

## MINUTES

### BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Special Board Meeting  
Benton County Administration Building  
Commissioners' Hearing Room  
7122 W. Okanogan Place, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, #E303  
Kennewick, WA  
Friday, February 17, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

*Meeting provided in-person, by Video Live-Broadcast and Telephonically via/WebEx*

**Present:** Chairman Will McKay  
Commissioner Jerome Delvin  
Commissioner Michael Alvarez  
County Administrator Jerrod MacPherson  
Clerk of the Board Marilu Flores

**Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting:** Sustainable Development Manager Adam Fyall, Robert Heard, IT

#### **Board Discussion with Potential Appointee and Possible Approval of an Appointment of Benton County Representative to the Energy Facility Site Evacuation Council for the Hop Hill Solar Project, File No. EFSEC Docket No. EF-220356**

Greg Wendt, Director of Community Development, indicated that the Board of Benton County Commissioners received notice from the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) regarding the application for site certification from BrightNight, LLC for the Hop Hill Solar Project located in unincorporated Benton County. Mr. Wendt said that Hop Hill is a very large project with a siting area of approximately 11,179 acres with the facility located approximately 11 miles north of the City of Prosser and 7 miles east of the State Route (SR) 241 and SR 82 interchange and the City of Sunnyside. He further indicated that pursuant to RCW 80.50, Benton County is allowed to appoint one voting member to the EFSEC council for this project. The appointment deadline is to be filled by February 17, 2023; therefore, it was necessary to convene for a special board meeting for the purpose of possibly appointing a Benton County representative. Mr. Wentz indicated that Mr. Paul Krupin of Kennewick has shown an interest in serving on the council for the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Krupin is active in the community, is a retired physical scientist, a former attorney with 45 years of experience in government and industry and is currently active with the Tri-Cities Care organization.

Mr. Wentz showed PowerPoint presentation displaying the exact location and indicated that on February 23, 2023, EFSEC was having a meeting at Three Rivers Convention Center in

Kennewick and further stated that the Planning Department would be present as well as putting material together for the meeting.

Mr. Wentz introduced Mr. Paul Krupin and asked the Board whether they had any questions.

Commissioner Delvin asked whether Mr. Krupin was familiar with the area and indicated that he feels that Benton County has been a dumping ground for renewables and asked his feelings on renewables. Mr. Krupin indicated that he was familiar with the area and indicated that he has analyzed and is concerned with the implications of this project but was willing to learn more of land use and its changes. He further stated that it's important to see what benefits there are and has questions on power use. Also of a concern to him was the impact on landowners and property values. He is eager to learn what the options are, willing to do his studies and get involved.

Commissioner Alvarez appreciated the analytical approach looking at the short, mid and long term ranges taking into consideration the legal ramifications involved.

Commissioner McKay appreciated Mr. Krupin stepping up and has been impressed with his other work relating to wind farm projects. Mr. McKay also appreciated his interest in attempting to secure agricultural land and finding options for different locations. Mr. Krupin indicated that these are the types of questions needed to be asked in trying to find the purpose and EFSEC's lack of alternatives. Mr. Krupin indicated that trying to stop the project will be a challenge due to the tremendous push being done with EFSEC actively doing processes to bypass the County.

Mr. Krupin asked whether it was feasible for the Board to pass an ordinance. Mr. Wendt said they have looked at that in the past but due to the Growth Management Act currently in place, that is not possible at this time until some changes are made; then the county may have some flexibility to pass an ordinance.

Mr. Krupin asked what the role was for this appointment. Commissioner Delvin indicated that he has watched him testify and would like him making rational decisions representing the best interests of the County and making sure they are following the process.

Commissioner Alvarez would like Benton County having a voice and is pleased with Mr. Krupin's background knowing Benton County will be well represented.

Commissioner McKay mentioned having this matter coming before the Board regularly for updates.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Delvin moved to approve the Resolution appointing Paul Krupin as its designee to serve as a voting member to the EFSEC Council for the proposed Hop Hill Solar Project. Commissioner Alvarez seconded and upon vote, motion carried.

**Resolution:**

2023-168      Appointment of Paul Krupin as Benton County Designee Serving as a Voting Member to the EFSEC Council for the Proposed Hop Hill Solar Project

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:24 a.m.

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Clerk of the Board

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Chairman