Informational Session

Town of Plover
Town of Grant
Portage Solar, LLC

In Attendance:
Town of Plover Town Board Members: James Garbe, Joe Firkus, Deb Sniadajewski, Dick Pingel, Roger Bentley (via phone), Patricia Weller
Town of Plover Plan Commission: Bill Sniadajewski, Mike Schoenolz, Rex Rossier
Town of Grant Town Board Members: Sharon Schwab, Heather Grys-Luecht
Town of Grant Plan Commission: Nathan Wolosek, Ron Becker, Ron Patterson
Portage Solar Representatives: Amber Miller, Elle DeBlieck, Ben Adamich, John Wiater, Eric Callisto
Portage County Board Supervisors: Scott Soik, Charlie Gussel
Citizens of Portage County: 29 residents signed in

Portage Solar Representatives Power Point Presentation – Copy available at www.townofplover.com

Pertinent information received from Portage Solar, LLC or any other solar project interested in the Town of Plover will be posted on the Town of Plover website.

Question and Answer Session Recap by Subject Matter:
In general, questions were answered by representatives of Portage Solar, LLC.

General
Question: Is there anything you currently have available on the website?
Answer: All documents filed with the Public Service Commission are available on the PSC's website. You will need the docket number (9810-CE-100) to access those documents. The Environmental Review is redacted as required by federal and state law, but all documents are available. The species name is the only thing redacted in the ER.

Question: Is there a second project in the works? (Answered by Plover Town Chairman, James Garbe)
Answer: Yes, the Towns of Plover and Grant have been contacted by another firm planning a solar array in our townships. They are several month removed from making a preliminary filing with the Public Service Commission.

Portage Solar Statement: Sign up for the docket on the PSC's website, get all the information you like, and become as involved as you like. You can provide comments to the PSC and you can become party to the case if you so choose. That means you stand toe-to-toe with all the other parties to the case.

Economics

Question: Why is there such significant interest in the Towns of Plover and Grant agricultural land for solar projects rather than looking at other non-productive land areas?
Answer: The openness and expansiveness of the area in addition to the existing infrastructure that enables the power to be sold into the market that can absorb it make this area attractive for solar arrays. We are tying into the Plover substation owned by ATC which ties into MISO which sells on the open market. It provides a big opportunity to sell into the open market. The electrical infrastructure services the broader state in addition to the local area. Availablilty of developable property is also key and this area provides that – most of that type of land tends to be agricultural land. However, it does take a willing property owner. We feel it would be a benefit to both towns given the tax benefit that will come to this area. This benefit will be far greater than the local tax payments that currently comes from the landowners.

Question: Do you have other projects in Wisconsin that are situated on similar topography in an agricultural region?
Answer: In the state of WI there are several similar projects being proposed and/or being built by utilities. National Grid is currently developing several in WI that will be owned and operated by Alliant Energy. The closest would be in the Town of Fulton in northern Rock County. We have also developed one by Lomira, WI which is on ground that is more hilly. Alliant Energy is developing a solar farm in Wood County in the Town of Saratoga, but is not affiliated with National Grid Renewables. There are 13-15 projects of similar size that are either operating, under construction, been approved or are in the pipeline within the state.

Question: Beyond looking at what the shared revenue payment will bring to Portage County, you also need to look at the impact that the local agricultural community brings to the area. Current stats show that local ag is responsible for $1.6 billion in annual activity. Do you understand that the impact of this ag land goes far beyond the revenues that the property tax is generating?
Answer: As a company founded by a farmer, we take seriously our responsibility to work with existing agricultural operations. In Portage County about there are about 200,000ish tillable acres of farmland and our proposed solar farm represents less than 1% of that land. We believe solar farms can be a compliment to agriculture and doesn't have to distract from the agricultural impact to the economies of the region.

Question: We have touched a little bit on the negative impact to the local economy as a result of the loss of productive agricultural land. I'm curious as to why that is not addressed in your filing with the Public Service Commission – why they do not require that as a plus and minus. You are showing all the positive impacts in your filing, but never mention a negative impact.
Answer: The legal answer which is not going to be satisfactory is that it is not required. That kind of analysis is just not required. We see the positive side with the revenue payments that will be made to the county and the towns. It is a balancing act.

Question: It is a balancing act, but why is there no documentation of the balance? Why is it OK to just provide positive impacts to the local economy but no negative impacts?
Answer: There will be an environmental assessment (EA) –it is a requirement of the Public Service Commission and the DNR to do a study of the environmental impacts of the project. But that will also touch on some of the economics. It is probably not going to be the deep dive that you are hoping for, but they will talk about some of the balancing impacts. There will be a public hearing on that, there will be a local meeting on that assessment, and commission staff will be here to take comments.

Question: Have any of the local businesses been contacted and apprised of this project?
Answer: We haven't spoken with any of the businesses, but it is something that we can start doing. We have spoken to the Chamber. Many of the meetings we have done so far have allowed public comment. It is important to us.

Question: Where does the power company get the money to provide the revenue sharing?
Answer: From the rates charged to the customer. Since solar is the cheapest way to make energy, there will not be a significant impact on rates.

Question: What is the projected cost per kilowatt hour produced?
Answer: You probably pay 14-15 cents per kilowatt hour. On the supply side, the utility is paying 3-4 cents per kilowatt hour. Utilities are investing in a plant to generate within their rate base and we generally meet that economic threshold.

Question: Is your proposed project the final scope of the project or is there the possibility for expansion at some point in the future?
Answer: We are seeking approval for this project. If that approval is granted, that is all that we can build. If the company would want to add on to do something bigger, it would require a new filing.

Question: Are there U.S. companies that are able to supply you with these solar panels?
Answer: We have had the same type of commodity issues and price fluctuations with all the component for the solar arrays. We source our modules through the global supply chain. One of the major players is a company called First Solar, a U.S. company, and we have used them pretty successfully.

Question: Would this be happening if not for available grant money from the government?
Answer: There are no grants to be taken out for this project, but the project is subsidized by an investment tax credit. A portion of the project can be written off as a tax credit. That is the only subsidy for this project. Federal tax policy is set at the federal level. When stripping away the tax credits, the cheapest source of energy is solar energy. The cost has come down dramatically in the last five years and it is also the cleanest way to product energy.

Question: Are you saying that you are going to give more money back to the Town of Plover than what the farmers are paying on that same land?

Answer: We are saying that the property tax revenue from the project in the form of the shared state revenue payment supersede the amount of the property tax payments on those parcels of land.

Question/Statement: Farmers have tended their land for years to create the resource that produces their crop. That crop also sustains many local businesses which will feel an impact from this project.
Answer: Our impact to local businesses is developed on less than 1% of tillable acres. The intent of our company is to work with local property owners so that at the end of the life of the project the land will be returned to tillable productive acreage, therefore preserving the value of the land. Electricity is also a necessary commodity. It is a similar land use and we are a business and we intend to provide to the local economy. Our enterprise is partnering with farmers to produce a different crop.

Question: Since you don't have the ability to use eminent domain, how many of these acres have to become unavailable to you before this project is not viable?
Answer: If we were unable come to a mutual agreeable arrangement with private property owners, we would be unable to construct the site as proposed. For each one of these pieces of property, we have already entered into a mutually agreeable arrangement.

Question: Is there some reason that the solar panels cannot be installed at a height greater than 15' such that the land beneath them could be used for other agricultural purposes such as grazing?
Answer: Situation of the panels often depends on the topography, types of panels used, racking system used, the type of ground where situated. Cost is greater to situate them higher and arrays can be more vulnerable to weather. We don't use concrete to situate the piers in the ground which would be required for panels being further above ground. The decommissioning commitment to the landowner requires removal of all equipment and using concrete would violate those agreements.

BESS System (Battery Storage)

Question: Has a project of this magnitude incorporated a lithium battery storage component before?
Answer: We currently have project in TX putting in same size battery storage, but it is not yet in production. There are thousands across the world and the technology used is similar to cell phone technology and generally thought to be safe. Safety concerns are addressed in advance with local EMT officials. This is the fourth project incorporating this battery technology to come before the WI Public Service Commission.

Question: Will the battery storage area require any specialized equipment for fire suppression?
Answer: The battery storage has built in fire suppression in the container – either sprinklers or foam. We haven't selected the specific container that will be used. If there is a fire, it would be electrical. Any fire suppression should be done through the utility. We will train with the local EMS provider pre-construction.

Question: Have you been in contact with the Village of Plover Fire and EMS?
Answer: Not yet

Question: The description of lithium ion as safe is somewhat deceptive. The Village of Plover Fire Department should be involved up front.
Answer: We will include that in the Joint Development Agreement – could include annual training sessions.

Question: Is there state oversight/inspections of the battery storage system?
Answer: Yes, we need to meet all requirements to hook into the electrical grid by the state and federal government as well as any requirements imposed by the grid. State has oversight of the siting of both the solar site and the battery storage area. There is a lot of remote monitoring as well as regular physical monitoring. Inverters are inspected on a regular basis. Some of equipment is inspected by employees, some by representatives of manufacturers. NERC safety standards have to be met. Siting of solar with batteries is going to become common practice as time goes on. Economics of the project is better with battery storage.

Question: If PFAS foam is used for fire suppression, are the battery storage areas encased in such a way that this foam cannot contaminate the ground water?
Answer: PFAS foam cannot be used in fire suppression systems any longer. The battery storage system containers are weatherproof – there are four modules with expensive electrical equipment. They also have an HVAC system and are completely waterproof.

Question: Are the batteries fully enclosed in a building?
Answer: It's not a building, but a storage container.

Question: Do the containers sit in a building?
Answer: No

Question: Do they sit on a concrete pad?
Answer: Yes, they are mounted on 4-foot-thick pads and are generally a little bit larger than the containers but have no containment around them. A portion of them may need to be replaced periodically and access to those containers are needed.

Question: Approximately how long does each container last?
Answer: Depends on the use – some containers may end up being used more than others depending on the need of the grid. Those that are used more frequently will have a shorter lifespan. Five to fifteen years is the norm.

Question: What happens to the bad batteries? Where does the container go when it is non-functional?
Answer: Some suppliers have recycle policies as do some solar panel manufacturers. Otherwise, they are disposed of as any other battery would be.

Question: If the containers do go bad, would they end up in this area?
Answer: It would be disposed of as any solid waste battery would be disposed of. Without knowing what manufacturer we will be using, it is hard to know at this time what disposal method would be used. We would hope that they would be recycled, but without knowing we can't say they will be for a fact.

Question: What kind of liability does your company assume if the battery storage blows up and damages my property or health?
Answer: If we caused an adverse issue to any of our neighbors, you would have a claim against us. We feel that our project will be built and operated to the highest safety standards and don't expect any issues to occur.

Ecosystem

Question: You are building in an area that has a very delicate ecosystem that Portage County has been working years to establish with the restoration of prairie land which has an incredibly high number of animals that are endangered as well as those that have value to the community. They rely on the ag land that you are going to be using. Have you established any kind of assessment of potential effect to these species?
Answer: Yes, we are required to complete an endangered resource review and have filed that with our documents to the Public Service Commission. The blue arrays that are identified as alternate areas on the map coincide closely with areas of concern for threatened and endangered species. At this point in time, we have submitted the ER review and everything will be taken as a whole. Once the project is ordered, the DNR has the ability to come back and require habitat surveys for any particular species. That is generally addressed after the order is issued by the Public Service Commission.

Question: With the planting of grasses in the 2,000 acres of this project, what happens when you get a wild grass fire going through the project? Will the DNR be trained on what to do?
Answer: We mow under the array area which decreases the risk of any fire event. We plant a CRP style seed mix which typically might be burned every few years however that would not be part of managing this area. If there were fires on the facility it would be contained within a block of it and we're not aware of any in the Midwest that have had that type of issue. Mitigating the risk with planned mowings and ensuring the electrical components are properly maintained is key. We will also work with local fire and EMS to walk through different types of scenarios.

Question: Will the soil be contaminated from the components of solar panels?
Answer: There is nothing dangerous about a solar panel. No toxic runoff comes off a solar panel. It is not accurate to say there will be dangerous runoff. We are not extracting anything out of the soil nor are we doing anything more than planting a seed mix. Converting CRP ground takes fertilization over 3-5 years and some decompaction.

Question: Where are the ponds located and how large are they?

Answer: They are located just south of the railroad tracks along Highway 54 near the Plover substation inside the wooded lot next to the substation. One pond is about 4.5 acres and the other is about ½ that size. They are needed to accommodate runoff from the impervious surface and serve as a storm water detention pond. They don't hold water all year round, just during certain storm events and will be planted with a grass mix that accommodates wetter soil. None of the existing drainage ditches will be touched by this project.

Question: Have you planned for high ground water issues in siting the array?
Answer: There is a lot of mucky soils on the south end of the project. We use a helical screw pile to support the panels in those areas. We check the corrosive properties of the ground water and the soils and use galvanized piles where necessary to mitigate corrosion. The majority of the soils on our site are sandier and generally have more water percolation – especially the soil around the substation. We will be planting perennial ground cover which should improve drainage in the area.

Question: Are you planning any drain tile system in the project?
Answer: Only where necessary in a crossing area or the area of a culvert. However, the design is all conceptual at this point. Once the project is ordered and the final design begins, there may be changes to the drainage plan.

Roads

Question: Will the roads to be built within the project site be private roads?
Answer: Yes

Question: What will those roads be constructed with?
Answer: They are gravel, typical field access spec – 12' gravel roads

Question: What do you mean by use of roadway?
Answer: Use of roads to access the site.

Question: Will you need to cross roadways with underground cabling?
Answer: Yes, we will work with whatever local municipality has jurisdiction at the point of crossing in developing a crossing agreement and will also develop a specification for each crossing site for underground conduit.

Safety

Question: When your systems discharge, is there a steady noise associated?
Answer: When the system produces electricity, there is virtually no noise. Central inverters which have fans will produce a small amount of noise. We are required to keep those noise levels at less than 50dbA at the edges of the site. Any noise produced will be during the day when the panels are producing electricity – there will be no noise at night. Some of the transformers near the substations could produce a humming sound near that substation.

Question: Do you accept the liability for any damages to my family's health or property as a result of a fire or extreme weather event?
Answer: If there is any adverse effect from an act of God, our insurance policy would protect your interests

Question: What will be the effects of stray voltage on our families and our pets and what are you going to do to protect us from that?
Answer: The company will do Electronic Magnetic Force modeling. The model filed with the Public Service Commission indicates that the EMF levels will be very low and very safe. Based on the model, you will get more EMF from your toaster than you will from this site. We do confined animal surveys within a mile radius of the project boundary and will use those surveys to run a model to see if there is any change in the stray voltage. Our facilities are all grounded and wires are enclosed in conduit which significantly mitigates any stray voltage issues.

Question: Has there been any events where the panels have blown up or started on fire?
Answer: We are not aware of any lightning strikes – our panels are not situated very high.

Question: Is there a conflict between the solar project generating power at the same time a local factory needs an instantaneous power load?
Answer: The factories are supplied power from the broader power system. The solar project would be pumping out power at the same time they are drawing. Being close to the power generating source is a good thing.

Question: Will the electrical wiring be buried or on the surface?
Answer: Wiring will go from solar modules to combiner boxes in the rows of racker systems. From the combiner boxes it will be trenched underground to inverter boxes and then trenched AC cabling to the substation where it is stepped up to the transmission voltage. There is an overhead generation tie-in line that will be constructed between the project substation and the existing Plover substation which will be about 350' long.

Decommissioning

Question: Can you give us the names of the communities where you have decommissioned sites?
Answer: We have not operated a large-scale solar system for more that 25 years so when referencing decommissioning, it refers to our covenants with local areas (towns and counties) in our permitting and siting agreements. In terms of actual decommissioning, we have taken out solar arrays after installing them making us familiar with the process. However, we have not decommissioned a large-scale solar site in the U.S.

Question: Can you provide the township with the decommissioning plan that has been filed with the state?
Answer: Yes. All documents are available on the Public Service Commission website. Use Docket Number 9810-CE-100. All materials filed are available to the public for viewing with

very limited exceptions. There are some materials that are required by federal law to be filed confidentially.

Question: Will there be a "decommissioning fund"/escrow account set aside for decommissioning purposes?
Answer: We are proposing to include that as part of the Joint Development Agreement – a financial assurance. Typically, it is a letter of credit or an escrow account but will be discussed at that point.

Question: What were the circumstances that caused you to take out solar panels/structures if it was not part of a decommissioning?
Answer: Testing

Municipal Joint Development Agreements

Question: Can you get us in touch with the Rock County people that developed the JDA for their project so we can plagiarize it when we write ours?
Answer: Sure – it was a local project since it is a much smaller project (less than 50 mW), but we can get you that information. We can send all the JDA's we have done.

Question: Could you be specific about what services you are looking for the Town to provide for this site?
Answer: We would not require any additional services other than access to the public roads and police, fire, and ems protection if there was a call to the site for an emergency. That would use would be similar to any other resident or business. We're adding tax base through the shared revenue payment but not putting a burden on the services those tax dollars provide for. During operations our impact to the roads is less than the current impact of the agricultural community. During construction there might be some wear and tear to the roads. We will take some surveys before and work with the towns to bring them up to spec at the end of construction if need be. We don't require sewer or water service for the sight. We work with the local utility for any electrical or fiber optic needs.

Question: If this project is sold to a utility at some point in the future, will all the contracts that you have developed with landowners, townships and the county remain in effect?
Answer: We are actively talking with utility companies – it might be that we sell the power or it might be that we sell the project. Either way, all the contracts or commitments made will be transferred with the project.

Question: The MISO filing is just as crucial as the Public Service Commission filing. Can you elaborate on what MISO is?
Answer: MISO is a regional transmission operator but does not own the transmission lines. However, they do regulate them. ATC is a member of MISO – MISO regulates the capacity on the lines and does studies on how much can be added to a certain lines. MISO is a regional operator. MISO certifies that the system is going to be safe if companies are allowed to

interconnect. They are the transmission cop – making sure the system operates in a safe and economical way.

Question: To understand your commitment – what happens if a windstorm would take out solar panels in year #9 versus year #19.
Answer: A tornado would impact anything – these facilities are built to withstand Midwest weather conditions. In the case of an extreme weather event, the insurance policies we purchase (just like you purchase insurance on your home) would cover the damages. That insusrance coverage would remain throughout the entire length of the project.

Question: What if you go out of business?
Answer: In that very unlikely case, it would go through bankruptcy court. As a revenue generating facility it would be purchased by another conglomerate. With that purchase would come all the written agreements and any new owner would have to abide by all those agreements.

Question: Why was the Town of Plover as a governmental unit not contacted until the day of the initial filing?
Answer: That is not accurate. There is a series of beneficial bilateral discussions with the owners of the land that have the right to do what they want with their land. That gets the project in shape until it actually is a project. From a business perspective, that has to be done confidentially and to expect it to be a public process is not the way it works.
Outreach was made to the Towns of Plover and Grant in December via phone calls and emails. Detail of those communications is to be provided.

Good Neighbor Agreements
Question: Are there any benefits provided by the company to neighboring homeowners?
Answer: Yes, we will be working with you on a "good neighbor agreement" for any homeowner that lives within 500 feet of the project. We will be contacting you in the near future.

Question: Can you elaborate on your good neighbor agreement?
Answer: The good neighbor agreements are personalized with each neighbor and there are options for each situation. Typically we provide a visual buffer if there is not one already present. We make a visit to the premise and work with the landowner to determine the best options are for their situation. We work with any residence that is within a 500' radius of the project boundary.

Question: Do any of you live in a community with a solar project nearby?
Answer: Yes, I live next door to a residential system. The closest ground mount is about 1/3 of a mile away.

Question: Are there health concerns from stray voltage and living right under the power lines that come from the substation?

Answer: We are not changing anything about the substation that is currently there. The fact that the solar generating facility is nearby is not going to impact the existing ATC line. Our proposed substation is the same size as the one already there and will have a connecting line to the current substation. Stray voltage is an issue with dairy farmers and well recognized as an issue. The PSC mandates we do testing to determine if there are any problems. We are regulated by the state and are required to mitigate any stray voltage issues.

Question: Is there potential impact from stray voltage to any cattle in the area?
Answer: Stray voltage is always a concern. It is real. As a result, the Commission requires stray voltage testing for a project of this size. That testing will be done both pre-construction and post-construction within a certain radius of the array.

Question: Do you offer any protections or guarantees for farmers if they should run into an issue with stray voltage?
Answer: I don't believe there is anything in writing.

Question: Why were the adjacent residents only contacted with a letter detailing a virtual meeting? Why were we not notified of anything prior to February.
Answer: We will be following up with all the adjacent residences shortly. Prior to doing any meeting for a community, we need to be confident that we have defined project footprint and a viable project.

Question: Are you going to report to the neighbors any fertilizer and pesticides you use on the cover crop? Are you going to use aerial applications of Windex?
Answer: We clean them by hand, do you want a job??