**READING TOWNSHIP**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND PLANNING COMMMISSION**

**SPECIAL JOINT MEETING**

**TO DISCUSS ZONING REGULATION OF SOLAR USE**

June 3, 2024

The special joint meeting of the Reading Township Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission was held at the Reading Township Community Center at the Hampton Fire Company Memorial Hall .

The special meeting was jointly called to order by Chairmen Thomason and Bowen (at the conclusion of the Planning Commission meeting) at 7:15 pm. All Supervisors and Planning Commissioners were in attendance. Also in attendance were: Andrew Merkel, Adams County Planning & Development; Andrew Miller, Zoning Officer; and Susan J. Smith, Solicitor.

The purpose of the special joint meeting was to continue discussion on amendments to the Zoning Ordinance relating to solar use.

The 2023 draft ordinance had been made available to the public prior to the meeting. Solicitor Smith noted prior discussion for the addition of noise and groundwater testing standards to the draft.

A large number of members of the public attended the joint meeting.

There was extensive discussion of concerns with and zoning regulation of a solar use among the Supervisors, the Planning Commission and the public.

The following members of the public offered comment: Rodney Hollabaugh, 657 Peepytown Road; Chris Holtzinger, 759 Gooseville Road; Monica Schryver, 759 Gooseville Road; Gary Myers- 2441 East Berlin Road.; and Vernon Greir, 270 Stoney Point Road. Ms. Schryver also distributed a copy of a draft ordinance (XYZ Town, New York).

Public comment addressed decommissioning standards; lot size and contiguity standards; consideration of other municipal experience and ordinances; legal review; potential for variance; concerns about noise, heat island/column, health risks and property value impacts; top soil testing; emergency services capability, escrow for training and equipment, and planning; road condition management; ERA.

Throughout the joint meeting, Solicitor Smith advised as to legal questions and principles of zoning regulation established by the Pennsylvania courts.

County Planning Andrew Merkel cautioned against a wholesale denial of a use in a district based on the presence of agricultural soils. Solicitor Smith cautioned about the health, safety and welfare justification for such standard applied on to a solar use and no other uses.

Chairman Thomason expressed desire to fight to protect the Township and concern about drafting an ordinance that can be easily challenged.

Supervisor Phillips invited the community to offer proposals to fill in the blanks for standards in the draft ordinance.

The Board set the date for a future workshop meeting on August 15, 2024 at 6:30 pm in the Community Center.

A motion to adjourn the special meeting was made by Chairman Bowen , and seconded by Commissioner Shuman; the motion carried unanimously.

The special joint meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.