

MINUTES OF THE BRADFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Bradford County Commissioners was called to order by Chairman Daryl Miller at 10:00 am.

VISITOR REMARKS CONCERNING AGENDA

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

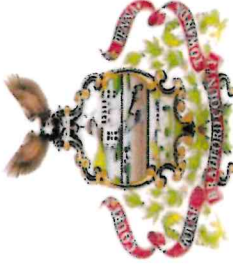
A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to correcting the minutes of December 28, 2023, to read: Approve the transfer of Tori Spencer, County Caseworker 2, Intellectual Disabilities from probationary to regular status as per the recommendation of Debra Sharp, Director of Children and Youth Services effective December 16, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve the Minutes of January 2, 2024.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion was made by Commissioner Gates, seconded by Commissioner McLinko, all voted “aye” to approve a Proclamation declaring January 11, 2024, as Law Enforcement Appreciation Day in Bradford County.

Daryl L. Miller, Chairman
Doug McLinko, Vice Chairman
Zachary R. Gates, Commissioner



Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk
Jonathan Foster, Solicitor

Bradford County Commissioners Office

Law Enforcement Appreciation Day in Bradford County

WHEREAS, the safety and well-being of all citizens is the first priority and highest calling of Bradford County; and

WHEREAS, we are honored to stand by Bradford County’s dedicated law enforcement professionals who, day after day, safeguard our families and communities, enforce the rule of law, and respond in times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, the mission of law enforcement requires the ability to act courageously and quickly; to make the right call in the face of imminent danger; to run toward danger instead of away; and to act with empathy and compassion as one serves others in their time of greatest need; and

WHEREAS, it is with immense gratitude that we set apart a day to reflect on and celebrate the selfless service and immeasurable contributions our law enforcement personnel make every day to ensure every citizen is safe in their home, workplace, and community; and

WHEREAS, we stand by our everyday heroes, including Bradford County’s local Police forces, the Pennsylvania State Troopers, Bradford County’s Sheriffs Department, Probation and Parole officers, and Correctional Officers, and lend our wholehearted support to them as they continue to give of themselves for the benefit of all.

NOW THEREFORE, We, the Bradford County Commissioners do hereby declare January 11, 2024, as Law Enforcement Appreciation Day in Bradford County.

ATTEST:

Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk

Bradford County Commissioners

301 Main Street Towanda PA 16848 (570) 265-1727 Fax (570) 265-1729
www.bradfordcountypa.org

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to award HUNT Engineers, the request for Professional Services for the Bradford County Grants office for the fiscal years 2024-2026.

A CONTINUATION OF THE MINUTES THURSDAY JANUARY 11, 2024

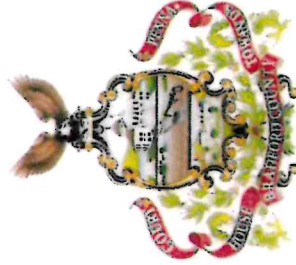
A motion was made by Commissioner Gates, seconded by Commissioner McLinko, all voted “aye” to approve the renewal of Eco-Testing Services, LLC for the Lead & Radon Contract for Bradford County Housing Rehab.

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve the 2024 Pandemic Response Plan for Bradford County.

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to authorize the Chief Clerk to advertise an RFP seeking consultant services to complete an update to the Bradford County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve Resolution 2024-05 Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption for Non-War Time Veterans and Surviving Spouses.

Daryl L. Miller, Chairman
Doug McLinko, Vice Chairman
Zachary R. Gates, Commissioner



Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk
Jonathan Foster, Solicitor

Bradford County Commissioners Office

**Resolution 2024-05
Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption for Non-War Time Veterans and Surviving Spouses**




WHEREAS, Bradford County currently provides under Pennsylvania law, the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) administers the Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption program for any honorably discharged Veteran who is 100% disabled; and

WHEREAS, The Veteran must have a 100% permanent service-connected disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, have served during a period of “war” established by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, own their property, and occupy it as their principal dwelling, and meet financial eligibility guidelines established by the State Veterans Commission. Pennsylvania County Code Title 51 Chapter 89. and;

WHEREAS, if a service member has met all criteria, but does not meet the wartime service established by the Department of Veterans Affairs; the department does not allow the service member or the surviving spouse to qualify for Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption, and;

WHEREAS, Bradford County wishes to extend the Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption process to include Non-War time active-duty service members, and their surviving spouse, and;

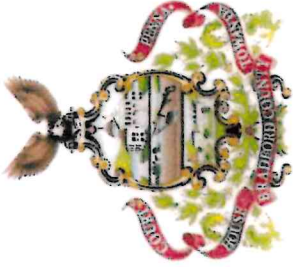
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Bradford County is committed to supporting the thousands of Veterans and their dependents in our County and shall extend the Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption as described above to Non-War time active-duty service members and their surviving spouses.




Bradford County Commissioners

Attest: 
Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve Resolution 2024-06 Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption for Veterans who share deed rights with other parties.

Daryl L. Miller, Chairman
Doug McLinko, Vice Chairman
Zachary R. Gates, Commissioner



Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk
Jonathan Foster, Solicitor

Bradford County Commissioners Office

**Resolution 2024-06
Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption for Veterans who share deed rights with other parties**

WHEREAS, Bradford County currently provides under Pennsylvania law, the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) administers the Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption program for any honorably discharged Veteran who is 100% disabled, and

WHEREAS, The Veteran must have a 100% permanent service-connected disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, own their property, and occupy it as their principal dwelling, and meet financial eligibility guidelines established by the State Veterans Commission, Pennsylvania County Code Title 51 Chapter 89., and;

WHEREAS, if a service member has met all criteria, but is in a deed in which there are other or multiple parties, the qualified Veteran will be ineligible for the tract of the deed which is in their name.

WHEREAS, Bradford County wishes to extend the Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption process to include Veterans who meet the criteria established, yet are members of a multiple-person deeded property.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Bradford County is committed to supporting the thousands of Veterans and their dependents in our County and shall extend the Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption as described above to Veterans of a multiple deeded property and extend the program to the tract deeded to them.



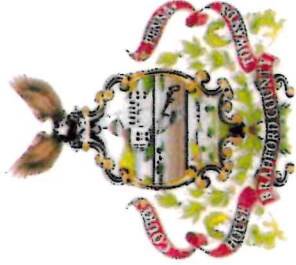
Zachary R. Gates
Bradford County Commissioners

Attest: 
Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk

301 Main Street Towanda PA 18848 (570) 265-1727 Fax (570) 265-1729
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A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve Resolution 2024-07 Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Deceased Veterans That Ultimately Died from Their Service-Connected Disability but Were Not “Permanent Service-Connection”.

Daryl L. Miller, Chairman
Doug McLinko, Vice Chairman
Zachary R. Gates, Commissioner



Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk
Jonathan Foster, Solicitor

Bradford County Commissioners Office

**Resolution 2024-07
Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption For Surviving Spouses Of Deceased Veterans That
Ultimately Died From Their Service-Connected Disability, But Were Not “Permanent
Service-Connection”**


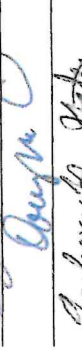

WHEREAS, Bradford County currently provides under Pennsylvania law, the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) administers the Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption program for any honorably discharged Veteran who is 100% disabled; and


WHEREAS, The Veteran must have a 100% permanent service-connected disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, own their property, and occupy it as their principal dwelling, and meet financial eligibility guidelines established by the State Veterans Commission. Pennsylvania County Code Title 51 Chapter 89., and;

WHEREAS, if a service member has met all criteria, but does not meet 100% permanent service-connected disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and has ultimately died from their service-connected disability(ies) does not allow the surviving spouse to qualify for Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption, and;

WHEREAS, Bradford County wishes to extend the Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption process to include the surviving spouses of Veterans of all eras that have ultimately died from their service-connected disability(ies), and;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Bradford County is committed to supporting the thousands of Veterans and their dependents in our County and shall extend the Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption, as described above, to surviving spouses of Veterans of any era that have ultimately died from their service-connected disability(ies).




Bradford County Commissioners

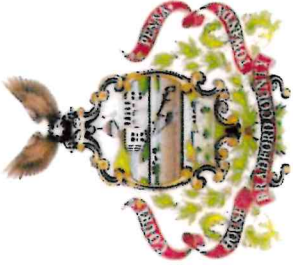
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A CONTINUATION OF THE MINUTES THURSDAY JANUARY 11, 2024

A motion was made by Commissioner Gates, seconded by Commissioner McLinko, all voted “aye” to approve Resolution 2024-08, Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Service Members Killed in Action or the Line of Duty

Daryl L. Miller, Chairman
Doug McLinko, Vice Chairman
Zachary R. Gates, Commissioner



Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk
Jonathan Foster, Solicitor

Bradford County Commissioners Office

**Resolution 2024-08
Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Service Members Killed in
Action or in the Line of Duty**

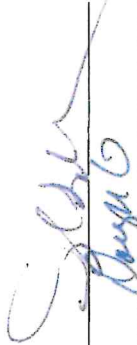
WHEREAS, Bradford County currently provides under Pennsylvania law, the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) administers the Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption program for any honorably discharged Veteran who is 100% disabled; and

WHEREAS, The Veteran must have a 100% permanent service-connected disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, own their property, and occupy it as their principal dwelling, and meet financial eligibility guidelines established by the State Veterans Commission. Pennsylvania County Code Title 51 Chapter 89., and;

WHEREAS, if a Service Member is killed in action during a war or killed in the line of duty while on active duty during any period of any service, the state legislature does not allow for the surviving spouse to qualify for real estate tax exemption; and

WHEREAS, Bradford County wishes to extend the real estate tax exemption process to include surviving spouses of active-duty service members, including those in the Reserves and the National Guard killed in action or in the line of duty; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Bradford County is committed to supporting the thousands of Veterans and their dependents in our County and shall extend the Real Estate Tax Exemption, as described above, to surviving spouses of Service members killed in the line of duty during any period of service.


Jonathan R. Gates
Bradford County Commissioners

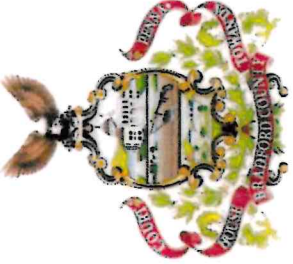
Attest: 
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A CONTINUATION OF THE MINUTES THURSDAY JANUARY 11, 2024

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve Resolution 2024-09 for a donation to LeRaysville Borough for sidewalk and ramp improvements to the municipal building in the amount of \$12,700.00.

Daryl L. Miller, Chairman
Doug McLinko, Vice Chairman
John M Sullivan, Commissioner



Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk
Jonathan Foster, Solicitor

Bradford County Commissioners Office

RESOLUTION 2024-09

**A RESOLUTION TO ALLOCATE A DONATION FOR
LERAYSVILLE BOROUGH**

WHEREAS, the Bradford County Commissioners recognize the importance of handicap accessibility to the communities in Bradford County, and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 2314(g) of Act 13, money can be distributed for the delivery of community outreach, and

NOW THEREFORE, we, the Commissioners of Bradford County, Pennsylvania do hereby resolve that effective this 11th day of January 2024 a donation in the amount of \$12,700.00 will be distributed to Leraysville Borough in efforts to do sidewalk and ramp improvements at the borough office; and

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have set our hand and seal this 11th day of January 2024.

ATTEST:

Bradford County Commissioners

Michelle L. Shedden, Chief Clerk

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A motion was made by Commissioner Gates, seconded by Commissioner McLinko, all voted “aye” to approve the reappointment of the following for a 3-year term to the Drug and Alcohol Planning Council of Bradford & Sullivan Counties effective January 4, 2024.

Andrea Button
Peter Quattrini

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve the Commercial Real Estate Lease between Bradford County Human Services Agency and the County of Sullivan for the space at the Mattern Building Suite #4.

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve an agreement between Bradford County and McGee and Family for cleaning services at the Bradford County Airport effective January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024.

A CONTINUATION OF THE MINUTES THURSDAY JANUARY 11, 2024

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve agreement between Bradford County and AMP Global Strategies for professional services in the amount of \$283,941.36 effective January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve the transfer of Kaitlin Strope from FT Clerk Typist 2 to Court Liaison, per the recommendation of Warden Quattrini, effective January 2, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve the hire of Rhea N Blair as FT County Caseworker 1, Intellectual Disabilities per recommendation of Mayme Carter, Human Services Director, effective January 8, 2024.

A motion was made to table by Commissioner Gates, seconded by Commissioner McLinko, all voted “aye” to tabling the hire of Heather Briggs as full-time Chief Deputy/Office Manager, per the recommendation of Tammy Hart, Prothonotary, effective January 15, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to approve the hire of Jennifer Kingsley, PTC Administrative Clerk 2, as per the recommendation of Patrick Beirne, Public Defender, effective January 3, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gates, seconded by Commissioner McLinko, all voted “aye” to approve the transfer of Jennifer Kingsley, from PTC Administrative Clerk 2, to full-time Admin Assistant 2, per the recommendation of Patrick Beirne, Public Defender, effective January 15, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gates, seconded by Commissioner McLinko, all voted “aye” to approve the transfer of Connie Boyd from full-time Administrative Clerk 2, to full-time Account Clerk 3, as per the recommendation of Dan Thorp, Fiscal Director, effective January 22, 2024.

OTHER

Richard D. Sheetz, Esquire has been appointed in response to a court order by the Court of Common Pleas to the position of Hearing Officer/Hearing Master for the Court of Common Pleas of Bradford County effective January 2, 2024.

Matthew Schwenk has been hired in response to a court order by the Court of Common Pleas to full-time Probation officer per the recommendation of Justin Popovich, Chief Probation Officer, effective January 9, 2024.

Kimberly Wilks has been hired in response to a court order by the Court of Common Pleas as full-time Admin Clerk 3, per the recommendation of Vonda Hoffman, Director of Domestic Relations, effective January 15, 2024.

Kathleen Wimsatt has been transferred in response to a court order by the Court of Common Pleas from full-time Admin Clerk 3, to part-time casual Admin Clerk 3, effective January 2, 2024.

Recognition of Bob Voda and Brenda Arnold for their heroic efforts on Thursday, January 4, 2024, when the elevator in the Courthouse malfunctioned.



Bradford County Commissioners

A CONTINUATION OF THE MINUTES THURSDAY JANUARY 11, 2024

SALARY BOARD
THURSDAY JANUARY 11, 2024
PRESENT: Daryl Miller, Doug McLinko, Zachary Gates and Matt Allen

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to reclassify full-time Chief Deputy to full-time Chief Deputy/Office Manager G22 effective January 11, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, seconded by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to reclassify Paralegal from 37.5 hours to 40 hours effective January 14, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gates, seconded by Commissioner McLinko, all voted “aye” to reclassify Admin Assist 2 District Attorney office from 35 hours to 40 hours effective January 14, 2024.

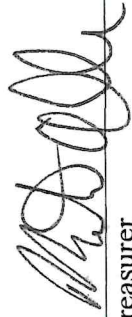
A motion was made by Treasure Matt Allen, seconded by Commissioner McLinko, all voted “aye” to approving the following salaries:

Richard D. Sheetz, Hearing Master Effective January 2, 2024	Grade 30 \$70,000 Annual
Kaitlin Strope, FT Court Liaison Effective January 2, 2024	G21 \$18.48
Rhea Blair, FT County Caseworker 1, Intellectual Disabilities Effective January 8, 2024	GHS24 \$20.57
Matthew Schwenk, FT PO Effective January 9, 2024	\$18.00
Jennifer Kingsley, PTC Admin Clerk 2 Effective January 3, 2024	G13 \$14.85
Jennifer Kingsley, FT Admin Assistant Effective January 15, 2024	G16 \$16.50
Connie Boyd, FT Account Clerk 3 Effective January 22, 2024	G16 \$16.88
Kimberly Wilks, FT Admin Clerk 3 Effective January 15, 2024	G16 \$15.77
Kathleen Wimsatt, PTC Admin Clerk 3 Effective January 2, 2024	G15 \$16.14




A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko and second by Commissioner Gates to table the following salaries:

Heather Briggs, FT Chief Deputy/Office Manager Prothonotary
Effective January 15, 2024

G22
\$19.41



Treasurer

Salary Board

A CONTINUATION OF THE MINUTES THURSDAY JANUARY 11, 2024

VISITORS REMARKS

Laura Hewitt - Minutes/Solar
YHEC - Plaque Appreciation presented to the Commissioners
Hugh Austin - Library

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner McLinko, second by Commissioner Gates, all voted “aye” to adjourn at 10:33 a.m.

Laura's list for 12/28 commissioner meeting:

Submitted 1/11/2024 by
Laura H. Hewitt

2 weeks ago, I offered notes regarding **only three of my longer list of concerns.**

Last week I sent a letter **listing more concerns with language from OTHER'S solar ordinances as examples to strengthen ours.**

We should NOT rely on a company that stands to gain financially to guide our decision (with tax bonuses stacking on top of tax credits they could cover up to 60% to 70% of project costs using the tax credits. ⁽¹⁾

I challenge the presumption that we cannot include language in our ordinance that other locales include. From my longer list, today I am just mentioning three:

... photovoltaic panels shall not contain harmful chemicals such as Cadmium ²

... natural vegetative ground cover shall be maintained under and around the solar arrays, **Only non-invasive species shall be used, and Maintenance shall include eradication of all noxious weeds and plants prior to the weeds seeding and spreading.** ⁵

... owner must maintain the facility in accord with the Site Plan, Permit and the ordinance. Maintenance shall include, but not limited to, painting, structural repairs and integrity of security measures including fencing. Any retrofit, replacement or refurbishment of equipment shall adhere to all local, state and federal requirements. **No damaged, broken or non-working parts of the CSES operation shall be stored on site.** ¹⁰

END OF the "SHORT LIST"

(My previous longer INCOMPLETE LIST OF CONCERNS, with accessible LINKS is included here, since email links are easier to follow than those in the letter I hand delivered to your office last week...)

varieties of solar panels² (and concerns about made in china?)

soil health: baseline,³ and restoration ⁴

ground cover⁵ and invasive weed management ^{6, 7}

water (is this covered under storm water management, and referenced in our amendment?)

larger setbacks for non-participating landowners⁸

codify buffer landscaping for non-participating landowners⁹

FACILITY maintenance - is this addressed anywhere? ¹⁰

end of life recycling ¹¹

...The ordinances I have discovered come from locations where solar sites have been installed, and in some cases, revisions were needed after the fact. ... to include additional protections. We would do well to learn from their experience. .

¹ <http://eelp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/IRA-tax-credits-explainer.pdf>

² C.7.The photovoltaic panels shall not contain harmful chemicals such as Cadmium or amorphous silicon. Prior to construction, the Applicant shall provide written panel specifications to include composition, toxicological information and the physical and chemical properties of all panels used at the facility.

(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iBsghvxF4cl6ypirvT0jRUsal6HkFKvU/view>, pg3)

³ 5. Pre-construction Soil Health Analysis and Long-Term Soil Monitoring Plan (i) Prior to construction, a soil analysis shall be conducted and assessed by a third-party professional to establish baseline soil health. (ii) Required sampling protocol . (includes MUCH more, please see full ordinance!)

(<https://www.linncountyiowa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22629/PA23-0007-Ordinance-Amendment>, pg9 AND MORE!)

4 Well-planned and implemented solar projects can serve as a non-permanent land use, income for the landowner, and can ensure continued agricultural production.... Ensure there is a decommissioning plan and transition plan for the agricultural operation at the end of the project's life span. Decommissioning plans should include full mitigation of land impacts and proper soil restoration to ensure the land is agriculture ready.

(https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/Sustainability/Documents/PDA-Solar-Guidance-Final.pdf)

5 4. Ground Cover, Trees, and Landscaping a. **A natural vegetative ground cover shall be maintained under and around the solar arrays.**

i. **Only non-invasive species shall be used,** and native species are recommended. ii. In interest of protecting pollinators seed mixes consisting of native meadow grasses and pollinator-friendly wildflower and/or clover species shall be used in consultation with a USDA Farm Bill biologist or local Soil and Water Conservation District professional on the area under and around the solar arrays. iii.

Maintenance shall include eradication of all noxious weeds and plants prior to the weeds seeding and spreading.

(<https://www.co.wayne.in.us/web/dept/planpermits/WayneCountySolarEnergySystemsSitingOrdinance.pdf>, pg11)

6 C.6. **Best practices when using herbicides (no-harmful to the environment)** to control weeds, gras and other unwanted vegetation shall be used.

(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iBsqhvxF4cl6ypirvTQJRUsal6HkFkVU/view>, pg3)

7 Maintenance... **All vegetation and seeds used on solar production sites should be native and be void of invasive species.** Vegetation should support soil health and pollinators. (https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/Sustainability/Documents/PDA-Solar-Guidance-Final.pdf, pg3)

8 c: Non-Participating Land Owners: i. **Setbacks from Non-Participating Land Owner** for Single Family Residence: The CSES shall be at **least 400 feet** from the foundation of the primary structure of a nonparticipating, pre-existing residential dwelling, as measured at the foundation to the edge of the CSES panel, including across a roadway if applicable.

(from https://www.co.dekalb.in.us/egov/documents/1631884113_64116.pdf, pg5)

9 Visual Buffer & Landscaping: a. **Existing natural woods on a participating land owner property shall remain in its natural state if abutting a non-participating land owner...** b. Other landscape buffering may be required that may include berms and landscape material during Development Plan Approval by the Plan Commission

(https://www.co.dekalb.in.us/egov/documents/1631884113_64116.pdf, pg6)

10 Maintenance, Repair and/or Replacement of CSES: a. **CSES owner must maintain the facility** in accord with the Site Plan, Permit and the ordinance. Maintenance shall include, but not limited to, painting, structural repairs and integrity of security measures including fencing. Any retrofit, replacement or refurbishment of equipment shall adhere to all local, state and federal requirements. **No damaged, broken or non-working parts of the CSES operation shall be stored on site.**

(https://www.co.dekalb.in.us/egov/documents/1631884113_64116.pdf, pg8)

11 The industry is new and still growing, with researchers examining how to commercialize recycling to economically recover most of the components of a solar panel. Elements of this recycling process can be found in the United States, but it is **not yet happening on a large scale.**

(<https://www.epa.gov/hw/solar-panel-recycling>)