
Gustin Township Planning Meeting Minutes

Special Use Permit Application-Solar

July 13, 2026- 7Pm

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm

A Special Use Permit Application meeting was held at the Gustin Township Hall on Monday, July 13, 2026. Attendees included Neil Barlow-President, Noreen Mendyka- Board Member, Julie Powers- Board Member, John Schlicker- Board Member, Charlie Powers- Board Member, Hannah Brege-Board Member, and Pamela Fowler- Secretary. All the members were in attendance.

Adam Brege – Gustin Twp Zoning Administrator

We will hold public comment

Hold the Public Hearing

Pamela Fowler- Reading of submitted Letters from the following:

Jamie Smith-Gustin Resident

Gracie Rigby-Gustin Landowner

Robert Leonard- Harrisville Township Resident

7:04 Open to Public Comment

Louis Moncovicvas- Has there been an environmental study done

Catherine McMaster- Read letter, req not to approve permit-Current set back down to 50'

Dana Raymus- Gustin Township- 115 acres 2 miles from the site, do not want buzzing next to us

Greg Boosio- Gustin – Consider property taxes, No windmills, no data centers, already polluted, Run off from solar. Consider increasing the buffer.

Gretchen Whitfield- Harrisville Twp.-Will electric go down, drainage, what will topsoil be like, property values, solar panels are ugly.

Annette Berugaman- 50 ' from houses, will start over with nothing.

Fairman Bockhorst-Moved her with family, will be 5-mile stretch of solar, what about recycling, what are doing with the ground under them.

John McMaster- Gustin Twp. - Thank board, did not expect to be in the middle of this, Ask deny current ordinance, want children to come back to the community.

Jason Somers- Read letter on behalf of family, had appraisal done on their house, affects adjoining property owners

Nathan Walker- Fire Chief- What about fire suppression training.

Laurie Szczesny-Harrisville twp.- Wildlife study in California, animal deaths, water pollution, tax treatment, tax loss, utility scale, alternate payment in taxes,

Sam Megli- Written comment submitted, ask deny application, keep open and table, what about decommissioning.

Amy Mills- Gustin Twp. -Procunier Road, Landing Turtles, under review, Have a lot in area.

Sandy Vonfintel- Gustin- Fire Hazzard, responsible for training, which fire department has been talked to about evacuation routes from fire.

Ann Emington-Gustin Twp. - Leachate, heavy metals, run off into wildlife, decommissioning of equipment, Damns- still a liability, what provisions if leave behind, who is liable

Wayne Whitten- Harrisville twp. - against solar, why didn't do the pledge of allegiance.

Daniel Brewer-Gustin Twp. - Do not want on farmland, need it to feed our animals and us, fire risk, special training,

Wlaina Dunmas-Haynes Twp.- Family farm, offers from Consumers Energy, affects whole county, contract, reserve right to remove topsoil, spray vegetation, we said no, did not want to do that to the neighbors.

Sandy Hartman-when do we get answers

Adam Brege- Consumers is here to do a presentation after public comment

John Whitfield-after 25-30 years nobody will be able to buy farmland

Kaitlyn Dellar- Not going to have any farmland left.

John Throop-Mikado Twp. - Lincoln ball diamond is gone, let state be the bad guys, already have mercury contamination from Viking

Joshua Whitten-Where is the power going, will it service the local community, Impact value of farmland, 6-20% decrease

Beliel Michael- impressive turnout, monies gen

Ken Vonfintel-Gustin- What about the panels and their health effects? Can you get cancer with solar panels and get respiratory problems?

Harold Bean-Cruzen Rd. - I don't mind the solar panels. How fragile is the electrical grid and how will this affect the electrical grid?

Tom Loos- Gustin Twp.- Asking panel to be transparent. You are our voice. Only people that can stop this.

Melissa Upper- Many unknowns. There's a lack of transparency. Did not get a letter. Scary. Does board get kickbacks? What about serious fire training? For battery storage pollution. Hard time getting youth to come back Solar Not the answer.

Charlene Allers- Why were there not signs placed out for the project? Done sneakily. Good to have the information outside the county.

George Tait-Gustin- Why doesn't? The state or government put solar on their property.

Annette Berugaman-Gustin Twp- Panels have poisoning

Laurie Sesny-Pa233- projects diminish farmland

Elaina Dunmus- Solar. Interesting to explore. Raised panels, animals underneath, no spray Other models require better models.

*8:00 pm-Presentation

Joe Lawson- Consumers Energy- Will give presentation, should answer some questions

Pete Wykoff- Consumers Energy- with them for two years

- Project summary-site location-& layout- how we meet ordinance
- Proposed schedule & overview
- Success through partnership – fairgrounds for staging crews- leave better than we found it
- Incident response team- damns- crew to mitigate flooding
- Partners in community- want to do what's right
- Mobile transformers for hospital- ahead of flood waters

Generation assets- solar, wind, natural gas

Why renewables-

- cost
- customer demand
- PA233/ PA235

No battery for this project

Nuclear – out of range

Ranger Power – Permit approved for the larger part of this project

Project Name – Gustin Solar- 215 MW

- Bifacial panels- still effective in winter
- Single panel trackers
- Eliminate any variance requests- meet all ordinance requirements
- Current Application in addition to previous application approved
- Purchased from Ranger Power
- 200ft setbacks

- Acquisition process- not adding additional acreage

What is in the solar panels

- Capsulant
- Solar cells
- Backplate
- Completely sealed in
- Nothing in contact with inside of panels
- Impacts from hail- stresses- will not shatter
- Nonhazardous
- No heavy metals
- Lead only in solder
- No PFAS
- No forever chemicals
- Studies done- information online
- Made in TX
- Can be reused at end of 30-year life- still 85% efficient
- Do not landfill these
- Study by EPRI – Electric Power Research Institute
- Met checklist-
 - Meet all setbacks-200 ft
 - Height-15ft
 - Screened year round
 - Noy exceed 45 decibels

Decommissioning- will provide Bond

6" fabric fence- allow critters to get through- Deer still get through

Study done-NFWS

Do not kill off ground cover

Public right of ways

Hired locally to cut

Slides showing progression of planting- McConnell rd

Spring planting- Add coniferous trees

Heat produced from panels same as roof tops

Will meet with Fire Chiefs- no special trainings

Temporary lighting – will not be permanent

Substation panels run back to McConnell rd.- power gets sent out where needed

Met with Alcona County Road Commission

- Consumers will be fully responsible for any damage or repairs from project
- Silt fence during project

Will provide an emergency response plan and Emergency Contact List

Federal Compliance- if emergency, no delay, can enter

Will post surety Bond- \$29.36 million

Detects Tornado- and winds – will turn accordingly

Renewals Ready EGLE grant eligible- \$5,500 per mega watt- No requirement on how dollars are spent

PILT- goes to taxing authority

Removing blight buildings on some properties

Consumers has a P.O. Box/email for contacting

- Gustinsolar@consumersenergy.com

Project to start in the fall of 2026 and continue to 2028

Erica Rice- the way her house is positioned, on a hill, L shape- no one approached us about project

Project will be surrounded- Screening can be moved forward

Grasses non-invasive-plant with Douglas firs-spread by roots only-Consumers will do the maintenance

Grasses come from Maple River Farms- they have website to look at

Gustin had outside review/NEMCOG- Denise Kline- prepare Finding of Fact

*9:02 pm

Tim Gulden- Township Attorney- read the applicable site plan and special land use standards and the draft possible findings of fact set forth in special Land Use Report #1-2026.

Municipal Clients-NEMCOG- Helpful for Planning Commission

Standard in ordinance

Reviewed all standards/Draft/Up to Planning Commission

General Findings Perfunctory/ Agricultural

*Julie Powers- would like to add an F- Work with each neighboring properties to cover the screening issue-public Hearings

Board- Table it- possibility

3 choices- Motion to approve, Motion to deny, Motion to approve based on the findings of fact with conditions- A thru E.

Motion to carry it made by John Schlicker- All Board Members answer in the affirmative- think about community input.

Motion Carries @ 10:16 pm

Next meeting to be scheduled and noticed in Alcona Review

*Laurie Sensy- clarify- different use of the word screening- Impact Study – California- Confusion of bats and birds

*John Whitfield- What about kids getting in- can they get hurt- able to hunt wetland

Public comment done

Meeting concluded at 10:27 pm

Julie Powers- Motion Made to approve with possible condition below- with added condition F- Work with each neighboring properties to cover the screening issue-public Hearings

Motion to approve the proposed Gustin Solar Energy Center in Gustin Townships based on the findings of fact contained in special Land Use Report #1-2026. With the following conditions

Possible conditions:

A. The estimated cost of decommissioning shall be reviewed by the Township every five years.

b. If battery storage is proposed at the facility, a new special land use shall be required.

c. this approve approval is based on the incumbents of minimum public costs to local municipalities providing emergency services if specialized firefighting or other emergency equipment and or training is found to be This approve approval is based on the incumbents of minimum public costs to local municipalities providing emergency services if specialized firefighting or other emergency equipment and or training is found to be necessary for the solar facility, Consumers Energy shall be required to provide funding for set equipment and or training to the applicable local agencies. Consumers Energy shall work with the local emergency services providers to file an emergency response plan

d. Consumers Energy shall enter into an agreement with the Alcona County Road Commission to cover any damage to roads during the construction of the solar facility.

e. A post construction sound survey shall be required. Documentation of sound pressure level measurements shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator by a third party qualified professional selected by the Planning Commission at the expense of the commercial solar energy system owner within six months of the commencement of the operation of the project. A post-construction sound survey shall be required. Documentation of sound pressure level measurements shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator by a third party qualified professional selected by the Planning Commission at the expense of the commercial solar energy system owner within six months of the commencement of the operation of the project. The survey. The survey. Will be designed to verify compliance. Will be

designed to verify compliance. With sound standards applicable to this ordinance. With sound standards applicable to this ordinance. with sound standards applicable to this ordinance

f. Work with each neighboring properties to cover the screening issue-public Hearings

Motion second- by Charlie Powers

John Schlicker Motion to Table the Open Motion to Approve- Second by Noreen Mendyka

Adjournment

Next meeting to be announced and noticed in the local paper and on the Gustin Township website

Secretary

Date of approval