

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Township, Village and County Officials:

The Global Elite

Earthrise is a corporation located in the Washington, D.C. Beltway, commonly known as "The Swamp," filled with lobbyists, special interests and industry insiders. Earthrise is funded by a global equity firm called Vision Ridge, which invests in "disruptive technologies" to liberate communities from fossil fuels. In 2022, Earthrise/Vision Ridge bought the Lincoln Generating Facility in nearby Manhattan, a highly-efficient natural gas (fossil fuel) power plant that produces 700 MW of reliable power for the energy grid on just 30 acres of land.

Secret Deals

Two years ago, without ever contacting our Township officials, Earthrise began procuring secret land leases for a commercial solar facility deep within the interior of Green Garden Township. As Earthrise declined our recent request for a site map, we began researching public records. To date, Earthrise leases, easements and purchases are found in no less than six rural Will County Townships, including Green Garden, Peotone, Wilton, Wesley, Florence, and Manhattan and even reach into Kankakee County. Farmland for the proposed Earthrise 600 MW commercial solar facility now totals almost 7900 acres, which would cover more than 12 square miles or almost 6000 NFL football fields with solar panels.

Thirty Pieces of Silver

Currently, an acre of local farmland is valued at about \$10,000. While the vast majority of rural residents have rejected Earthrise solicitations, a small number of large-acre landholders have joined Earthrise, enabling a potential land grab that will destabilize our historic rural community, end future rural-residential development and replace it with an industrial corridor. Earthrise will reward the avarice of its allies with lease payouts that total \$73,000 per acre (with a 30-year lease) and \$152,000 per acre (with a 50-year lease). Earthrise lease payouts alone could amount to over one billion dollars.

Green Garden Township

Opportunistic Earthrise leases or holdings now exist on more than 25 properties on over 1750 acres in Green Garden Township. While these Earthrise records involve less than 10 landholders in a Township of 3850 residents, the intent to strangle the Township with solar sprawl is evident.

Farmland throughout our Township has already been targeted by Earthrise, including fields adjacent to Erinwood, Links Edge, River Oaks, Saddle Ridge and Prairie Schooner subdivisions. Earthrise leases and holdings will impact residents living along 104th Avenue from Dralle Road to Bruns Road, residents living along Bruns Road between 88th Avenue and Center Road and on Bruns between 104th Avenue and Scheer Road, those living on Dralle Road between 88th Avenue and Center Road and on Pauling Road between 88th Avenue and Center Road, on Scheer Road north of Offner Road, and even the field that surrounds the historic Green Garden Methodist Church. The locations of these solar leases expose the utter contempt Earthrise has for our residents, our rural community, and our Township's Comprehensive Plan. These locations are currently found in Township Sections 9, 10, 17, 19, 20, 27, 29, 30 and 31. Draconian solar laws, passed in Illinois in 2021 and 2023, prioritize the renewables industry above all other citizens, business and commerce and discard the protective barriers of established zoning laws. These unconstitutional solar laws disenfranchise our elected officials, permit a mere 50' setback for 20' H solar panel arrays from rural residential backyards, with no earthen berms or evergreen cover required.

A First Glimpse

This past weekend, mailers have been received by some Township residents for an Earthrise Open House at the Manhattan Park District (397 S. State St. in Manhattan), on Wednesday, October 8th, between 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. This will be the first opportunity for most residents in six townships to view the proposed Earthrise 600 MW commercial solar project site plan.

Solutions and Signatures

Legal and legislative opportunities exist to level the playing field to preserve our community and define our future. The first step has begun with the Township signature drive. In zoning cases, your address and your signature are needed to identify residents opposing a land use application. Anyone living in any of the impacted townships can sign the signature petition. The form is available online at the Homepage of the Green Garden Township website. If you haven't done so, please fill in and send your signed petitions via Email by scan or photo to re3tom@gmail.com or you can send by mail to the address listed on the form. If you are sending via Email, please save your original petition for future collection.

More information will be forthcoming.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Becker
The Watershed Committee