

NOTES
Four-Town Public Solar Project Meeting
Dunkirk, Fulton, Porter, Albion
Dunkirk Town Hall – 6:30pm
Monday, 07.13.26

In Attendance:

Town Board Members	Attendees	
• Dunkirk: Norm Monsen • Dunkirk: Dan Jenks • Dunkirk: Brad Gilbert • Albion: Melanie McCarthy • Albion: Larry Beck • Albion: Bruce Hudson (absent) • Albion: Abigail Staff • Albion: Robert Venske (absent) • Albion: Kim Olson, Plan Commission • Fulton: Scott Farrington • Fulton: Evan Sayre • Fulton: Randy Thompson • Fulton: Michelle Stafford (absent) • Fulton: Kerry Hull (absent) • Porter: Scott Johnson • Porter: Ryan Nelson • Porter: Alan Sweeney • Porter: Sam Jenson (Zoning Commission)	• Albion Michele McGuire • Albion Irma Radermacker • Albion Rob Shelley • Dunkirk Ted Christman • Dunkirk James Rece • Dunkirk Shelly Schieldt • Dunkirk Bill Delehanty • Dunkirk Kim Maerz • Dunkirk Becky Dakin • Dunkirk Bonnie Smithbeck • Dunkirk Karl Brickson • Dunkirk Jay Kretsch • Dunkirk Brad Gilbert • Dunkirk Dan Jenks • Dunkirk Norm Monsen • Dunkirk Matt Harris • Dunkirk John Alme • Dunkirk Rollie Amundson • Dunkirk Kathie Amundson • Dunkirk Casey Burns • Dunkirk Jessica Johnson DeGroot • Dunkirk Ardith Hemmersbach • Dunkirk J. Sebevoss Long • Dunkirk Jack Lyon • Dunkirk Greg Marti • Dunkirk Marie Matejka	• Dunkirk Kim Monsen • Dunkirk Connie Nagel • Dunkirk Rob Nordness • Dunkirk Doug Olson • Dunkirk Ed Ott • Dunkirk Cindy Rasmussen • Dunkirk Diane Reinstad • Dunkirk Dennis Reinstad • Dunkirk Brooke Vike • Dunkirk Russell Vike • Dunkirk Dan Furseth • Porter Ilene Axford • Porter Lisa Imhoff • Porter Cindy Johnson • Porter Ruth Miller • Porter Steve Oakeson • Porter Rob Slotter • Dunn Jack Sorenson • Dunn Tracy Wiklund • Dane Nancy Roth • Edgerton Tony Vike • Fitchburg Randy Udell • Fitchburg Beau Stafford • Vienna Rhonda Meinholz

Attendance Summary: 07.13.26 - 68 ppl attended in all. 13 Town Board Members out of 16. State Rep Randy Udell. Albion residents – 7; Dunkirk residents – 31; Fulton residents – 0; Porter residents – 10; “Other” towns - 7.

Topic	• Discussion	Action
Open/Welcome	• Norm Monsen opened the meeting welcoming all in attendance	
Pledge	• The Pledge of Allegiance was led by three veterans in attendance.	
Introductions	• Town Board Members were addressed. • Norm Monsen introduced State Representative Randy Udell.	
Purpose	• Norm Monsen stated that there is a lot going on in our four towns with solar projects and we are not all on the same page. We four towns need to share what we know. We need to hear from residents as well. We need to discuss what’s important to our townships: safety, financial concerns, and lots more.	
Project Area Maps	• Dan Jenks shared the project overall map. The slide showed us the project “preferred” area consisting of four quadrants: one in Dunkirk, in Fulton, in Porter, and in Albion. We understand that there is no development at this point, but this is the total of EDP’s “preferred” area – 950 acres. • Dan Jenks next showed drone images of the proposed project site in Dunkirk, Fulton, Porter, and Albion. • Dan showed the next map that delineated the exact parcels for this project. Some of these parcels have been under lease for several years. No	

	construction has started yet. EDP is still soliciting potential farmers/parcels.	
Q:	Attendee asked the proposed start time/date.	
What we know about EDP	- Brad Gilbert reviewed information provided by EDP. - EDP Renewables North America, headquartered in Houston - Approx 1000 employees. - They claim to be the fourth largest renewable energy producer worldwide - The project is proposed at 170 MW; 4 towns; 2 counties - Proposed completion date of 2029. It is not clear if this includes both Phase I and Phase II	
Overview	Norm Monsen emphasized that we are just quickly reviewing the information from our last meeting that was cut short because of tornado warnings. Norm asked the audience to raise their hands if they attended the last meeting. Then, those who were attending for the first time. It appeared 1/3 had attended in June with 2/3 of the attendees being new.	
EDP Question s/Answers	- Bill Delehanty, Dunkirk Plan Commission Chair explained that the Dunkirk Plan Commission and several others from other towns involved met with EDP in January. They posed many questions. EDP provided written responses at a later date. - The Q&A with EDP is provided in attendee's handouts. Bill encouraged attendees to read through this as it might answer many questions. - Bill also offered that if attendees want to get more involved . . . - Bill stated that the solar issue may involve the entire state - He stated that if 300 acres farms horses it is taxed as commercial. If farmland is zoned Ag, it is taxed at far less. There is a big price difference. - Bill referred to the State Department of Revenue Guidelines that Solar is considered Agricultural, not Commercial. - Q: Attendee asked how it can be Ag since it is clearly commercial. Bill answered that that's a question to ask the state. - Albion Board Member: said that we need to talk with the WI Towns Assn (Town Advocacy Council - TAC). They are a lobby group. Albion is a member of this association. Abigail Staff will forward the TAC info to Becky.	Q: why is solar zoned Ag and not commercial? Becky: add TAC to Resource List and talk w them
Zoning	- Porter: Sam Jenson said that solar is zoned Ag. This is because of the 2009 WI Act 40 regarding wind and solar. This will shut off all towns into input for stipulation restrictions. Another bill in the senate, SB-3 proposed to restore the power to the townships with their zoning ordinances, but this bill did NOT pass. SB-493 and SB-3 did NOT pass – these addressed roads, set-backs, etc. Sam Jenson emphasized that people need to talk to their representatives and ask how they voted and talk to them about what needs to be done regarding solar zoning. - Attendee Q: Ag land pays taxes. Bill Delehanty stated that if the parcel is zoned Ag they pay the Town and County separately for taxes. Solar does not pay any School taxes. Ag land is valued quite low.	Provide these two bill docs to "working committee" for a plan of how to follow-up
Topsoil	Norm Monsen asked the Towns what they have heard about what the Solar Project does with the topsoil. The Q&As from EDP state that they keep it with the land, but Norm interjected that other towns have stated that the topsoil has been removed.	Q: What Solar does w topsoil

Decommissioning	• Norm Monsen asked what the Towns have heard about decommissioning. The group off-handedly stated that in 30 years the agreement, if it exists, will be meaningless. Landowners may change. The Solar company may change. Who holds anyone to the agreement in 30 years?	Q: Decommissioning Agreement – what happens in 30 years?
Zoom	• Norm Monsen talked to those who had joined the meeting via Zoom and told them to please type in their questions.	
Solar Ordinances	• Norm Monsen stated that we are all hearing a lot of conflicting information. • Norm Monsen stated that Dunkirk put a Solar Ordinance in place in 2021. Their attorney at the time said that they really don't have much to go on. • Norm Monsen also said that Dunkirk has a driveway ordinance. Dunkirk has weight limits on their roads, but they struggle to enforce this. Dunkirk has used the Sheriff and cameras. Farmers are exempt from road weight limits. • Christiana is on their second and third rebuild of some of their roads because of the solar truck traffic. • Dunkirk has a Constable with no enforcement authority. State Patrol checks truck papers occasionally.	Q: strengthen our ordinances?
Albion Ordinances	• Norm asked Albion Town Board Members what they have heard. • Larry Beck stated that they see one corner of the proposed site is in Albion, however, Albion has not been approached by EDP at all. They have not heard anything about solar development. Albion has been spurred on by Christiana and are re-examining their road ordinances. Albion has a solar ordinance, but they are going to update it. Albion also struggles with their road weight limits. • Abigail Staff mentioned that since Albion is by the interstate it tends to be a free-for-all for trucks. There is one enforcement officer for twelve-or-so counties. Albion tries to protect our roads. We also have a driveway ordinance. • Norm Monsen asked if there are any known solar leases in Albion. They responded, EDP has not come to Albion at all.	
Fulton Ordinances	• Norm asked Fulton Town Board Members what they have heard. • Evan Sayre stated that he would like to put together a proposal to protect our roads. He suggests that he would write this up and have all towns review. He believes there ARE solutions – just because something hasn't been done before . . . Evan said he wants to see if all four town are interested in him doing this. This is a novel concept where we would collect money before they come and put it in a bond. • All Town Boards agreed that they supported Evan Sayre in drafting this proposal. • Scott Jenson mentioned that three years ago some solar company came to Fulton inquiring about a potential installation and they never returned. Scott said this could have been EDP but he doesn't know for sure.	Evan Sayre to draft Solar Road Protection proposal for four-town review
Protect Roads	• Norm Monsen mentioned that Dunkirk spends most of their Town budget on road repair. Last year Dunkirk spend \$300k on road maintenance and Dunkirk really needs \$6k--\$7k to maintain roads properly.	
Acreage	• It was stated that if the project is over 100MW is has to be approved at the	

	state level by PSC and the solar company does not have to sign a bond. If the project is under 100MW the agreement is with the farmer and the Town really can't do anything. • Brett Olson in the audience mentioned that at the last meeting, Jim Maple mentioned that the EDP Project Phase I includes 9,000 acres but by Phase II it will be 170,000 acres	
PSC	• Matt Harris stated that he works for PSC. If the project is over 100MW, PSC controls things. PSC won't allow them to do a lot of things. The project is closely regulated by PSC rules. That's why Solar companies may prefer to install a project just under 100MW to avoid PSC regulations.	Resource: Matt Harris re: PSC
Protect Roads	• Randy Thompson, Board Member from Fulton, said that protection of roads isn't needed only in the construction phase. Last year there was a hailstorm and thousands of solar panels were damaged. During ongoing replacement and repair, truck traffic was extensive. • Attendee commented that they heard that the damaged panels had been buried on the property. • Fulton board member responded that the ones from Indian Ford were taken to Texas as that is the only place that recycles solar panels.	
Porter Ordinances	• Norm asked the Board Members from Porter to share what they've heard. • Alan Sweeney said that Porter has a Solar Ordinance, but it pertains to small-scale residential installations for renewable energy. • Scott Johnson mentioned that he sat on Rock County Planning for many years. Back in March, EDP was at their meeting seeking 500 more acres to put under contract. EDP said construction would start in 2027 including an environmental study. The installation would be complete by 2029.	
Agrivoltaics	• Norm asked Beau Stafford to talk to us about Agrivoltaics. • Beau explained that he grew up in Fulton. He works for the state legislature in Ag policy and utility policy. His part-time job is solar grazing in Fitchburg. • He had received dozens of solar companies wanting his land. "One Energy" had an installation near his farm and Beau asked them what they were planting under the panels. He was concerned as their farm was organic. The company said they would plant anything he wanted. "One Energy" asked him about the plans for his farm, specifically about raising sheep. Beau then researched this possibility – grazing sheep under the solar panels. • Beau stated that there are 27,000 acres of solar farms in Wisconsin and the solar companies are unable to maintain that much vegetation. It is necessary to keep the vegetation low, away from the panels. • Beau said he started with 100 sheep and now has 525. "One Energy" is approaching them to be able to graze more acreage. • The solar companies are usually planting pollinators. • Beau stated he is the largest shepherd in the state. • He uses virtual fencing, similar to an invisible fence for your dog. He can graze the sites quickly and can move the sheep daily. • Q: Do you process the sheep for meat? Yes. • Beau stated that he is required to reach/graze all areas/acreage on the site. If the sheep can't keep up he's required to mow. This concept is not new. It	Q: How do you get the solar company to commit to this?

	exists in Texas and in Europe. American Solar Grazing Association. • Beau stated that Wisconsin is a regulated utility market. They require that the lowest rate possible be given to rate payers. • Beau said that his grazing also must be competitive with other landscapers. • Casey Burns from the audience interjected that he received numerous solicitations on his porch. He wanted to know how nearby solar farms would affect property values. • Larry Beck from Albion asked if the solar panels have to be installed any differently to allow for grazing. • Beau said that this involves the site design. We've all seen "single-access-trackers" - panels that follow the sun. Older sites, the panels are very near the ground, but the snow was a big problem. Beau said the panels have to be at least 28" at their lowest point for grazing. • Q: Are you liable for damage to the panels. Beau said that he carries insurance – the premium is high. Each panel costs about \$200. • Beau said in the first year of installation they let all of the vegetation come up and he mows it one time. Then, three weeks later he lets in the sheep. • Q: Can the market sustain sheep? Lamb consumption is on the rise. The US imports most of their supply. • Beau is also talking with MG&E regarding grazing Kunekune pigs. Their snouts are built differently. The advantage here is that pigs will consume thistle and sheep will not. • Q: solar panels any risk to the sheep – stray voltage? Beau replied that all the electricity is grounded. Bare wire would be a problem. If he sees any, he reports it. Attendee expressed concern that the meat might be affected by the voltage. DC current off the panels is converted to AC. There are no studies about the effects on sheep. • Beau stated that the sun is a big problem. He has to provide shelter for the sheep. The solar panels offer shelter and cool metal for them. • Discussion continued regarding security, safety, and access to the solar farms. The solar farms are on private property so entering is trespassing. Beau has permission to enter. He also must comply with safety regulations. He wears safety glasses, hardhat, and must call in when entering the property. • Discussion took place regarding the solar farm's emergency response plan. Attendees had concern that the emergency response would be properly trained to respond to a fire in a solar farm. The group also said that the towns should not have to pay for the training.	
Advice	• Norm Monsen asked Beau Stafford, since he works on utility policy, what advice did he have for us? • Beau stated that we need to obtain a Joint Development Agreement that will address noise, construction, decommission – get this on the front end before it goes to PSC.	Joint Development Agreement
Emergency Services	• Q: Do all four towns have an emergency services agreement with solar? • Abigail from Albion said that the Q&A handout addresses emergency plans, that the Solar company works with the Town and updates the plan every 6 months. Wouldn't the Fire Dept need a bond – extra training.	Q: extra training for Fire Dept

Battery Storage	• Scott Farrington from Fulton shared that a company came to them talking about battery storage in their town. The big problem with battery storage is if there's a fire, you can't put it out. There's now a new chemical that will extinguish the fire, but it costs \$1000/5-gal. Scott did the math and it would cost over one million dollars for enough chemical to put out most fires. Town fire departments should not have to pay for this. • Solar Farms have battery storage. • It was mentioned that an Assessor stated that if there is battery storage its zoned commercial. Someone commented that the Solar company said that only the land where the batteries were stored would be zoned commercial. • Evan Sayre stated that battery storage is coming.	Q: Solar Farm have battery storage? What is fire extinguish plan?
Responding to Solar Co	• Casey Burns emphasized that we cannot talk with or answer any question to the Solar Company and respond in the affirmative. We cannot ever say, "yes." We cannot trust these people. Watch what you say.	
Options	• Q: Is this a done deal? • The leases are in place. The first lease was made in 2020. • Dan Furseth said that he knows folks in Cambridge. This all started in 2020 when Ebers passed – "WI carbon-free by 2020." He mentioned "Invenergy," a private company that goes directly to the farmer and does not go through any regulation. Then, when they complete the installation, they give the keys to the local utility company and then they have to deal with regulations. He and his family have been farming for 60-70 years. Solar money is coming. • Dan Furseth stated that Cambridge farmers are receiving \$1450 payment each month. He talked about solar income vs farm income and how things are changing. He said that our days of buying land is over. • Norm Monsen interjected that during their initial January meeting, several farmers asked EDP, "Why are you doing this?" They answered that this is how you pass the land on to generations to come. That answer was not well received.	
EDP Maintain ownership?	• Scott Farrington said that EDP stated that they would maintain ownership. The attendees disagreed with this and said that that is completely unknown throughout the next 30 years.	
Action Committee	• Norm Monsen asked that as a step moving forward, we form a committee/working committee – 1-2 people from each town. Town Board Members agreed with this approach. • It was determined that Becky would work with the Town Board members to have them appoint: One board member and One other member (resident, board member, content expert.) It was felt that this should happen quickly and have the committee appointed this week and meet again next week to keep the momentum going. • Scott Farrington asked if they should invite EDP to a Fulton Town meeting. The group thought they should hold off on this and allow the "working committee" to ask EDP to attend one of their committee meetings. We want EDP to have to talk with all FOUR towns each time they want to talk about this project.	
Keep	• An attendee said that we've been talking a lot about what to do about the	Q: how to

them out?	installation, but why aren't we talking about how to keep them out? Should the 4-Towns oppose this? Attendee stated that we need to talk with Jeff Nodeston from Cambridge. He was on their board but is now retired. He was involved in all their installations.	keep them out Resource: Jeff Nodeston, Cambridge
Opposed Data Center	Rhonda Meinholz from Vienna shared that they defeated a 1600-acre data center with QTS. QTS had a presentation at DeForrest High School where they wanted our questions in advance. We learned that we had to take notes and catch them in their inaccuracies. Nancy Roth, from Dane Township, said they submitted 100 questions for QTS to answer. They did respond to all questions. We used their answers against them. You have to catch them in their lies.	
Extra-territorial jurisdiction	- Q: don't the cities have a say in this – they're larger – through extra-territorial jurisdiction? Bill Delehanty: No, that only pertains to rezoning. - Abigail Staff asked if these come through as CUPs. Several people nodded.	
Talk w your Representatives	- Sam Jenson from Fulton said this is a solution to this: SB-493 and SB-3, both senate bills. Contact your local reps about these two bills. How did they vote and why? Make some noise. Small towns don't have power. We have to talk to our lobbyists. - This is an election year – bug them. - Norm Monsen said the “working committee” needs to make their first action to form a Joint Resolution supporting the work of our legislators. (Sam Jenson from Porter is familiar with this process.)	Talk to Sam Jenson re Joint Resolution
Revenue Sharing	- Q: Don't towns get money from this? - Norm Monsen answered that we've heard answers all of the board. Some towns get nothing while others see it as a wind fall.	Q: Revenue Sharing
Keep the electric	Evan Sayre from Fulton said that all of the electricity is going to Chicago or Milwaukee. Why can't we keep the energy here?	Q: Where does elec go and why?
Adjourn	The meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.	

Next meeting:

The continuation of this topic will take place through the newly formed “Four-Town Solar Project” Committee. They will prioritize the above questions/tasks and call for future public meetings as they learn more about the projects.