

Planning Commission

Dave McCullough, District 1
Heath Krug, District 2, Vice-Chair
Vacant, District 3
Kirk Pendleton, District 4
Elizabeth Yerxa, District 5,



Community Development Department

Greg Plucker,
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COLUSA COUNTY Planning Commission Special Meeting Minutes October 30, 2024

Board Chambers
546 Jay Street, Suite 108
Colusa, CA 95932

The Colusa County Planning Commission meets in Regular Session this 30th day of October 2024 at the hour of 9:00 a.m. Present: Commissioners Gerry Nall, Kirk Pendleton and Heath Krug. Absent: Commissioners Dave McCullough and Elizabeth Yerxa.

Pledge of Allegiance

I. PUBLIC COMMENT
None.

II. PRESENTATION/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

1. Presentation on the Janus Solar and Battery Storage project's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)(SCH #2024061043) and receive any public verbal comments on the DEIR, and provide any Commission verbal comments on the DEIR.

Comments received by Mr. Plucker.

Commissioner Pendleton states he likes the idea of the power lines being underground which would take care of the visual impact and fire aspect. He inquires if these lines will be shut down by PG&E when there is a PSPS events during high fire danger.

Mr. Plucker states these areas are not in a PG&E high definition area. He states the question should be phrased if the final EIR addresses whether or not these lines would be shut down and how they relate to the shutoffs. He further states this way the question will be specifically answered and included in the final EIR.

Commissioner Pendleton states most of the west side of the valley is shut down when there is a wind event. He further states most of the people who live in this area have had their insurance cancelled or not renewed due to high fire risk. He states he has a problem with putting an ignition source in such a high fire area. He further states solar panels work like an airfoil and increase the wind speed underneath them. He

states they need to put in a containment arrangement around the battery plant so if there is a fire, and water is used to extinguish it, that heavy metals won't seep into the ground.

Comments received by Mr. Salas, Ms. Jain, Mr. Schweitzer, Mr. Raines, Mr. Cohn, Ms. Merrick.

Commissioner Nall inquires to the other options Janus Solar could have taken.

Mr. Salas states they could have challenged the decision in court or applied through the State Energy Commission.

Ms. Ferini states she is in opposition of the project due to the removal of ag land from the Williamson Act for commercial and industrial use, the devaluations of ag property located near the project and the fire dangers.

Ms. Turkleson inquires why are we here? She further states the concerns have not changed and she is still in opposition of the project. She states some of the issues have been addressed but fire protection and the water supply are big issues. She inquires if everyone will be trained or will it be just Williams Fires Department. She further states the DEIR is huge and it is on private land not on the Cortina Reservation according to Pioneer review.

Mr. Cunningham states he and the Chamber of Commerce met with Janus Solar and they covered the benefits as part of the project. He further states the Chamber of Commerce is in support of the project.

Ms. Conrado states she is in favor of project and believes there will be a great economic benefits and the environmental impact will help the State meet its renewable energy requirements in the future. She further states that Janus has been cooperative with consideration of concerns.

Mr. Faevro states he is the owner of the land being used for the project. He further states he would like to address one comment that was made by the Commission and that is that a flat panel acting as an airfoil can redirect the wind, but it cannot speed it up. He states that he has never had an insurance company deny coverage. He further states that he seeks to continue his long-standing efforts to improve their portion of Colusa County in collaboration with the County and we request your help in so doing. He states he considers producing clean electricity as the optimal choice for the owners and the County. He further states that it is no surprise that the Golden State of California leads the nation on solar power and produces 26% of State's electricity, we choose to be part of the solution and we invite the Board to do the same. He states there is a desire to establish a productive use of non-plant farmland, while maintaining existing agriculture operations and both goals can be accomplished under the existing land use designation for the property and every landowner has the right to develop their property as long as the land use requirements are met. He further states at the end of the project Janus Solar will decommission the site and return it to its current state and it will be secured by a bond held by the County. He states this could only be a win win for all involved.

Ms. Turkleson states that the DEIR mentions that there were alternative sites

recommended for this project.

Mr. Plucker states there was an alternative site identified as an example of how the impact would change if it were relocated to rice ground, this was offered only as a comparative analysis for impacts.

Ms. Turkleson inquires if at the present time if there are other alternate sites being explored?

Mr. Plucker states he is not aware of another site.

Mr. Williams states he did see the alternative sites and one was his property. He inquires if anyone from Janus Solar is affiliated with Eon or has been on their payroll? He states there is a lot of property south of Hwy 20 and inquires why his property was used as an example.

Mr. Salas states that the Eon Company was a previous company developing this project and they talked to many landowners.

Mr. Williams states there are many other properties that are closer and the other landowners were not interested. He further asks what will be your contract with PGE and as far the as decommissioning how big is the bond?

Mr. Salas states they talked to many other landowners and the bonds go up with value.

Mr. Marsh states this project is next to his property and he has no opposition to the project itself, however, you have one road in and one road out. He states people who have fought fires understand that the smoke causes visibility, intoxication issues and messes with the mind. He further states the DEIR has a lot of flaws in it and has eliminated a lot of things and the report is huge. He states he does not think it fair to have something this thick for a reasonable person who also has another job to fix someone else's flaws. He states what wasn't mentioned in regards to the battery storage systems is the exothermic reaction. He further states in bad weather the fire department has to use a road that isn't maintained and then they have to find a Knox box with bad visibility. He inquires if the alarm system is hard wired because there are dead zones on this road. He states another thing that was not mentioned is the hay crop that Faevero grows every year, what if it catches on fire. He further states power shuts off are an inconvenience and the people who you are asking don't live here. He further states Mr. Williams mentioned alternative sites why did they pick his. He also inquires regarding the decommissioning and where are they sending those materials to. He further states in the old DEIR it mentions 196,000.00 solar panels, the new one doesn't mention anything. He states he would like to see that in the EIR and in regards to fires there are a lot of things that they missed.

Ms. Marsh states there was a prior attempt to get this project passed and now there is a lot more information in the DEIR. She further states the fiscal impact report is missing, it was provided before and now is not included. She states she would like to know the basis for the numbers they are providing, and she understands a private owner wanting to do what they want on their property, she supports that completely. She further states what she doesn't support is asking the government for funds to

support the project as it is being done now, where are the competitive bids to show that it is being done economically. She further states in the DEIR the company will put all the power lines underground and they can do that at a cost of 6 and 10 million dollar a mile but PG&E will do at a cost of less than 3 million a mile. She states there is still 40 pages of site location being identified as 1830 Spring Valley Road and they should be stricken from the record as they are not participating in this project. She further states the County still has it displayed as such. She states the property tax does not talk to the exclusions of solar projects. She asks for economic basis for all this and give the complete picture. She further states it is mentioned in the DEIR the County will be obligated for 7.4 million of dollars for constructions cost and in the County budget, it did deduct a solar project or canceled a solar project from the 2024-2025 budget. She inquires where is the commitment from PG&E to take the power from the site. She states there is a huge expectation from the community that this will bring jobs but experience says they will be unionized jobs from folks that will be relocated to the area. She further states that it was mentioned that the solar panels would be taken to the Wheatland landfill and they stated they would not take the solar panels and this needs to be verified.

Mr. Marsh inquires if the training the fire department will be getting the same as the one CalFire in Fresno receives.

Vice-Chair Krug adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m. to reconvene in Regular Session on November 6, 2024 at the hour of 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Greg Plucker, Secretary to the
Planning Commission

Heath Krug, Vice-Chair

By: _____
Patricia Rodriguez, Deputy Clerk