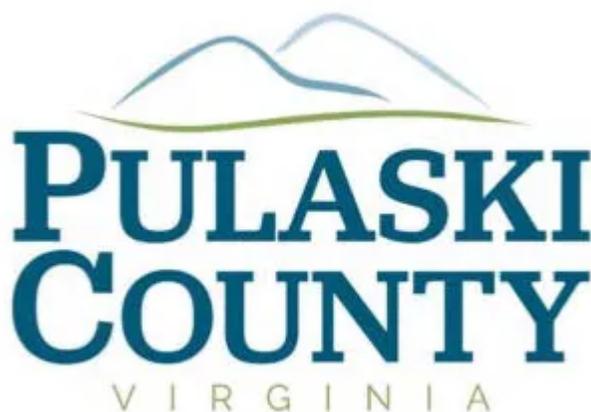


OCTOBER 29, 2022

Supervisors reject permit for Shiloh solar project



By MIKE WILLIAMS

The Patriot

A solar farm won't be built in Shiloh, following denial Monday night by the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors of a Special Use Permit request.

The board's action put an end to months of meetings and back-and-forth between the county, property owners in the area and Helios Solar, LLC who was seeking the permit to allow for construction of a 11.45 MWac solar project on property owned by Lyom De Moraes off Lowman Ferry Road.

Both county staff and the planning commission had earlier recommended approval by the Board of Supervisors.

However, the board rejected those recommendations primarily over concerns for possible water contamination from material used in the solar panels and issues with other projects developed by Heliose.

Massie Supervisor Andy McCready questioned a Heliose representative over environmental compliance and erosion control issues experienced by the company at projects developed previously in Wytheville and Buckingham County.

"It just seems like you've had some problems with that," McCready said.

The representative responded he was correct, noting that is why the company had changed its procedures and added staff who focuses on that specific aspect of construction.

During a public hearing on the issue, several adjoining landowners spoke in opposition to the project, mostly because of those concerns over possible water contamination. Other concerns expressed dealt with tree coverage designed to block landowners' view of the project, and the developer's plan to only test for water contamination on an annual basis.

A company representative noted that any problems Heliose had had in earlier projects had been corrected, and that the solar panels used in their projects all meet Environmental Protection Agency regulations.

In an effort to address concerns expressed by adjoining landowners, Heliose had offered several detailed conditions to the project.

One of which included a donation to the county of \$100,000 toward the Smith Farm Park project in Fairlawn.

The company also offered testimony by an appraiser who said he had consistently found in his 15 years of research in multiple states that solar projects have no impact on the values of adjoining properties, and that a number of university studies support his findings.

Eventually Draper Supervisor Dirk Compton offered a motion to deny the Special Use Permit request. His motion was seconded by Robinson Supervisor Jeff Reeves.

Before a final vote, McCready said, "I'm a strong believer in a person having the right to develop their property within reason. I believe solar farms have offered opportunities to farmers that they've never had before. The problem I'm having is it just appears there's a continual drip of problems."

The board voted unanimously to reject the SUP request.

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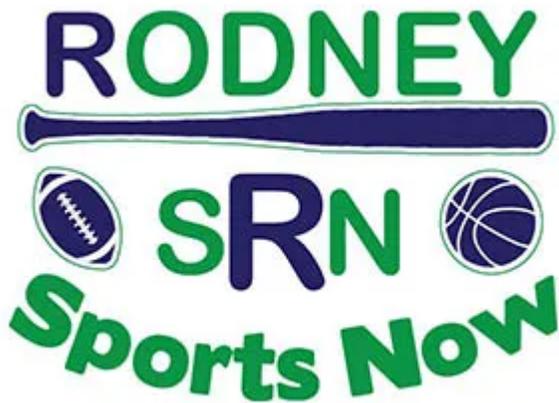


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