

## August 13, 2024 ~ REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Ladd Village Board met in regular session on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, in the Ladd Village Hall at 121 N. Main Avenue. Village President Pro Tem Jan Martin called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and led the pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

Roll Call: Present: Trustees Dave Margherio, Dan Nelson, Brad Nicholson, Andy Ruggerio, Molly Thrasher (6)

In attendance: Deputy Village Clerk Julie Koch, Engineer Adam Ossola, Atty. Pat Barry, and Police Chief Jacob Frund

Thrasher motioned/Nicholson second to accept the July 23, 2024, regular meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nicholson, Nelson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Nelson motioned/Ruggerio second to authorize payment of the bills for \$267,117.67.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nicholson, Nelson Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Correspondence: Thank you note from Chris Noll thanking the Village President and the Trustees for allowing them all to share their concerns regarding the Solar Farm at the last meeting. He complimented the council on the overall conduct of the meetings.

Public Comment: Rubin Grandon of Green Key Solar addressed the board, he is the project developer for the Ladd 2 and the Ladd 3 solar project north of town. They are working with Brian Gillan and the Gillan family to host the commercial solar energy facility. Right now they have a conditional use permit application that is pending with the county. It's zoned agricultural land and in that application, they have fulfilled all of the requirements under the Bureau County Ordinance. He stated that he was here to share a little bit about himself, and the project and to listen to the concerns. He has become aware of some of the different concerns of the residents and he is aware of the Village's decision to overturn their prior decision to give no objection to the 1.5 mile commercial solar facility C.U.P waiver. He told us a little bit about himself. He grew up in a very small town in Iowa of 300 people. He has many family members who were farmers until their passing. Rubin started working with solar about 5 years ago, because he feels solar is very important, and that is reflected in the state goals by Pritzker in coming out of Springfield to be net neutral by 2050, and that is what has opened the door for these projects. Rubin stated whether you believe in solar energy or not it is a huge economic boom and it's a great opportunity for people to participate by hosting solar farms. It's a way that a lot of different families have diversified what they are doing. Currently, Greenkey is working on 100 different projects throughout the State of Illinois and Ameren territory. They are not doing wind or battery storage. They are not doing anything different than exactly what they are looking to do with this project. This project is 68 acres, spread across 2 different projects because of Ameren rules. It will be ground-mounted and all of the power produced will go right to the grid that is adjacent to the property. It is then called community solar for anyone that has an Ameren electric meter whether you are a resident, municipal office, or business you can subscribe to get your power from that facility and can receive a discount on that and save 10-15% off your total bill. In terms of some of the negative outlooks on the project, he stated that there aren't any and he was surprised by all of the concerns. Rubin states they are not factual evidence. There are no reports to back up what was said. They look forward to an opportunity to talk about it more. Stated that he sent out a letter at the end of June to all of the neighbors of the

property of the proposed project and never received a phone call or a letter from anyone. Heard that one of the neighbors was not in favor of the project so Rubin got a number for that resident and tried to call him, leaving a message but never received a call back from them. Invited anyone to hang out after the meeting and ask any questions that anyone has and he would be more than happy to answer them for those residents or concerned citizens. He said it is not on top of a mine, the piling will not cause disruptions by vibrations that would be any more than that of the grain trucks going into the Ladd elevator. There is no environmental concerns in terms of toxicity or soil erosion. Not only is there the Bureau County Ordinance but the Illinois EPA also has one that they will implement a vegetation management control plan alongside the facility. They are not trying to put up something toxic they want to come in and manage this and have a good relationship with the neighbors around the project.

Karen Nerad, neighbor to the property where the solar project will be being built, stated they bought this farm that they live on 20 years ago. This is their serenity and they have put in a lot of time and money to make the house and the property what it is today and they don't want a solar farm coming in next to them and ruining that. They don't want to look out their windows and see this every day. They don't want cameras that are at this solar farm pointing directly in the direction of their home and property. Nerad stated that they received the letter but didn't reach back out to the company because the company is the one that should be reaching out to them. She stated that they want to put up 27,000 solar panels that stand 12ft high adjacent to their property. She is wondering why they are putting it there and not somewhere else that doesn't have residents right around the property where this is being put up. She said that Greenkey says there is no slope into Ladd, but there is and that is a concern to the residents who live south of where this project is looking to be built. She has 3 1/3 acres of farmable land just north of her house and she can't get one farmer now to come in to rent it because of the potential solar that will be going up there so it is now a loss of income for them. If there are strong winds or a tornado that comes through, or hail what will it do to these solar panels?

Tim Nerad neighbor to the property where the solar project will be being built. Nerad responded to a comment that Rubin made that they hope to develop a relationship over this. Tim said that Greenkey is not the one that is going to be running this solar farm. They are going to build it and then sell it. They are not going to keep it and manage it.

Jim Dunseth- Lives out on 1800 N Ave and has lived there since 1969. He is not happy to look at solar panels across from his house 1320ft away from it. All of the research that Greenkey has done has been done by solar people not by qualified people so you don't get an honest opinion of what effects these solar panels will have. The drainage is another issue. This project will not be located in a good spot for drainage. 80% of Greenkey solar panels are made in China, it is not good for our National security to subsidize one of our biggest enemies.

Christine Bastion- Chris is concerned about the drainage since they are at the bottom of this hill. She was told that Pritzker put a law in that no solar projects could be within 1.5 miles of town yet they want to put their solar farm even closer than that. She doesn't feel like it's ok to break the law and how can Bureau County allow this if it is a law?

Pam Flaherty- She and her husband farmed the ground near where Nerads have lived for over 50 years between her and her husband and his parents. They have personally watched that water drain and run towards the Village of Ladd. She stated that some things may have changed over the years but there is still a huge grade difference from that property south to the Village of Ladd. Solar panels may be the way of the future but what is going to be the result? She is afraid that if we rush all of this stuff through and then realize that this was a big mistake. Those are her concerns.

Chris Noll- Chris lives on Hwy 89 directly across the street from where they are proposing to put up this solar farm. Has lived around or in Ladd his entire life. He applauds the Village for wanting to keep the agricultural ground as it is and protecting our economic development to the North of the Village. He feels like it isn't the right decision for the town and for its future growth and development. As they explained before about the drainage problem if it is blocked in any way it will flood 89 by the Ladd Elevator and his house and if the water flows through the site as they propose, the water will run down the hill toward the Village of Ladd with whatever it is carrying with it. He agrees with his fellow residents that visually it is not what he is looking to see in the future.

Atty Patrick Barry then spoke stating that the Village is not involved in this project but the Village did receive a request from the county as to whether or not they had any objections to this project. It was published on the board agenda and no one showed up to speak about it so the Village went ahead and agreed to let the project go forward without any objection. We were then notified that there were neighbors that objected to the project and they came before the board stating their concerns, so in conclusion of listening to those neighbors the board then decided to overturn their decision and object to the solar project. Village sent a revised recommendation to the County that we objected to the project. Barry stated that that was the end of the village's involvement in the project.

Dave Flaherty raised his hand and Atty Barry asked him if he had a question. Dave stated that the Village is a fast-growing community for a small town and he seems to think that most of our area for expansion is going North of town. Barry told him that the development if any will be more at the south end of town towards the interstate.

Committee Reports: Thrasher and Koch let the board know that there was a baseball meeting the week before on Thursday at the Ladd Grade School where everyone within the community was invited to come and support Ladd baseball and bringing games back to Ladd. We spoke about the baseball/softball diamonds over at Kennedy Park and how we would like to get more use of them from town ball leagues. Currently, Ladd and Spring Valley are combined and have been for the last couple of years. We as a Village and community would like to see our fields get used more. With regards to that we would like to get the infield of the little diamond removed and possibly expand the infield back further into the outfield to give more room to move the bases back. This will also give the Village more of an opportunity to have some travel ball teams come and use our field for tournaments. We are going to meet again on September 18 at 6:30 at the Ladd Grade School library. In the meantime, Steve Bosi is going to speak with Brad Foster the head of Spring Valley baseball to see what we can do to get some of our fields used for baseball games and Anna Dempsey is going to reach out to the head of the softball league to do the same thing as well. President Cattani was in attendance at this meeting and was asked to reach out to Mayor Melanie Malooley Thompson of Spring Valley to see if he could work

with her on this matter. Steve reached out to D&M Landscaping to get a quote on getting that infield removed and the diamond to where it needs to be. He is going to contact 2 other companies for quotes. At that meeting, Cattani asked BJ Liebe if this was something our Village worker could do, pulling out that infield and Liebe stated that he couldn't see why they couldn't.

Tree Committee - Nelson and Margherio- E Elm St, Bill Rounds called stating that there is a tree that is half dead east of the duplex on the berm. They went and looked and saw no tree on the berm of his property at all. So there is nothing to be done there. Steven Rounds house on 334 N Bureau Ave, there is a tree on berm with dead branches. The committee is requesting that the Village workers cut out the dead parts and clean it up. Dan Winner at 331 N Bureau has a tree on the berm between him and the neighbor to the North of him that when there are storms or strong winds it loses branches and the last time it almost landed on one of his vehicles. The committee is requesting that the village workers cut out the dead parts and trim back the tree from hanging over the driveway.

Margherio stated they are not arborists and that they were told last meeting that they requested that the Village workers take down a tree and it was a perfectly healthy tree that they cut down. Margherio stated that they need to know what they need to be looking at and for in the future before they can make a decision. Martin said that there is a large branch on a tree on the berm at the Sebben house on the corner of Cleveland and 89 that is huge and was hanging over the road and needs to be cut back. The council informed her that we have looked at that tree before that it's actually on the Sebbens property and that this will need to be taken care of by them.

Engineer's Report: 2023 SRTS Project: They had the kickoff meeting on August 1, 2024 at IDOT in Ottawa. Frank, Kevin (NCICG) and Adam attended the meeting with a couple of guys from IDOT. They gave them the notice to proceed whenever the council was ready for them to do so. They did bring up the issue of concerns with the residents on the North side where the project is proposed to take place. The board talked about the possibility of shifting it to the South side of the street and IDOT's opinion is that the best place for this project would be to keep it on the North side of the road as it was planned from the beginning. Ossola asked the council if there were any objections to going forward with the project. Ossola said that we will work with the residents the best we can to accommodate shifting to one side or the other of the right away to avoid certain trees that they would like us to avoid or landscaping etc. We will be looking to bid on the project spring of 2025 and have it constructed in the summer of 2025. There is some environmental approval that we would have to get before the project could take place and that may be the only thing that would hold us up. Ossola reminded the council that the engineering costs for this project will not be covered by the grant so that would come out of the general fund. He asked the board if they want to see an engineering agreement before proceeding or if the council would just like them to move forward and bill on a month-to-month basis. The board stated that we would just have them do a month-to-month billing. Ossola is thinking \$35,000-40,000 total for this spread out over 4 months.

Margherio asked about the Main Street grant. They need to get the RFQ (request for qualification) to Rhonda so that it can be advertised so that they can get the plans put together. They should be getting that ad out in the next few weeks. Martin asked if it would start this fall and Ossola stated that it's looking more likely to start about the same time as the SRTS project.

Superintendent's Report: Not in attendance

Police Chief: Chief Frund stated that they have been doing traffic stops and have been very busy. Ordinance violations have been going out for tall grass and weeds.

New Business: Ordinance Regulating Public Camping within Corporate Boundaries and Other Actions in Connection therewithin for the Village of Ladd. IML has suggested that everyone implement this as an ordinance within their communities. Frund stated that they are seeing it more and more over in Princeton especially around the train station.

Nicholson motioned/Margherio second to approve Ordinance #1169 An Ordinance Regulating Public Camping Within Corporate Boundaries and Other Actions in Connection Therewithin For the Village of Ladd.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nicholson, Nelson, Ruggerio, Thrasher – Motion carried

Margherio advised Chief Frund that there was a gentleman who came to his house the other day trying to sell solar. Margherio told the guy that he was on the board for the Village and asked him if he had a peddler permit. Margherio told him that he needed to come up to the office to acquire a permit. Koch told him that she had 2 young guys come in that afternoon for permit applications but they haven't turned them in yet.

Nicholson advised Chief Frund that he was at the post office the other day a resident took their dog out of the car and put them in the grass next to the sidewalk and let them do their business and then picked the dog back up and put it in the car and left. Stated people walk past their house all of the time and do not pick up after their dogs. He asked Frund if there was an ordinance on that. Frund told Nicholson to let him know after the meeting who it is and he will address it with the owner.

Building Inspector: Not in attendance. Martin advised the council that she spoke with Flanagan before the meeting. The owner of 105 N Main Ave came in and asked if there was an ordinance on which way the front door went. Asked if it could swing in or has to be a door that would swing out over the sidewalk. Flanagan stated for fire safety reasons that it needs to be a push-out door. Margherio also asked if there was an ordinance as to what needs to be on the front of the building if it needs to be fireproof.

Village Attorney: Atty Barry stated that he called Jed the day after the last meeting and reviewed the contract with him and told him that it was Cattani, Nicholson, and Barrys understanding that Jed was going to go back and talk with the guys and then get back to us, but Barry hadn't heard anything. Jed stated that he wanted to still meet with the unit but Mario had been on vacation so he wanted to make sure they were all going to be there when he met with them. As of this morning that had not happened. Jed reached out to Barry this afternoon and said that he had talked to Frank. Frank told Barry that he, Brad and Rhonda had continued to negotiate some issues, he filled Barry in on where he was at with the contract and felt that they were close to resolving it. There is one member who isn't happy with the request, the wage request but he thinks that the rest of them are fine with it. Jed feels like if they want to take a vote it will pass and they can get it done. Jed is working on a draft of the agreement but he wants to make sure that what he and Cattani agreed to is properly set forth there. Nicholson stated that he was in on the meeting with Cattani and Bezely. Cattani left word with Julie on what went on through that meeting to transfer to the council for him at the meeting tonight in his absence. Nicholson stated that he could tell what he recalled from their meeting. Barry stated that he would like to talk with Cattani and Bezely. Barry told Jed that he would get back to him after the meeting tonight. Jed is going to try and draft a proposed agreement and then Barry feels like we will have more of something to go off of. Barry stated that he would call Cattani tomorrow to make sure that we are all on the same page.

Old Business: Discuss an Update on the Ladd Cemetery Association Dissolving & the Village of Ladd taking it over Margherio thinks that we should keep it the same. He thinks that we should sit with Paul Biccochi and get a board together for the Cemetery. He fears that the Village takes it over and then we would have to spend the village's money. The Cemetery has been operating on its own without any problems. He feels that the Village employees should not be a part of it either in maintaining it or taking care of it in any way. Barry said that Biccochi stated that he has a renewal to file in August and that's when he would like us to take it over. The board feels like it isn't something that we should take on right now. Nicholson asked if the Village were to take over because we are a municipality, would fall under different parameters that we don't need now in regards to employees and prevailing wages? Barry doesn't think that it's an issue. Margherio thinks we need to look at other options before we say yes and take it over. Martin stated that our next meeting is still in August and that maybe if we can find out more information before then we could talk about it again.

New Business: Discuss Quote from D&M Landscaping to Increase Weed Control in both Parks for 2025 and option for 2024 Nicholson would like to make a motion that we table it till spring and then also get a couple of different quotes on it. Nicholson discussed with Dave owner of D&M today and Dave said that we never put that he was supposed to control the weeds down there and that we wanted a quick and cheap job and that was all that we wanted. He applied dry granules this year and it hasn't done anything. Dave said that he used exactly what he used last year and the same employee applied it. Dave stated they got a late start this year because of all of the rain so that could make a difference as well. Nicholson feels that maybe it needed to be a little wetter when they applied it and maybe it was too dry out and the chemicals didn't take like they should have. Dave stated that some of those weeds need to be killed with a liquid chemical and pre-emergent. Nicholson thought that we had one more application for this year. Koch thought that we didn't have any more applications this year but she would look into it. The board decided to table until spring and then we would get bids and go from there.

Discuss and Approve Replacement of the Failed Manhole at the End of N Central Ave Along the Railroad Track Koch stated that Doug gave her a quote from Starline and the cost is based on the past excavation in this area that had found the soil conditions very unfavorable for excavation and led to additional shoring and time related to completion of work. Koch reported to the council that Doug gave her an update. He had reached out to 3 different companies and the only one that he heard back from was Starline Construction. Koch explained that Don from Starline texted Doug and told him that the manhole and all of the materials would run around \$4800 after talking with Doug labor and machine time by the hour would be about \$3000 per day. Ruggerio stated he feels like we should go out for more bids unless this is considered emergent, and then President Cattani would be able to make that decision.

Discuss & Approve the replacement of the air conditioning units in Ladd Community Center vs. repairing the current units that we have Martin told the council that currently the air conditioning is not working at all. She spoke with Cattani this afternoon. Kettman said that the current air conditioning unit would have to be replaced. It is 22 years old and to replace it would be a better choice than to repair it. To get one great big unit from Kettman's it would be \$27,000 and it would be a couple months before they could get it in. He met with Grassers this morning. Grassers said we have 1 large unit there and that we should probably move to 3-4 units and be able to zone it so that if we move the clerk's office over there it would be zoned for different parts of the building. Grassers quoted

Continued 8-13-24

\$10,095 to repair the existing unit that we have and Frank stated that Grassers told him \$20,000-\$21,000 to replace it. The board decided to table this till the next meeting.

Announcements: Rhonda said that we need a plan for the Main Ave business buildings. Charro Taco wanted the Village of Ladd to inspect their building's plumbing and electricity. Do we hire someone to do that or is the business responsible for hiring someone to do that as the final inspection? Staci Wood sent a thank you for the sympathy card that the Village sent to her and her family mourning the loss of her mother. All liquor licenses are paid and reissued. For the storm sewer project grant, Frank called all of the farmers whose property we would be needing an easement on and spoke with them all. Klein/Helm are the only ones that have gotten back to him stating that they would be ok with it. We will wait to hear from the rest of them as to what they decide. Ruggerio asked why we couldn't run the project down the middle of that street. Ossola told him that they all own to the middle of the road so either way we would need an easement and it would be much easier to put it in the ditches and keep an open ditch.

Nicholson motioned/Margherio second to move out of regular session into executive session Section 2 (c) Collective Negotiating Matters Between Public Employers and Their Employees or Representatives at 7:42 pm.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Returned to regular session at 8:05 pm.

Roll call was taken.

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

Also present were Atty. Pat Barry, and Deputy Clerk Koch

Thrasher told the council that Dave Bernabei told her that there is a large hole on the corner of Locust and Lincoln. Koch stated that he had called twice to the clerk's office that Doug was aware of it and the issue would be taken care of as soon as those residents removed their mailboxes because that is what was causing the issue.

Koch let the council know that there is a meeting on Thursday over at the courthouse in Princeton. Cattani was going to go but is unsure if he will be able to make it now and wondered if anyone else would be willing to go and represent the Village of Ladd.

Margherio motioned/Thrasher second to adjourn the meeting

Ayes: Margherio, Martin, Nelson, Nicholson, Ruggerio, Thrasher - Motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm

Julie Koch, Deputy Village Clerk