

**Sevier County Planning & Zoning Commission**  
**July 8, 2015**

Minutes of the Sevier County Planning Commission meeting held on the eighth day of July 2015 in the Commission Chambers of the Sevier County Administration Building, 250 North Main, Richfield, Utah. Those present included: John Worley, Evelyn Nielsen, Mike Miles, Brenda Malmgren and Caryl Christensen.

Kelly Alvey and Ralph Brown were excused.

Others present included: Zoning Administrator Larry Hanson, County Commissioner Garth 'Tooter' Ogden, County Commissioner Gordon Topham, Deputy Clerk/Auditor Barbara Crowther, and others listed on the attached roll.

**Planning Commission Update:**

Zoning Administrator Larry Hanson updated the Commission on the Sevier Power Plant, noting that until the price of power increases, the plant will not be built. He then addressed some additional items in the packet including a Conditional Use Permit from Iron County issued for a solar power plant, as well as an ordinance on solar power plants. He suggested using them to help determine whether or not all of the concerns involving a solar power plant have been addressed.

**Concept approval given for Community Energy Solar project near Sigurd:**

Sam Sours, Community Energy Solar of Boulder, met with the Planning Commission regarding the proposed Sigurd Solar Generation Facility. Zoning Administrator Hanson said the project will require a PUD Overlay Zone Change and a Planned Unit Development permit. Mr. Sours reviewed the plan for an 80 MW (mega watt) solar power plant to be located on approximately 600 acres of land owned by the B&K Anderson Ranch LLC, near Sigurd. He said the property is currently zoned GRF20R, that it is a scrub brush area used primarily for access to the BLM, and that it is near the Sigurd Substation. He noted that his company is in the final stages of finalizing an agreement with the Rocky Mountain Power Company to get the power on the grid through the Sigurd Substation, and they have been very receptive of the project. Discussion followed concerning the following:

The scope of the project would encompass approximately 350,000 solar power modules grouped in pods across 600 acres of land with the power being transmitted to the Sigurd Power station. The solar power modules would be noticeable when driving through the county, and would change the horizon some. The lay out of the project is planned around the existing roadways, power lines, drainage areas, easements, irrigation rights of way, etc. They have met with the Cedar Ridge Irrigation Company to discuss some items and concerns regarding the drainage area. They plan to work with the County on moving some of the roads, as well as UDOT to facilitate getting the power across I-70. He noted that there would not be expansion of the existing roads, but some may need to be moved.

The timeline of the Company for the project includes County approval by the first of the year, with construction taking approximately ten months, and being online and producing power towards the end of next year, 2016.

For labor to build the project, they would be utilizing approximately 200 – 300 workers to complete the project. The workers would range from engineers to dirt haulers, and would most likely stay in the hotels and motels of the area during their specific building phase of the project. Mr. Sours indicated there would be between 6 and 8 employees once construction is complete and the project goes online.

Drainage concerns will be addressed with an engineering study to determine the limits of the 100 year flood plain, and initial environmental studies have already been done. Initial studies include wetlands mitigation and archeological sites that may or may not be in the area. Caryl Christensen

suggested they also work with the Piute Canal Company and farmers in the area who would be more familiar with the drainage and other activity on the land than an engineer who would be guessing. She also asked about the canals crossing the property and whether or not any of them would be impacted. Mr. Sours noted that they will not touch the cement ditch, and will work with the canal companies to be able to cross the canals. The Planning Commission made suggestions of contacts for the canal companies, as well as farmers in the area.

The concept of the project is to set up the panels in pods, which would be hooked together with medium sized wiring, then the power would be collected and sent across I-70 with overhead lines to the substation. When placing the pods of panels, there would be a need to smooth out the sites, taking into consideration the drainage of the area. During the next phase of the application, a larger concept plan image will be provided, as well as picture of what the arrays of panels will look like. They plan to fence the individual pods of panels, and their preferred method of fencing would be 6 foot chain link fence with a 3 foot strand of barbed wire across the top, which is similar to the fencing around the power substation. They do not plan on any type of lighting at night, and will not need water or sewer. They will use power from the grid for security cameras to patrol the site, and the panels will be monitored 24/7 from a facility in another location.

The photovoltaic panels will be placed on posts driven into the ground 7 to 9 feet deep with a racking system on top holding panels from 3 to 5.5 feet wide. The panels will rotate east to west as the sun goes up, varying between 3 to 5 feet off of the ground, and are engineered to handle high winds and snow loads. At the highest point, the panels will be 7 feet off of the ground. Lightening could strike the panels, but they would most likely have to be shot to break. They do anticipate some vandalism. The panels are projected to last up to 50 years, and they are the darker panels, similar to the panels on top of the Ideal Dairy Building. The panels will be moving in tandem, and because they are the darker panels, should not cause problems for airplanes with reflectivity or glare. They will not cause any problems for those driving on the freeway either, as they will be facing up. The panels are non-flammable, but if there is a fire there will be better access to the area to fight fire.

The wildlife in the area should not be affected, as even though the deer may be able to jump over the fencing, there should be plenty of open space for them to migrate through the proposed project area. Birds should not be affected either, as the panels are dark and not the type of panels utilized in the Las Vegas area solar plant which produce a lot of heat and are deadly to birds.

They do plan to try to keep the weeds below the pivot of the panels, and will engineer the ground cover to minimize fugitive dust, as well as flooding concerns. They are anticipating ground cover similar to what is at the substation, and anything such as rocks, sagebrush or other debris that is removed during the building stage will be taken from the site. The Planning Commission suggested working with farmers who are familiar with the area and the flooding patterns in the past.

The project is slated to last up to 50 years, and the current lease with the landowner is for 25 years. The lease agreement can be extended, and does include a decommissioning section which would require the removal of all equipment and fencing. Mr. Sours noted that any roadways or improvements to irrigation and drainage would remain, and would not be changed back at the end of the project. The agreement for the sale of the power is also 25 years, and may be renewed. Mr. Sours said there is an expectation for a designated amount of power for the duration of the project, so there will be no 'phase out'. When they are done, they are done, and all equipment will be removed.

The ownership of the land was addressed as it appears that some of the property is owned by the Fullmer's, and if it is they need to get additional agreements in place.

Risk mitigation for this project would include flooding, and possibly adding channels through the west side to mitigate that concern, that the power agreement has not yet been signed, crossing points for the canals, that the federal tax credit will go away by the end of 2016, and the hope that there will be some type of tax credit given by Sevier County.

The Planning Commission noted that their biggest concerns included land ownership, and water for the farmers in the area so as to not disrupt their work. Further discussion followed concerning the path that

the application will take, which will include a public hearing on the proposal immediately following the presentation of the Preliminary Plan, that any concerns brought out in the public hearing can then be addressed during the final plan, that the company plans to request a waiver of the annexation requirement, that the waiver will be considered after the recommendation of the Planning Commission, that it was unlikely that Sigurd Town would want to annex the property as it is not contiguous to the Town boundaries nor is it in their annexation plan, that all of the project area is on private land and does not include any BLM land, and that the public hearing will most likely be scheduled for the September meeting. Mr. Sours then reviewed who Community Energy is noting that they have been around for a while, and gave a brief history of the business which included the location of several of their projects. Mr. Sours indicated that this proposal is the total project, and they do not anticipate adding any additional phases. County Commissioner Topham said there are better locations, but at this one there is the ability to get the power immediately on the grid. There were a few questions from the audience which included where the panels would be manufactured, whether or not local businesses and contractors could or would be used, whether or not the investors of the project are American, whether Sevier County would be the point of sale for large purchases for the project, and the effect of the project on the tax revenues of Sevier County. After discussion, John Worley moved to approve the concept plan for the Sigurd Solar Generation Facility, second Evelyn Nielsen, unanimous.

**Minutes for June 10<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission approved:**

Minutes of the June 10<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting were reviewed and approved with corrections on a motion by Caryl Christensen, second Evelyn Nielsen, all in favor. John Worley abstained.

Chairman John Worley announced that this was Evelyn Nielsen's last meeting. He thanked her for her service with the Planning Commission.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.