

RECEIVED

Thursday, October 20, 2016

Dr. Talina Matthews
Director Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 615
Frankfort KY 40602

OCT 25 2016

Public Service
Commission

PSC Case # 2016-00274,
LG&E / KU Voluntary Solar Plant
Conner Station Road
Shelby County KY

Dear Dr. Matthews:

In early August the residents in my neighborhood received a letter from Mr. David Huff, Director of Customer Energy at LG&E/KU, inviting us to a "neighborhood meeting" to inform us of their intent to build a solar power electrical generating plant on a 35-acre site located directly across the street from the entrance to our development. The site is at the south-east corner of Conner Station Road immediately north of I-64. The facility, when complete, would contain approximately twelve thousand solar panels which will be about seven to nine feet off the ground. It's our understanding the site will be surrounded by a six-foot chain link fence, and staggered evergreen trees.

Being concerned about maintaining the rural setting of our neighborhood and our property values, approximately seventeen of our neighbors attended the August 23rd meeting. The representatives of the power company could not have been nicer, listened to our concerns, and to some extent, other than agreeing to building somewhere else, agreed to consider some of our suggestions regarding screening etc.

We asked Mr. Huff why they picked this particular site which is adjacent to a rural upper end residential area vs picking a site in an industrial area or in the middle of open farm land. His answer was simple and straightforward. The subject property was for sale, the location is sort of centered between the KU and LG&E market areas, and most importantly it has good **visibility from an interstate**.

Because the solar plant will impact the natural beauty and rural character of the neighborhood and the property values, I was very surprised **only two** of the ninety or so families who live on Conner Station Road south I-64, most of which must pass the proposed solar plant site daily, were present at neighborhood meeting. I emailed Jim Holderman, Manager of Real Estate for LG&E / KU on August 25th asking who was invited, his response follows.

Dear Mr. Karem –

Thank you for contacting us with your questions. As far as the meeting this past Tuesday, I was not able to attend, but we are glad that you took to time to come learn more about the project. For projects similar to this, we notify the local elected officials ahead of anyone, we then notify the adjoining property owners, **as well as anyone whom we believe would be most impacted by the construction of a project**. For the Solar Share Project, we mailed letters to 20 property owners, which included two owners south of I-

64. Although our proposed use of the property as a generation facility is exempt from zoning, we have much respect for the zoning regulations, and with that we notified adjoining owners. We anticipated others learning about the project through word of mouth discussions with family and friends, as well as the media outlets

I think its little odd (sneaky, underhanded, sly, devious, shifty) that LG&E contacted less than 20% of the people who will be affected by the project and also is sort of odd that the one and only "Public Notice", placed in the Shelby County newspapers was published on August 24th, the day after the neighborhood meeting. Basically they eliminated the input and questions from ninety or so families whose property will be impacted. My impression from the meeting is they didn't look at many sites, or, that they really do not care about the impact to our neighborhood.

A few days after the neighborhood meeting I sent a letter describing the proposed facility to everyone living south of I-64, this was approximately 96 homes. I received an incredible amount of negative feedback, many expressed shock because they hadn't heard about it. I emailed David Huff on September 30th suggesting they might have a second neighborhood meeting to help fill everyone in. Included in the same email I asked for details relating to construction and screening. I was wondering if any of the screening ideas discussed in the neighborhood meeting had been incorporated into their plans. In his response on October 3rd, Mr. Huff denied the request for a second neighborhood meeting and briefly described the site improvements. Very little, if any of the additional screening discussed at the meeting was included, actually his written description contained less screening. Mr. Huff did not mention the addition of electric transmission lines and related buildings to service the solar plant.

I've read more about Solar Plants in the last month or so than I ever anticipated. The more I read the more I'm confused about LG&E's site selection and economic decisions. A very small part of what I've read is shown below.

- Because a Solar Farm is a Solar Plant then there are studies that show an industrial site in residential areas can affect property values.
- Solar power is very expensive, is not cost efficient and without government assistance would rarely be built.
- Renewables, while gaining traction, have their drawbacks. Solar panels only generate their peak electricity when the sun is out and their output can fluctuate wildly, which LG&E and KU already have observed at its E.W. Brown solar array. Solar power output also fluctuates with the seasons. Less daylight in the winter means less power generation. **Kentucky's potential for large-scale solar power generation is limited.**
- If you were investing a million dollars of your money in a piece of property and you had two choices to make: one was beside a corn field and one was beside a solar farm, which one would you choose? If you automatically would choose the one that was not beside the solar farm, then you would probably have to agree that it is going to impact the value of that property.
- Because they are generally large facilities with numerous highly geometric and sometimes highly reflective surfaces, solar energy facilities may create visual impacts; however, being visible is not necessarily the same as being intrusive. Aesthetic issues

are by their nature highly subjective. Proper siting decisions can help to avoid aesthetic impacts to the landscape.

- There were lots of articles on the environmental impacts, I believe the conclusion is because solar is new, no one really knows the long term consequences.

If the project goes forward, and if they haven't already done so, I think it is very important, that LG&E/KU be required to file testimony concerning potential **property value impacts** as a result of the solar plant, and to supply "**detailed**" mitigation measures for the proposed facility. There should also be some form of environmental impact study.

Quite frankly, I guess none of the above makes much difference. I realize its practically impossible for a group of ordinary citizens to compete financially or otherwise with LG&E, especially considering the powers given the utility companies through state statutes. **Its blatantly evident this project location was chosen for nothing more than enhancing the image of LG&E and with little or no regard to surrounding property values.** What's even more disappointing, LG&E can create the same amount of solar energy, on an interstate or a non- interstate location in Shelby County, on one of the many available sites more suited to industrial use, and can do so without devaluating the surrounding property.

I'm certainly not smart enough to comprehend or understand the statute as it relates to the vast authority given to utility companies, however it makes me wonder if the intent of those laws are to allow the utility to be exempt from zoning for a **voluntary project**, especially one which will serve only five hundred homes, just for the purpose of **enhancing their image.**

To conclude, all of us are interested in alternative energy sources, however we are **strongly opposed** to the location selected. There are several commercial and industrial sites available within a few miles of this location, all with equal or better I-64 visibility, including an interstate location which is already owned by the commonwealth which has been offered by the Shelby County Judge Executive. None of the alternative sites would impact the property values or visual impacts of any residential areas.

Your help on this matter would be greatly appreciated. This is a very important issue to me and our neighbors and I hope the PSC can help persuade LGE/KU to choose an industrial location for this project.

Sincerely,



Jerry Karem
1015 Wooded Lake Drive
Simpsonville, KY 40067

██████████
jerry@jerrykarem.com