



**Office of Jim Grafton**  
**City Administrator ▪ Public Works Director**

Date: 2-7-19

Re: Park, Building, and Grounds/Finance Meeting

Attendance: Mayor Carter, Josh Dyer, Rick Lohse, Tony Trulson, Kathy Hall, Bob Rockwell, Larry York, Caryn Unsicker, Jim Grafton

Location: City Hall 121 11<sup>th</sup> Street

The meeting was called to order at 6:12pm and it was noted a quorum was present for one agenda item.

The purpose of the meeting was discussion on proposed PPA agreements with Simpleray and Blue Sky Solar providers. Alderman Dyer explained that there is no action to take. He said that his goal was to bring solar to the city. The reason to move forward so quickly was to try to save as much money as possible. He noted an unnecessary amount of time was spent by Blue Sky to prepare a proposal. Alderman Dyer further explained steps that have been taken and the confusion on signing the various agreements. He noted that Blue Sky Solar has withdrawn their bid. The proposal from Simple Ray has not been discussed by committee. He asked if there were any questions by those present. Alderwoman Unsicker commented that she did not see that there was any intentional or ulterior motives. Alderman Dyer said there was a lack of transparency but it was gross mishandling (of Blue Sky). Alderman Trulson said that he did not question his integrity. He felt he needed more time to evaluate the roof for example and thanked Alderman Dyer for his dedication to this project. Same comment Alderman York. Alderman Lohse felt he was rushed into a decision although he is in full support of solar. He noted he would like to see solar on the new Public Works building. The Mayor said that he signed off on interconnection agreements with Blue Sky for the fire station and City Clerk's building one with Simple Ray for the police station. Alderman York said he preferred that the units be ground mount; he said that only one option was presented. Jim noted that the interconnection agreements that were signed were not submitted as part of any application.

**\*\*Attachment Alderman Dyer's statement he read into the record\*\***

There was no committee action and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

February 7, 2019

Thank you all for coming. There is no formal action to take, but I have a detailed status update on the solar projects the City has been pursuing.

Let me start by being clear about my goals. Since I have been on council, I have been working to bring more solar energy to Silvis in order to save money over time in a way that is beneficial to the city. That has always been my *primary* goal with solar. The benefits of solar being environmentally friendly, less dependent on fossil fuels, and moving this city forward in the 21st century, make this a great way to decrease the cost of our government while still providing excellent service. This was and remains my goal. Let me assure you that the only reason for moving quickly recently with the solar project was to help us meet a state deadline for funding that would save the City as much money as possible.

Due to a number of recent events, Blue Sky Solar has withdrawn their bid for the project. First, it came to their attention that Simple Ray and Ben Eastep have been working on a plan for solar for the PD for 6-8 months. This was known to city officials, but was not communicated to me, or any other Council members that I am aware of, or Blue Sky Solar, and created an unnecessary waste of time and resources for Blue Sky to create a proposal including the PD building. The lack of transparency is disconcerting. Next, on January 15th, this committee discussed signing interconnection agreements between Blue Sky Solar and the City of Silvis at the Fire Department, City Hall, and the Police Department. The mayor told us that if he got a consensus vote, he would sign them. He received the requested consensus vote, and although time was of the essence, he delayed signing. He told me he spent that time trying to contact Ben Eastep to hear what he had to say and then further arranged a sit down with MidAmerican Energy, and didn't invite Council Members or Blue Sky to the meeting. Not bringing all parties to the conversation table allows for misinformation rather than clarity. After talking to Mid-American Energy, the mayor signed an interconnection agreement for the Fire Department with Blue Sky Solar and unilaterally signed an interconnection with Simple Ray for the PD. For the first interconnection agreement, the Mayor said he needed a consensus vote, but the second he signed without a vote. This Committee did not discuss and approve signing the Simple Ray interconnection agreement until the following Tuesday, and we were unaware that it had been signed. Also at the last committee meeting, the mayor proceeded to question my integrity and that of Blue Sky Solar. He asked if I had been promised some sort of kickback for getting Silvis to do a project with Blue Sky. That would be illegal, and it was incredibly offensive to make completely unfounded suggestions that either of us would engage in such activity. My actions have been completely ethical and straightforward.

Blue Sky Solar has remained professional and stated that they would consider future projects, but given these recent events, they have withdrawn their bid for doing a solar project with us that would utilize the Illinois' Adjustable Block Program.

At this point, the city now has an interconnection agreement being processed with Simple Ray but has yet to receive a proposal for what we would pay for energy. Without this vital information we cannot possibly proceed in considering this option that has a February 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for application, and we certainly can't vote on a power purchase agreement when we haven't even seen a proposal. We have been shown the cost for the developer to get the array, but no indication of costs or considerations for the City. I have also seen a letter of intent asking us for a 3 year commitment to SimpleRay to not seek other bids or engage with other companies on any source of renewable energy, not just solar, for the PD. I do not know whether that has been signed. Several months ago, the council negotiated down a similar request for a 90 day commitment and only approved a 60 day commitment. I'm disappointed that the City of Silvis won't be able to receive cost savings from the Illinois Adjustable Block Program. At this point, we will need to wait for other proposals to provide full details and necessary information before considering them.