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County Commissioners vote to table final decision on Elkhart County Solar Project until September

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Elkhart County, Indiana (August 16, 2021) – Elkhart County Commissioners today voted unanimously to table a decision on the proposed Elkhart County Solar Project until September. The proposed location for the renewable energy plant is on approximately 850 acres of land just south of Millersburg.

“We are keenly aware of our friends and neighbors who support, as well as those who don’t support this renewable energy project,” commented Suzie Weirick, President of the Elkhart County Commissioners. “Making decisions that balance the needs of individuals, including individual property rights and the County as a whole, is never easy. And it’s why we ask citizens to weigh in.”

Kansas City, Missouri-based Savion, LLC is the project developer for the Elkhart County Solar Project. According to Sara Mills, Development Director for Savion, the project will create no sound, light or other forms of pollution. Attractive landscaping will obscure the operation from the view of surrounding homeowners. If the project is not renewed at the end of its 30-year life, all of the land will be returned to agricultural use at Savion’s cost.

Savion reports that the Elkhart Solar Project will provide enough clean energy to run more than 16 thousand homes a year. The energy will be uploaded to the PGM electric coop and purchased by regional utility companies to be used locally.

Attorney Jason Kuchmay at Snyder Morgan Federoff & Kuchmay located in Fort Wayne who is representing local opponents of the renewable energy project, argued that the Project is not something addressed by Elkhart County’s Comprehensive Plan and is not therefore an appropriate consideration. Kuchmay also cited the opinion of a Rhode Island University paper which claims property values in the immediate vicinity of a solar farm decrease by 1.7 percent.

Project supporters responded by reminding the Commissioners that Comprehensive Plans are merely a set of recommendations, not laws, and that independent studies and data from across the country show either no effect or negligible effect on surrounding property values.

Other comments from supporters were specific to the issue of property rights and how they considered them fundamental to our way of life in this region.

Elkhart County Commissioners will consider all aspects of the Project before coming to a final vote in September.

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ABOUT ELKHART COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Elkhart County is governed by a board of three County Commissioners. The board of Commissioners constitutes the legislative body of the county for ordinance purposes and serves as the executive branch for Elkhart County government.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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