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Solar Advisory Group questions commissioners on ordinance language

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HUNTINGTON
During a Solar Advisory Group update to Huntington County Commissioners Monday, the commissioners refused to change language in the solar ordinance until further notice because the current county code only addresses solar.

Solar Energy Systems Advisory Group member George Bachnivsky asked the commissioners if they would consider adding language about other energy producing sources to the ordinance, because the current ordinance doesn't address those.

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ORDINANCE

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Commissioner Rob Miller said the board couldn't approve the measure since the ordinance only pertains to solar.

A new preliminary ordinance is expected for review by the county commissioner's attorney.

The commissioners placed a moratorium on solar projects in early August to explore options on the issue and consider whether a new ordinance is necessary. Later that month, the commissioners formed a solar

advisory group comprised of two appointed members in favor of solar, two not in favor and a mediator.

The commissioners chose to address the issue because three solar farms in the county are involved, and residents rallied at county meetings in large numbers for and against solar energy production.

A public meeting will be planned in the future. Commissioners have said they want that meeting to be at a venue other than the courthouse, so everyone who attends will be able to be in the same room. In the past interested persons have

been in hallways, G.A.R. Room or the commissioner's office two watch a live feed.

"I want to keep everybody together as a whole," said Stoffel.

In a related matter, Economic Development Executive Director Mark Wickersham talked about the county's electrical grid. Three energy companies feed into or supply energy to the county: AEP Indiana & Michigan Power, Duke Energy, and Heartland REMC. One concern raised about the issue in the past is exporting, importing or retaining the energy created.