

**INFORMAL MEETING OF AUGUST 2, 2021**

Informal Meeting of the City Council was held in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall, on Monday evening, August 2, 2021.

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Kazinskas called the meeting to order at 6:45 o'clock p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Councillors present were President Elizabeth Kazinskas and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Ronald Cormier, Aleksander Dernalowicz, Karen Hardern, Judy Mack, George Tyros, and James Walsh. Councillor Scott Joseph Graves was absent.

President Kazinskas announced that there is an informal meeting to discuss item #10484, A Measure Authorizing a Solar Energy PILOT Agreement with BCC Solar Energy Advantage. She wanted to clarify that the solar field is located on Mill Street and that this item was referred to the Committee of the Whole at the July 6th Council Meeting. Mayor Nicholson, Planning Director Trevor Beauregard and Assistant Director of Community Development Lyndsy Butler were also present to answer any questions.

Mayor Nicholson said that BCC Solar Advantage currently has a solar array on Mill Street that they leased the land from the Gardener Redevelopment Authority. Under the way that the statutes are written is a PILOT is for the excise tax on the panels themselves not on the real estate underneath the panels. It's the personal property tax not the real estate tax. BCC Solar Advantage is looking at purchasing the land from the Gardner Redevelopment Authority which would then subject the land to tax payments, which they are, which the land is currently tax exempt. What BCC Solar Advantage is looking at doing is, in the most basic terms, is make it so that the payments that we are currently receiving from BCC Solar Energy remain pretty much equivalent to what they've been paying as far as their personal property pilot programs but that it's the pilot for the panels and the real estate tax together now equal that amount that we've been paying. This is typical that you see different places across the state in which a publicly owned land that has a solar field on top of it does become privately owned. After that, this is a typical arrangement that gets made after because the company is now subject to taxation for the land on top of the property that's on the land. For those who may not be familiar a PILOT is payment in lieu of taxes that's what the acronym is where an item is tax exempt like solar panels are for personal property taxes. We still receive payment through this area of the statute that allows the city to receive this type of payment. Mr. Unger, who was here at the previous meeting did have a family issue come up so he was unable to be here this evening but he did ask that Director Beauregard and I assist if there are any questions.



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Councillor James Walsh had a question regarding the expiration of the current lease and for how long. He also wanted to know what the purchase price for the land.

Director Beauregard responded that the current lease is a ten year lease and that there was two years left. The current purchase price offer is \$210,000.00.

President Kazinskas asked if there were any further questions or comments on the topic. No one spoke.

The Informal Meeting concluded at 6:56 p.m.

Accepted by the City Council: October 18, 2021