

## **SOLAR ARRAY TASK FORCE**

Date and Time: Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 5:00 pm, City Hall, Board Room

Members Present: Chad Henke (C), Paul Svetlik, Jay Coldwell, Susan Woods

Members Excused: John Robinson

Others Present: Eric Lindman, John Kahon, Kody Hart, Alder Gary Gisselman

Noting the presence of a quorum Chairperson Henke called the meeting to order at 5:01 P.M.

### **Approval of Minutes from previous meeting (10/16/2023).**

Motion by Svetlik to approve. Motion did not receive a second as members wanted more time to review the minutes from the previous meeting. Approval of the minutes of the 10/16/2023 meeting postponed to the next meeting.

### **Discussion on power usage from the new water treatment facility.**

Coldwell stated that a more detailed listing of the particular water treatment facility power usage is needed as opposed to the document provided which outlines all of the power usage of all Wausau Water Works facilities. It was stated that Clark Dietz should have that information however they are looking at usage more as opposed to cost.

### **Discussion and information on the health and vitality of the trees on 1010 Bugbee Ave.**

Woods questioned what the risk of tree falls were for a potential array. John Kahon, Parks, Recreation & Forestry Forester stated that the location in question is a natural wood lot with natural tree growth and few trees dying likely due to a noted lack of disease or insect concerns. There is a red pine plantation in a section of the location which are typically planted for harvest and have tall crowns which could be a risk for tree falls. It is likely that a stressor, such as a drought, could cause all the red pines to die at the same time causing major tree falls.

Svetlik questioned if there could be measures to improve the health of the wood lot. Kahon stated that there was not a lot that could be done outside of leaving the lot alone to improve the health of the trees in this area.

Henke questioned if this wood lot was planned to be harvested in a management cycle. Kahon stated that the lot is too small and the lumber is not of quality for any large-scale harvesting to be a good return on investment.

Woods questioned as to how tall these trees are and if that would impact the workable area of a solar array. Kahon stated that the height of the trees would need to be considered when locating the array.

Svetlik questioned if more trees could be planted in these areas. Kahon stated that additional planting of trees would need to be considered with respect to soil and wildlife.

### **Discussion on the subsurface soil investigation completed on the property north of the water treatment facility.**

Woods questioned what was found in other areas. It was stated that most of the area in question for a possible array has construction debris in various sizes that would have to be mitigated during construction. A solar array could be mounted on slabs of concrete that would have little impact on the soil quality or be pile driven into the ground if the soil on site would be appropriate.

### **Discussion on the ordinance adopted by the Village of Maine related to ground mount solar arrays.**

Henke stated that the lone no vote in the recommendation of the ordinance adopted by the Village of Maine was due to a concern that smaller arrays put in by homeowners would be impacted by regulations meant to protect the community from large industrial arrays.

Woods questioned if this would impact constructing a solar array within the village limits. It was stated that the passage of the ordinance provided a pathway to do so. Wood further questioned if the ordinances would hamper possible construction. It was stated that the city would be able to work within the regulations.

Woods questioned if part of the ordinance requiring sheltering a solar array from a residence would impact construction options that are near existing homes. It was stated that much of the potential array would not be constructed near a home invoking this ordinance.

**Discussion on alternative locations for solar arrays on city owned property near the water treatment facility.**

Svetlik questioned what it would take to find out the structural limitations on the roof mounted solar array. It was stated that the information could be discovered for future considerations.

Coldwell questioned if they should make considerations based on the option that produces the most megawatts. It was stated that existing switch gear in the new water treatment facility can only accept up to 1.1 megawatts with anything larger requiring additional switch gear to tie it into the facility adding complexities.

Woods questioned if the 1.1 megawatt concept offsets 50-40% of the cost. It was stated that if a solar array with a greater output was constructed, the remainder of the electricity would be sold back to the grid. Woods further questioned if the newer structures of the water treatment facility were considered in the 1.1 megawatt calculation. It was stated that the newer structures would require a recalculation.

Henke directed staff to bring a concept for a 1.5 or 1.4 solar array on the Bay Shore site to the December meeting.

Woods directed staff to bring numbers on the cashflow of the concept presented and other iterations on the Bay Shore site based on using the electricity produced on site and selling additional watts to the grid.

Coldwell questioned if any of the structures are within a flood stage. It was stated that none of the proposed structures are close to a flood stage plain.

Woods and Henke directed staff to bring a better calculation of the switch gear capacity based on the increased usage of the water treatment plant in full usage.

Coldwell directed staff to bring back anticipated electric usage rate increases for the water facilities to be considered in a cost factor analysis.

**Discussion and possible action on scheduling the next meeting in December.**

It was stated that Monday, December 11, 2023, at 5:00 P.M. will be the next meeting of the Solar Array Task Force.

**Public Comment**

Henke asked what members of the public would like to see at the next meeting. It was stated that the public would want to see the differential building costs of the various design concepts and the reasoning for the variances. It was also stated if a preliminary inquiry could be put into the Village of Maine to see what conditions would need to exist to seek approval.

**Adjourn**

Motion by Coldwell, seconded by Woods, to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:12 P.M.