



CITY OF GIBSON | 101 E 8TH STREET, PO BOX 545, GIBSON CITY, IL 60936  
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MEETING OF THE PLAN COMMISSION  
Monday November 20, 2023

Meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chairman Chase McCall

**Roll Call:** Present: Mike Bleich, Donna Boundy, David Crow, Betsey Hammitt, Keith Lipka  
Mike McCall, Project Development Planner Marc Miller and Secretary/Clerk Jan Hall, Jean  
Noellsch – Ford County Chronicle.

Absent: Mike Allen & Terry Hutchcraft.

**Audience / Public Comment** – Each person in audience stated their name and purpose for attending: Dale Denny representing Lori Day, owner of 111 & 115 N. Church, Paul Sarantakos, owner of Project Development Planner Audriana Burella representing Solar Provider Group.

Minutes of November 8, 2023 were approved unanimously.

- A. Dale Denny – spoke on behalf of his mother, Lori Day – 111 & 115 (former bank building) on her request to have the vacant lot, 111 N. Church – zoning changed from Business to R2-mult-housing residential. Her plans are to move a house onto the empty lot (111 N Church) and use it as rental property. She currently runs her cleaning service office from the 115 N Church address and has tenants in the upper levels. Her request for rezoning is only for 111 N. Church according to her son, Dale Denny. Chairman McCall asked for comments/questions. Having none, Commissioner Donna Boundy made a motion to recommend to council to grant this rezoning request as presented. 2<sup>nd</sup> to her motion was made by Commissioner Betsy Hammit. Roll call vote, motion to recommend rezoning approved unanimously.
- B. Paul Sarantakos – resides at 120 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, explained that he is a licensed massage therapist. Sarantakos stated there are currently 3 licensed therapists in town, often overextended. He sees this as a part-time job with appointments made as needed. Plenty of parking on his private property, and only one client would be at the house at a time. After discussion, committee findings are the need to supplement therapy needs and, proposed use will not be a detriment to neighboring properties and will be by appointment only. Commissioner Boundy suggested this permit be limited to current owner and expires upon sale of the property. Motion was made by Commissioner Hammitt, 2<sup>nd</sup> made by Commissioner Lipka, motion to recommend Special Use Permit be granted by city council passed 6/0.

6:20 p.m. Chairman McCall reconvened the Public Hearing from November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to further discuss the Drummer Creek Solar Project and possible Pre-Annexation Agreement.

Project Development Planner Miller reviewed previous discussion and explained that the original idea of the City was to annex this property to increase tax revenue that will be generated by the project, as well as providing a way for residents to subscribe for lower electricity rates through Ameren, our current electricity provider.

Commissioner Bleich asked for clarification – that the Plan Commission is simply making a recommendation to council, but the final vote lies with the City Council. Atty Miller concurred and explained the Plan Commission function is a ‘finding of facts’ for the city council.

Bleich went on to state that he has not fully reviewed all the details of the project and understands the Pre-Annexation cannot be signed unless and until the Loftus property is annexed into the city limits.

Atty Miller stated that from the beginning, the thought was the land may be contiguous ‘point-to-point’ but has since clarified that without annexation of the properties directly north (Birky’s and Harvest Moon), this property cannot be annexed. The Pre-Annexation Agreement is drawn up for a 20-year period, and property owners will be required to annex if and when the land becomes contiguous. At that point the tax revenue would come to the City, but until then, the tax revenue goes to Ford County, GCMS, Moyer Library District and Gibson Fire Protection District. There is no financial advantage to the city unless it is annexed.

Chairman McCall asked Atty Miller if the Plan Commission can request City Council to prepare 5-year plan showing actual ways they plan to encourage annexation by other properties so this property will have to annex? Atty Miller’s response – yes, you can request and recommend, but not require. McCall stated he isn’t comfortable approving based on ‘Hopes & Dreams’.

Commissioner Crow – asked if approving this opens the door more readily to wind farms? The response was ‘no’. Crow stated he is not in favor of wind farms.

Chairman McCall mentioned that the most recent annexation was with One Earth Energy, and they benefit from TIF and an Enterprise Zone. Are these available to this property? Again, only when and if annexed.

Project Development Planner Miller reiterated the advantage of recommending the Pre-Annexation Agreement is that it protects the City by requiring annexation when possible (contiguous) but at 20 years, the Agreement dissolves and the property remains county Agricultural. Also, city has the benefit of controlling any stipulations and oversight by the City Superintendent, Tyler Martin, to see that all is carried forward with stipulations and restrictions.

Bleich asked Project Development Planner Burella is the project will move forward with or without the Pre-Annexation agreement and she answered “yes, we will then work through the county, which is more restrictive than the City”.

Project Development Planner Burella clarified the project only requires use of 29 acres, but the Pre-Annexation Agreement encompasses the entire 70 acres of land owned by Mr. Loftus.

After further discussion, Commissioner Hammitt made a motion to continue this hearing, but the motion was later rescinded when all questions were answered.

Chairman McCall felt he was hearing two different schools of thought about Annexation Agreement.

Project Development Planner Burella suggested stipulations that may help and would be welcome are a 'Beautification Natural Boundary on the east side of the project –

Commissioner Boundy requested a stipulation that the Gibson City Fire Protection District be provided training for fighting a fire at the solar project, with Drummer Creek Solar paying for the training. Training to be continued as requested by the Fire Department. She also asked about an appropriate 'turn-around' road for emergency vehicles access. Project Development Planner Burella shared that Birkey's paved the 'Harvest Lane' road from Rt. 47 to the west – to the railroad. After the railroad it is hard-packed gravel, that will withstand the weight of cranes and therefore sufficient for fire trucks.

Further restrictions discussed were the 20' maximum height, with 16' being the maximum tilt height.

Chairman McCall asked Project Development Planner Burella to explain about the project being sold once built. Her response was "Yes, typically a company is hired to handle the sales". Project Development Planner Miller clarified that with the Pre-Annexation Agreement the stipulations and restrictions follow regardless of ownership.

A motion by Commissioner Lipka was made to approve the findings of facts and recommend the Pre-Annexation Agreement and Special Use Permit be moved forward for acceptance by City Council. 2<sup>nd</sup> to his motion made by Commissioner Crow. Roll call vote – motion passed with Commissioners Hammit, Lipka, Boundy and Crow voting yes, Chairman McCall voted 'present' and Commissioner Bleich abstained from voting. Project Development Planner Miller will prepare appropriate paperwork for presentation to the City Council.

Motion to adjourn by Commission Lipka, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alderman Bleich, meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Submitted by:

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Jan Hall, Secretary / Clerk