Stafford council approves amendment to Stafford Business Park

By NICHOLAS HUBA • STAFF WRITER • August 17, 2010

STAFFORD — The Township Council approved an amendment to the redevelopment plan for Stafford Business Park that clears the way for solar panels to be installed at the site as well as minor changes to the residential aspect of the project.

After nearly two hours of sometimes heated discussion, the council approved the amendment during its meeting Tuesday night.

"This change will have no impact on the wildlife in the area," said Joe DelDuca, a partner in Walters Group, the developer for the business park.

The solar panel plan calls for the construction of 24,624 solar panels to be set in 1,026 arrays or stands. The Pinelands Commission is in the process of reviewing the project. The plan states the panels will generate six megawatts of power for the residential and commercial aspects of the business park. According to the application, only 1.6 acres will be affected. The business park project includes both residential and business sections.

The minor changes to the residential aspect of the project include small changes to the density of residential development and the locations of porches.

Sal Sorce said the township should reject the plan and allow the space to be saved as open space.

"It belongs to us and should be saved as open space," said Sorce, who has been a vocal critic of the project over the years. "You should refuse this."

Steve Miller, a township resident, said he is in favor of the amendment.

"We have to ensure this project is a success," Miller said. "I would have not liked to spend $20 to $30 million to cap the landfill. They are allowed to make money."

Theresa Lettman, director of monitoring for the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, said that her group is against the solar panel plan.

"The developer made the argument, during the two years it took to develop the memorandum of agreement, that all the land other than the landfill was needed to make the project work financially. The landfill was not needed for this financial equation," Lettman said. "We are against this plan."