will bring. I feel that the city of Winchester is gaining the only benefit from any of this. Don't think that the hardworking landowners and the ones in this community that pay the most of the county's over priced property taxes will forget that the next time elections come around. We are all getting tired of losing. Thank you.

Gary said thank you. Next. Okay, ma'am. You can introduce while the gentleman writes down the names.

Nancy Francis said Jeff and Nancy Francis. We live at 9215 West 800 South. And I was born in Winchester, raised in Union Township, moved away for employment. And when we were returning from Texas in 2009, we decided to come back to Randolph County, partially because of our family, but we also thought it would just be a good place for our retirement years. We strongly oppose what is going on with the Riverstart Park II, and feel that it is not appropriate. On the south side of the area designated, there are 36 homes along US 36 between State Road 1 and 1100 West. Why would you want to affect such a residential area? Solar farms destroy the natural landscape and are ugly. There are health concerns and there are no long-term studies about the effects of EMFs on humans and animals. Ground work can cause extensive damage destroying aquifers where we get our well water, and of course, the loss of agricultural land. I come from many generations of farmers in Randolph County. All of these concerns have a negative effect on property values as well as having a negative effect on those living in this area. I have been terribly depressed at the thought of this. It just seems like there's no end to it. Union Township has an unfair burden of wind, solar and the landfill. Our roads were narrowed down after the windmills with gravel being placed along the edge of the roads and it has made it very, very dangerous if your car gets off into that gravel. Randolph County has the highest income tax in the state of Indiana. I would like to see more efforts to bring manufacturing and industry to our county. If you insist on more solar, there are more appropriate open areas in other townships so that Union Township does not bear this unfair burden. I just have to think how much is going to be enough? Our county is being changed to a place where no one wants to live.

Gary said sir, do you have anything to add?

Jeff Francis said I don't have anything to say.

Gary said okay, thank you.

Joy Bowling said hi. My name is Joy Bowling and I'm a nurse practitioner. I'm trained in public health, health care across the lifespan, family medicine. My concern about this is focused primarily on public safety and health risks. I, personally, have done research on public health across the lifespan. I understand it was said that EMF exposure is considered low. There's not really a lot of clear studies done, not long-term studies. There is a clear association of EMF and risk of cancer. Causality is not clearly established. But there is, it's listed as an association. It's, EMF radiation is listed as a Class B Carcinogen, meaning we don't know for sure. So, essentially, when we look at health across the lifespan, you know, obviously, if you don't study the long-term outcomes, you don't know what the long-term outcome is. And my concern here is on a project of this scale, there's a lot of people, there's a lot of children surrounding the area where this could be lasting for generations, and we don't have any longitudinal studies like even a decade long, even 10 years long, to prove for sure that there is no risk. So, then we're looking at a project that could be generational, far more than just 10 years, and we don't have anything to prove that that could not cause harm. And I think that should be considered, because when you're looking at environmental risks, you also look at cumulative risks. And so, as other people have said, you know, this is a small area to have a lot of concentrated things. So, in this area we have solar energy, you know, the solar farms, we've got the windfarms, we've got the landfill, there has to be some risk associated with that. You know, you can't do anything in life without risk. So, there has to be some risk, and we're combining a lot of combined risk in a small area to quite a significant population of people, and part of this area also has very close proximity to a school. And there's unknown out there about the risk of EMF exposure and cancer, and specifically childhood leukemias. That is a question that has not been disproven scientifically. So, I think that that should be considered when you're looking at a project this scale and how close this is to children and to families that this could have long-term environmental risks. I'd appreciate that to be reviewed and you know, look at that personally before a decision is made about this. To anyone taking notes about that, if you all could find some studies that would disprove what I'm saying, I would like to read those because I've done research and I couldn't find anything myself that was any clear quality studies about that. Thank you.

Gary said thank you. Next please? Are there any speakers left in the room?

Mort Radford said hello. My name is Mort Radford. I live right here in the middle. I'm surrounded by solar panels.

Missy said could we have your address please?

Mort Radford said 7173 South 1000 West. If you look right in the center of your map, you'll see where I'm at. I've got them on my north side, east side, south side, west side. I mean, it's pretty much covering me. I know that there's a lot of research that's been done, but what about my family life as far as being that close to me? What I've been told is there's 500 feet that I'm able to measure from my house to where the solar panels will be. And I know that it's probably going to be, what it's going to be, I mean, you guys have got the decision, but just think about having to live beside them day in, day out. The flooding, the water, which I'm not going to say that it's going to be that much, but if it's any, it's more than what I really want to take up. But, if it does come, I think it's pretty sad, and I have to be surrounded by them all around. I've already talked to a couple agents, talked to them on the phone, missed a few phone calls. I really don't want

them around my house, but what it'll be is what it'll be. But I'm kind of asking you to really give this a consideration. I mean, I know you guys, some of you guys are farmers, some of you guys are going to make money off of them, some people might not make anything. But if you do make anything, is it worth the time to do it as putting it around your houses. I agree that, as the one lady said, that it'll change your property tax, I mean, it'll make it come down or it could make it go up. But the thing of it is, is do you want this at your house? That's what I'm asking you. You think about it. I don't know where you live. I know where 2 of you live. But I don't know where the others live, but as I look.

Gary said time's up, sir.

Mort Radford said I see that I voted for you. Thank you.

Gary said thank you.

Darla Shore said hi. I'm Darla Shore and my husband, Doug Shore. We live at 9145 West US Highway 36 in Modoc. I just want to not take up a lot more time, but I just agree with, I'm opposed to this project. I agree with all the comments that I've heard. I live in that watershed that the Ogdens were discussing, where my backyard floods. And I do have a garden. It's not everything that I eat, but it's important to me. It's important to us. And I grew up just west of 1100 on 600 South. And I grew up on a farm, a small farm, and I didn't move to the city. I went in the city for college, but I wanted to stay in the country. And there's just something about being raised there, living there, and it's just the best place to be. And I just feel like that this is not the place, that Union Township already has way too much of the solar and the wind turbines. One thing I would like for, and I haven't heard that addressed, is I'd like for EDP and you guys to consider, which I've read some articles that it's a lot more expensive, but either the solar canopies like in the parking lots in Winchester or on buildings. I realize that they're heavy and I know that they might not be feasible, but I'd like for that to be considered and that's all that I have to say.

Gary said sir?

Doug Shore said I didn't know I was going to be up here.

Darla Shore said I didn't know either. I wasn't sure.

Doug Shore said I don't have a problem with progress at all. I don't have a problem with some of the windmills. I don't have a problem with some of the solar panels. You know, the county needed the money. I don't think it's all bad. And each person that puts them up, that's their decision. You know, we don't know their financial responsibility. I begrudge nobody of what they do. But, I just, I'm like Mr. Edwards, just maybe pause and just look at it, you know, just do we need more around Union Township? But, I appreciate you all.

Darla Shore said oh yes, and thank you. Thank you for letting us be here.

Gary said thank you.

Lisa Keesling said hi. I'm Lisa Keesling. I live at 8372 South 850 West in Union Township. You have an opportunity before you today to set an example for the rest of the state and the country to protect productive farm ground and correct mistakes of the past. In August last year, even the federal government decided, the USDA announced it was suspending its support of wind and solar projects on productive farm ground. So, personally, from a farming standpoint, my husband and I farm, and the solar parks have continued to eat away available farm ground. Agriculture employs a significant number of people in this county, and you're eliminating jobs and futures for those families, especially younger farmers. We want to continue to serve in this community in production agriculture. You're driving people away. You've heard people say that. I was looking at Randolph County United's own comprehensive plan, and I think it was about 2018, within the alternative energy section it states: Land used for solar energy can often be reverted back to its original land use once the project is decommissioned. That's the end of that sentence. In the next sentence it states quote, Randolph County generally supports the inclusion of solar technology provided there is no net loss of prime agricultural land, unquote. But we are losing our prime agricultural land. That's the thing. So, in the next paragraph, the document states quote, solar farms have the potential to convert agricultural land to non-agricultural land permanently. Once sited, a solar farm increases the potential for the soil to be degraded. This could potentially cause agricultural land to lose its production capacity, unquote. Finally, in that same section of the document, it also acknowledges that some of the solar equipment contains quote, small amounts of toxic materials that can potentially contribute to the creation of new brown field if not properly handled and disposed, unquote. So, as you will hear, there's other people here to talk about this too, these statements about the ability to restore soil productivity are completely false. It takes hundreds of years to restore just one inch of top soil. That's documented across all kinds of land grant universities. The productive part of the soil contains nutrients, microbes, you know, all kinds of things. Then compaction of equipment destroys drainage, as you've heard. And the potential for environmental impact is completely unknown as Randolph County United stated, and you heard from Joy. Please be a better steward of our county and our land from now on. You have the power to make changes and we need you to actually care enough to be our voice and advocate in the county, not a group that destroys our farm ground. A solar park is not agriculture. It's not a farm. It should not be zoned agriculture. Please choose to protect this limited resource in our county. You know, I was thinking there's an Amy Grant song in the mid-90s, and the first line of it was they've paved paradise and put up a parking lot, and that's what this is. So, thank you for your time.

Gary said thank you. Anyone else, please?

Brad Keesling said while she writes down, I first want to say hello Modoc. It's a good thing.

Gary said hey, sir.

Brad Keesling said it's a good thing.

Gary said sir?

Brad Keesling said yeah?

Gary said you need to address the commissioners.

Brad Keesling said it's a good thing that Gene Shore is at the garage because nobody else is in Modoc right now. So, mom's filling out everything. I'm Brad Keesling, live on 850 West between Modoc and Union School. This is my mom, Barbara Keesling. She lives just down the road. We have, my family has been in east central Indiana since the beginning of the state. We have been in Randolph County where we live right now for 70 years. Her dad, and that family was in, this is in Union Township, they've been there for 70 years, as well. She's going to start.

Barbara Keesling said okay, finish writing.

Brad Keesling said oh, okay. I was using your writing time as.

Barbara Keesling said okay. My name is Barbara Keesling. I'm just going to read this statement. Randolph County, through good stewardship and conservation practices by local farm families, is rich with very productive farm land that does not require irrigation. And that's a big deal because we all know of the water problem for the western third of the United States. Union Township has absorbed most of the solar and wind projects. If Riverstart Solar Park II is implemented, at least 5,000 acres of highly productive farm land will have been lost. So, what does that mean? 5,000 acres lost. Tillable land is the single largest limiting factor for a young farmer to get started. There is also a limiting factor for established operations to continue. Speaking generally, let's say it takes a 1,000 acres and another job to support a young farm family, or 2 to 2500 acres, 2,000 to 2500 acres and maybe an additional enterprise for a family to farm full time and maybe have one or two employees. So, 5,000 acres of productive farm land lost means 3 to 5 less family farm operations. Each of these farms and their employees represent hundreds of hours donated to the community through churches, schools, coaching, food pantries, fire departments, FFA, 4-H, community events, councils, boards and more. Each represents thousands and thousands of dollars donated to scholarships, endowments, Randolph County Community Foundation, secret families, 4-H, churches, food pantries, community projects, parks, ballfields, FFA, Journey Home, general benevolence and much more. They partner with dozens of businesses in Randolph County and the immediate surrounding area. They employ and train high school kids.

Gary said that's 3 minutes ma'am. You can continue but it takes from.

Brad Keesling said go ahead.

Barbara Keesling said they employ and train high school kids. Every farm family contributes to the local community in many ways. Some more than others. But all contribute greatly to Randolph County. When we lose thousands of acres of productive farmland, when we lose farm families, we all lose. Our community loses and Randolph County loses. I want to provide a personal invitation to any commissioners who have not been in Union Township recently. If you care to come down, I will give you a personal tour. I'll even buy your lunch. But I want you to take a good look at what the solar panels look like and really think about would I want to live there.

Brad Keesling said so, continuing with what mom said, you can drive from the western border of Union Township through the country and all the way through Union Township, and basically, not get out of solar, and you can wave at the landfill on the way by. And when you drive by these, if you can honestly look at those and say that's a farm, those solar panels out there, that's a farm, that's not commercial, then honestly, I think you may be blinded by the money that's coming in. Do you want this by your house? Do you want this by the golf course? What do you want the county to look like in 5, 10, 20 years? In studying that map, there's very, very few of these solar projects that are put around the landowners' homes that are leasing to these projects. What's next? I understand park five is already approved. I understand there are 2 more parks planned in the county by another company. What about data centers? That's in Farm Bureau meeting later this week. How many data centers? Lithium Ion battery storage. We have CO2 sequestration in place. Does that mean a pipeline? Okay, according to Randolph County United, your Randolph County's comprehensive plan, Randolph County must create a community that conserves and preserves viable farmland. That's from Randolph County's documents. Randolph County generally supports solar, provided there is no net loss of prime agriculture land. That's from the comprehensive plan. When you didn't follow Randolph County's own comprehensive plan on solar, how can we trust your vision for the future of the county? I have been told that you do not see how you can stop people from doing what they want with their own land. As a landowner, if I decided to build a 100,000 square foot building to start manufacturing, I think you would come in and have something to say about it, and you should have something to say about it, because it's commercial. You've said it in your own definition of Riverstart Solar Park II, it is a C-SES. The C stands for commercial per article 19. These solar parks are commercial, period. Many counties in the state already understand that.

Gary said sir, you're out of time.

Brad Keesling said counties and other states have adopted a similar approach. And anybody in the power to implement change really care enough to do anything.

Gary said sir, you're out of time.

Brad Keesling said thank you.

Gary said thank you. Okay, whose next?

Meeks said if you'd like to submit something, just give it to me. I'll put it over here and I'll.

Brad Keesling said will you make copies or one of you make copies? It's 3 of the same thing. It's just a lot of my notes.

Gary said we'll take them and.

Brad Keesling said I hope you'll have a chance to look at them. There're some references to so resources I used.

Gary said thank you. Ma'am, you're up.

Rachael Moll said okay. My name is Rachel Moll. I live at 9583 West 700 South, Modoc. And I'm an outsider. I came from Wayne County. Me and my husband purchased a property. We tore down the house, the barn, and we established a home there at is beautiful. And we bought that place because of the beautiful setting. We wanted to see the field behind us and now it's going to solar all 3 sides. Scott Fisher did a lo of work for us and we appreciate that. A lot of my neighbors have spoken. This is not okay with us. I understand that's their land and they can do what they want with it, but you have to look at people like if that was solar and windmills, we would have never purchased that property. And we would have never came to Randolph County. So, I want you to understand that people coming from the outside are coming because of the way the land looks and my son is 19 now. He works in Winchester. He's a very, like, he's very into like working, like that's, he's just very, I don't know the word I'm looking for.

Someone said industrious?

Rachael Moll said yes. And he's already said mom, I don't want here because o the solar panels and the windmills. And that is not okay. So, I want you guys to look at the younger generation coming forth. So, that's all I have to say.

Gary said thank you. Next. Is there anyone left in the room that would like to come forward?

Garrett Alka said hello. My name is Garrett Alka. My address is 58 West 500 North, Winchester, Indiana. And I'm a landowner down in Union Township. The Institute for Energy Research states a large scale sort of developments negatively affect the agriculture land by disturbing and degrading valuable top soil. According to their article, the rapid expansion of solar energy has increasingly targeted farmland because it offers large, flat and open spaces that are easy for developers to build on. However, when solar installation replace farmland, the process of construction in long-term land use destroys soils by ability and agriculture productivity. One of the main ways solar park complete soil productivity is through construction related disturbance. Building a solar facility requires clearing vegetation, grading land and installing support posts and constructing access roads. These activities disrupt the natural process or the natural structure of the soil and mix top soil with sub-soil layers. Top soil is the most important for agriculture because it contains the highest concentration of nutrients, organic matter and micro-organisms that support plant growth. When construction equipment compacts or moves this layer, the land loses its fertility and is unfit for production agriculture. The article also highlights erosion as a major concern. After farmland is cleared for solar infrastructure, the soil is vulnerable to wind and water erosion, especially during construction, rain washes away nutrient rich top soils reducing soil depth and degrading the land's ability to sustain crops. The article discusses changes to natural drainage patterns. Solar rays require mounding systems and service roads that alter how water flows across the land. This increases erosion and damages drainage. It is well documented that construction does disturb soil layers and spreads, and spread lower quality materials over the original top soil. Such problems make it nearly impossible to restore the land to productive farming if the solar project is later dismantled. Solar park development does have severe consequences for farm land. Construction activities, erosion, soil compaction and drainage changes all, changes, all degrade the quality of agriculture soils. Several sources indicate that it takes hundreds to thousands of years just to form a single inch of top soil. Complete regeneration of natural soil structure and productivity is measured in

centuries, not decades. Because our sub soil is clay, recovery to original productivity is even harder. Thank you.

Gary said thank you. Next.

Korey Thomas said my name is Korey Thomas. I live at 9230 West 800 South in Modoc. I moved there 11 years ago. Since I've been there I've had a, I've had a radio tower put up right at the east of my property line. I've got windmills to my west and this solar project would be to my north. So, I'm kind of just running out of places to look when I walk out of my house, and I agree with most of what everyone else here has said today. I just wanted to add that.

Gary said is that all?

Korey Thomas said yes.

Gary said thank you. Anyone else?

Greg Oren said thank you for listening to me this morning. I'm Greg Oren. I farm, own Rise and Shine Farms in southwest Randolph County, 400 South, 1200 West is our base farm. I've watched, 15 years ago, if you would ask me what I thought about windmills and solar panels and all this, I would have told you that we need every form of energy that we could get, whether it is gas fired, coal fired, wind fired or solar panels. Since then, I've really changed my mind. I have two turbines on the farm and through the construction period, it was horrible. They tore up land that can never be reconstituted. As I've heard other people say, it takes a hundred years to build up all the good things and the good quality in soil, and I looked through this crowd, and I see 4th and 5th generation farmers that are just like me. My son will be 4th, he is 4th generation. I don't know where the 5th generation is going to come from. There's not going to be enough productive land left in our country to produce the amount of food that we're doing to need to provide for the world. We have, we've been very conservation-minded. A lot of us have no tilled now since the late 80s. Tried to use every practice that we could use to conserve soil. I farm, I've got land in Union Township also. Right across from 3 hundred and some acres that I farmed for 36 years and I listened to all their stories in the beginning, how all this ground after 30 years could all be, it would be resting, and it could be farmed again if you didn't want to sign that up again. That's all false. I watched bulldozers and scrapers and 36-inch disk blades take that top soil off of the high spots, which in the state of Indiana in our area, average top soil, it's only probably 8 to 12 inches anyway. They took it all off. They scraped it off, and the next day, if it was muddy, they went out there and scraped 2 more inches off, and then they went in and then they disked it, and then they hauled dirt back in and they leveled all the hills off down in the low area so it would be nice to mow. They totally devastated those acres. And I'm a witness to it because I farmed my whole life. I've been fortunate enough for 62 years. But I don't know where the next generation, what's going to be left for the younger farmers in this county.

Gary said sir, that's all your time.

Greg Oren said thank you.

Gary said thank you. Who's next? Is there anybody else that would like to come forward? Okay, please identify.

Monte Burrows said I'm Monte Joe Burrows 10737 West 900 South.

Gary said and with you?

Monte Burrows said this is my wife, Cynthia. I didn't really have anything prepared, but thought I needed to say something. I guess this boils down to it's local Randolph County farmers versus a foreign company. I think they're either out of Spain or Portugal. And my brother and I, when this first came around, we've been approached by this wind energy and solar since probably about 2006. I've got a box full of companies wanting to do this because I guess they figure Randolph County is kind of easy. We went to White county, looked at that, decided we didn't want it for ourselves, but if they would help the county, we would sign up. We signed up 40 acres. Okay. I know we're the last, probably the ones to sign up. You know what they did? They sent me a check out, wouldn't sign it. Do you think I could negotiate that check? No. And I tell you what, I've had, the employee said well, they were running out of money, they had to fire some, or they had to let go so many employees. So, I had my doubt in my mind, I don't want this. I had a Texas guy working on these solar farms. He come up, wanted to rent a room. His expression was why would you want to turn this beautiful farm ground into solar? It needs to go to a desert or something. And besides, they've got cranes on these, if you ever get down to that area you'll see cranes working on these wind turbines. And I've got employees saying you get on 36 there, you see these solar panels, some are facing east, some facing west, some are flat. They don't work. So, I guess you guys have got to figure out you want to protect your local Randolph County farmers, or you want to invest in a foreign company? Another thing they said they had an appraiser. Well, he was a commercial real estate appraiser from Indianapolis. And at that time, I don't think there was any other solar. So, I don't know how they can get their opinions. You need a local, somebody that's a real residential appraiser or a farmer appraiser, instead of some Indianapolis that does commercial real estate. I don't think anybody would want to take his opinion what this ground or housing are worth down here. So, and she's got something to say.

Gary said ma'am, go ahead.

Cynthia Burrows said okay. Mine's short. I'm talking from my heart about this. I moved here 11 years ago, from Winchester. And we got married and we built a house here, a beautiful home and I loved the view. I do not want or like the solar panels and I don't want to look at them either. I think they're ugly. And I just love looking at the countryside and the crops growing, you know. I just love the view that way. We've got an upstairs. You can see for miles, you know. And everybody commented, oh, you can see forever from here. And now we've already got wind turbines there. And now they want to put solar panels there. And I don't want to look at that. It ruined that view, that's for sure. I was raised by people that they were good people and their parents were, and they taught me that greed or money didn't get you into heaven either. And they told me to respect older people and their opinions, and their property. You wouldn't even walk on your neighbor's yard without permission, you know, when I grew up. But anyway, my son, my youngest son, is a new farmer that lives near Gaston and they had to fight this. They

had to fight the people from ruining the ground around him. He's been trying to get farm ground. He's got some but he needs more. It turned, he said it turned neighbors against neighbors and it got pretty hateful. He said he'd never seen anything like it. He said and they used to be friends. He said I really don't want to feel that way about our neighbors. Please don't do this for greed and not thinking about how your neighbor feels. That's all.

Monte Burrows said you need to think about the population in the county. If you don't have population, all of your other businesses are going to go downhill. Down in our southwest corner we're fortunate. We've got US Highway 35, US 36, Highway 1. We've got Cardinal Greenway. We've got Wilbur Wright Greenway. That's quality of life. And if, I'm going to do like Barb, you come down and I'll give you a tour of our area, see how beautiful it is or it used to be anyway.

Cynthia Burrows said well, as it used to be.

Monte Burrows said and you know, that's where a lot of population growth is. You heard them, you know, they're coming from Wayne and everything. They would love to live out there, but they're not going to live out there with this, and it's going to keep on going into Randolph County. So, what's your plan? What's your plan for Randolph County, get rid of agriculture? I want to hear your plan. You got a plan Gary without agriculture?

Gary said this is a public hearing for the people to speak to the commissioners.

Monte Burrows said yeah.

Gary said we're not going to engage in back and forth.

Monte Burrows said yeah, well, we just you know, if you're going to do this, we'd just kind of like to need to know plans, because these young farmers, they're going to have to make a choice. They're going to have to make a choice. They're probably going to have to move out of the county. So, that's all I have.

Gary said thank you. Who's next? Is there anyone left that would like to come before the commissioners?

Joseph Thomas said my name is Joseph Thomas. I recently purchased a farm, my first one. It's what I've wanted to do for a long time. I'm concerned about the long-term effects of solar panels because we kind of are the Guinee pigs in this, you know, what's going to happen in 20 or 30 years, you know. What are we going to realize then that we didn't know now? I'm concerned about that. Obviously, growing the farm, I'd like to do it. Just makes it a lot more challenging. Also concerned about the ecological side of things. The solar panels are a black large mass that collect heat and it makes it warmer. And you know, a corn field in the summer time is cool, and that's where deer and living organisms are going to want to be. And I think there's a lot of unknowns that people are overlooking. And I also think that everyone here, when they bought their ground or you know, everyone that owns ground agreed to be a steward of the land and this

isn't what I consider you know, being a good tenant of you know, commercial solar panels. I agree with them in areas, you know, isolated, not commercial large zones like it is. That's it.

Gary said thank you.

William Gruwell said hi. My name's Bill Gruwell. Kind of the new guy around here. So, my dad, oh wait a minute, 10323 West 700 South. My dad was out there for about 25 years. He passed away a little over a year ago, so me and my brother have that land out there now. And I guess being new around here, I don't have much, got a good neighbor, I know that. But, hat I'm hearing is you know, EDP comes up here and throws the larger number to kind of sound like to offset a person's land that's going to the energy companies. What I'm hearing is the people in Union Township, they already made enough sacrifice for green energy. They've already got all the solar fields. They've already got the windmills. So, that's just what I'm hearing. From and outsider, I'm not exactly an outsider, I do own property there, but that's what I'm hearing. I feel like Union Township has already committed enough of their land to green energy. And I think that's just something you guys need to take at mind. You know, they throw out the bigger number, as of Randolph County and then once you break it down to just Union Township, that percentage is a lot higher than the number they're throwing out for Randolph County. So, I just think the people of Union Township have already sacrificed enough for their land. And that's all I have to say about it.

Gary said anyone else? Is there anyone else left in the room that would like to come forward?

John Peacock said John Peacock. I'm a farmer in eastern Randolph County and I've got so much I'd like to talk about with you today, and I want to say this. I'm thankful for the opportunity for dialogue. That has not always been the case as you folks know. But I appreciate it. I think now it's a chance to move forward with what is best for this county. I think that's what we're facing today. We're learning today. I'm here to support these folks from Union Township because my initial reason for even getting involved in this was to ask Mike Wickersham years ago, when is enough, enough? When do we have enough money in this county that we can quit giving away our best resource, which is our land? People might be arguable but it's our best resource. And it probably is number one, but folks, we are not encouraging people to come to our community with what we are doing. My concern is with the next 50 years, not the short-term cash flow. I'm so thankful you three are dealing with short-term cash flow because I don't want to do it, okay. And I thank you for that. It is okay that we don't agree. It is okay. But it's most important that we have dialogue in this country, that we will listen to each other and make the best decisions based on open discussions. I mean, if we agree all the time folks, one of us isn't thinking very well, okay? So, we need to have these discussions. I understand this started with the good intention of bringing money that we needed for our county. That is something we needed. I understand that. I think there are several things, the Randolph County United Comprehensive plan has been referred to. One of the things in there that was listed was that we want greater predictability and all types of land uses near their homes. We wanted people to understand what they're moving into. This hasn't always been the case, you know. There's been people that moved into areas where solar is coming or has come that didn't even know it was coming. So, I'm glad we've made some strides in the right direction as far as open communication. But I think it's really important that we remember what this country was founded on. And if we go

back to Abraham Lincoln years ago and the Gettysburg Address, you talk about a government of the people, by the people and for the people. I believe that's important, and I believe it's important that we listen to these concerns.

Gary said your time's up, John. Thank you. Anyone else?

Garrett Lester said my name's Garrett Lester, 5609 South 1100 West, Modoc, Indiana. Not much of a speaker, but I ant to throw my opinion out there on the conservation of the land as well as you know, the farm productivity. I was fortunate enough to grow up hunting and trapping, fishing, a lot of stuff a young country kid loves to do. And you know, I've got 6 kids and I want them to grow up with the same mentality, to get out, to enjoy the outdoors, play in the creeks. We get out as much as we can in the summer, ride the gators, just enjoy the community. I think everybody understands that. With all this stuff going up, it's more, everything's fenced off, the travel lines of the deer, I've even, I just videotaped 15 turkeys the other day, right by my house, and I haven't seen a turkey in Randolph County in years. So, there's a lot of conservation out there as well as a productive farm ground that's being lost with the travel patterns of the wildlife and what used to be, and still could be, a great county to hunt and fish and trap in for my kids, for my friends' kids, so on, so forth. So, I guess I asked you to keep that in the back of your head as well when we make a final decision on all this.

Gary said thank you.

Garrett Lester said thank you.

Gary said anyone else? Anyone else left in the room that wants to come and speak?

Dean Haggard said my name's Dean Haggard. I live at 7523 South 11 West. We have property on the corner of 1 and 36. We are in the livestock business. I think if you look at property today, the many uses there is from farming, wildlife, extracurricular ATV, those kinds of things, we have property that can be used for many different various enjoyments in life. Being on the corner of 1 and 35, we are in a business where we deal with people from all over the country, not just locally. And if this project goes ahead and goes in, we're going to have solar panels to look at while we're trying to deal with people from all over the country. And they're going to ask the one question, what do you think of solar panels? What do you think of windmills? I mean, this is a normal thing with someone that doesn't have to deal with them every day. What do you think our answer should be, oh great, we love them or no, we really don't think they're the useful piece of property that we could have had if we have left this in farm ground? So, therefore, I want you to understand that there's a lot of uses that this ground can be used for that's going to affect a lot of different people, but these solar panels are going to be one thing, and one thing to look at, and they're not going to get any prettier any day from day one until the end that they're pulled out of the ground. That's really all I have to say. Thank you for your time.

Gary said thank you. Who's next? Is there anyone left in the room that would like to come forward? We will now approach closing this public hearing if no one else wants to come forward. Seeing nobody coming forward, somebody like to make a motion to close this public hearing?

Tom made a motion to close the public hearing. Missy seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Gary said we will recess for 10 minutes and we will reconvene the commissioner's meeting that was in session this morning.

Meeting recessed.

Gary said alright everybody, we'll reconvene the commissioners meeting that's been in recess today. And basically, it is for commissioners to discuss the public meeting that we have just had.

Meeks said so, just so I can pop in if you don't mind?

Gary said I don't mind.

Meeks said what my reading of the ordinance says that you now have 5 days in which to either approve or, well, to consider whether the proposed site is appropriate and whether it should be approved. So, you have 5 days now to tell the director so either you would need to decide today or reconvene within the next 5 days. There's a 48 hour notice period, so really, the only real date would be probably Friday. So, I just wanted to say that and then you guys can decide what to do.

Gary said thank you. So, there's a lot of paperwork handed out, but almost all of it was written verbatim, so it's not being ignored, I do not believe. We can wait until Friday, or we can decide today. I can decide today. I'm in a position that I will decide today. Tom, would you decide today?

Tom said I'm okay with decide today.

Gary said Missy?

Missy said I'm okay.

Gary said you're okay with deciding today, okay. For me, it is my decision for me, that I will disapprove the location of this project. I guess there's not a whole lot left to say other than I listened to everybody. I have some of my own same feelings, and I think Union Township has had enough. I'm not so sure Randolph County has not have enough in total. But the decision today is disapproval or approval of this project and its location, and I disapprove, so, Tom, you're up.

Tom said thank you. First of all, I want to say we appreciate everybody that came out. That was a, that's what these meetings are for. We really appreciate everybody come with their concerns and everything else. I've had concerns with this in the beginning. A large portion of this is also in ag limited, which is not allowed, so it would have to go to a BZA hearing also. And then this area has a lot higher concentration of housing than the other areas, so, I, at this time, I'm with Gary. As it's the site we see, I would disapprove also of the location.

Gary said Missy?

Missy said I agree. I spent quite a few days down in Modoc in the last two weeks, and I know, I saw a couple of you, we eat, my husband and I eat in the diner, each time we do when we go down there, and I guess he probably convinced me more than anything, I was leaning towards not approving it. I think it's too much in one area, and I think that you should have, I don't mean that we can stop everything, that if we don't like it, from whether it's a CAFO, whether it's anything else, I think there's an awful lot of that down there and that's what I overwhelmingly heard, and I'm not going to point you out, but I stopped and I know I was in your driveway, so you came out wanting to know what I was doing in your driveway, one of you, but I did, I did listen to you on Saturday and on Monday, of the days that I was down there. I just don't think it's appropriate right now. I don't think it's wanted, and I think, so therefore, my vote is no.

Gary said okay, with that, would somebody like to make a motion to disapprove this project as presented?

Tom said I'll make that motion to disapprove the location.

Gary said the location of this project. Would you like to second that?

Missy said I second that.

All aye votes. Motion carried.

Gary said anything further for this commissioners meeting, Missy?

Missy said I'm not saying to EDP that we are nixing anything that come through, but I think there are some districts, some areas who might want it, in smaller format and spread out just a little bit more. The biggest concern I heard when I was sitting with people down there, and at one time, I had 7 people who we were, I met with, they came in and they called each other and so, eventually, it was 7 people sitting there. But I think the concentration of it in a small area just wasn't what I thought was going to be conducive to Randolph County.

Gary said okay. Is that all?

Missy said yes.

Gary said Niki, you have anything to add before we adjourn?

Nikki said no.

Tom said no.

Gary said Meeks?

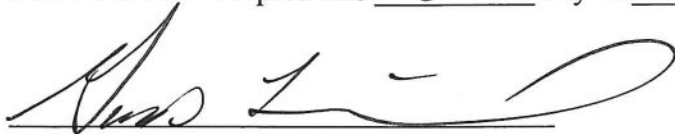
Meeks said no.

Gary said okay.

Adjournment

Tom made a motion to adjourn. Missy seconded the motion. All aye votes. Meeting adjourned.

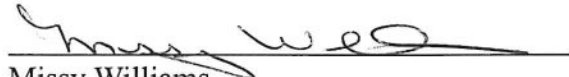
Reviewed and accepted this 20 day of April, 2026



Gary Friend

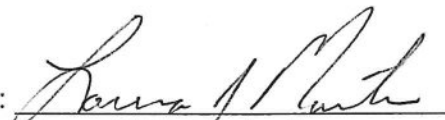


Tom Kerns



Missy Williams

ATTESTED:


Laura J Martin, Auditor

