

Sayers, Margery

From: Baker, Kevin
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 4:07 PM
To: Sayers, Margery
Subject: FW: CR-140 & CR-141- Follow Up

For Related Documents under CR140 + 141.

From: John Miller <john.miller@chaberton.com>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 3:42 PM
To: Walsh, Elizabeth <ewalsh@howardcountymd.gov>
Cc: Stefano Ratti <Stefano@chaberton.com>
Subject: CR-140 & CR-141- Follow Up

Dear Council Member Walsh,

Thank you for the consideration you have given CR 140-2021 and CR 141-2021, and the overall PILOT model for solar energy facilities. Prior to this evening's meeting, we would like to provide a few additional thoughts.

- Both the State of Maryland and Howard County have identified the importance of renewable energy to combat climate change, modernize the energy infrastructure, and improve air quality. Support for the PILOT is direct support for the environmental benefits these projects provide.
- We have spoken to several residents & organizations located in Howard County who have expressed their support in promoting renewable energy, specifically solar, in the County, and would like to see solar projects be successful.
- Howard County has committed to being a Bee-City by promoting pollinators in the County. Specifically, Howard County has set an objective to increase pollinator habitat on public and private land. If granted the PILOT, we will commit to coordinating with the County to include our solar area (approximately 24 acres), to qualify those acres under the Bee City Program, thus allowing Howard County to significantly exceed its goals under the Program. Furthermore, the location of the solar projects being directly adjacent to the agricultural field of our property owner, as well as several other adjacent agricultural properties, mean our pollinator habitat will be placed in a crucial location to provide gains in agricultural production. By supporting CR 140 and CR-141, and supporting solar development in general, the Council will be directly lending its support to increasing pollinator habitat in the County and the goals of the Bee City program.
- We would also like to note the following, with respect to some of the questions that have previously been raised:
 - *On the question of company financials.* As project financials show, solar energy development is not a highly profitable business, especially compared to retail or technology companies. Indeed, many solar companies are benefit corporations, non-profits, or operate with a component of environmental/social benefit built-in. Solar developers also put a significant amount of capital into projects that, for various reasons, do not come to fruition. This aspect is not even captured at the level of the project financials.
 - *On the question of why PILOT discussions occur at a late stage in the development process.* We must sign offtake contracts while projects get developed, otherwise, if we did everything in series, it would take too much time to get a project through development and into operations. Projects sometimes fail due to a multitude of potential reasons, and thus early-stage projects should not be put in front of the County too early, or the council would risk spending a lot of time on projects that are unsure to move forward. Also, we would have liked to get in front of the County several months earlier, but we were postponed several times to be presented with other projects and through this standard PILOT contract.

- *On the question of why we assumed that the PILOT would be in place in the project financials. We based our business case assumptions upon the fact that Howard County previously provided a tax abatement to the early phases of the Nixon Farms solar project, in 2014 (CR 90-2014), and again approved in 2018 (CR 11-2018).*

We look forward to working with the Council and delivering a solar project which brings all the benefits outlined above.

John Lennon Miller



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