



County of Surry Virginia Planning Commission Work Session Minutes December 20, 2021

MEETING CONVENED:

The meeting of the Surry County Commission work session was called to order at 7:00 PM on Monday, December 20, 2021, in the Surry County General District Court, 45 School Street, Surry, Virginia by Mr. Eddie Brock, Chairperson.

ATTENDANCE: The following members respond to Roll Call Present:

Mr. Eddie Brock, Chairperson
Ms. Judy S. Lyttle
Mr. Theodore Lunsford
Mr. David Coggin
Mr. William Seward, IV
Ms. Dianne cheek
Ms. Carmen D. Judkins

Absent:

Mr. Giron Wooden, Jr.
Mr. Thomas Hardy
Mr. Stephen Berryman
Mr. Earl Newby, Sr.

Also present were Mr. Horace Wade, Director of Planning and Community Development, Ms. Regina Hilton, Administrative Assistant, Mr. Lorenzo Turner, Planner 1, Mr. Greg Davis, Ms. Lorraine Bergman, Mr. Nick Robertson

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Surry Solar LLC General Projection Description:** The Applicant proposes to construct a 20 megawatt (alternating current) photovoltaic solar energy generation facility on approximately +225 acres located off Colonial Trail West/SR 10, south of Bacons Castle Trail, and north of Hog Island Road. The project infrastructure will consist primarily of UL

listed solar photovoltaic panels, DC to AC inverters, voltage transformers, security fencing and a meter and attachment line to interconnect with existing transmission system. The project involves parcel 43-58F. The Comprehensive Plan indicates the property is suitable for Rural Preservation. The public hearing is scheduled for January 24, 2022.

1. Presentation – Surry Solar Center, LLC
2. Planning Commission Discussion

Mr. Wade provided a brief introduction of the Surry Solar Center LLC project to be presented by Pine Gate Renewables and their representatives. The representatives will speak on the work session items prior to the public hearing that will take place in January.

Mr. Greg Davis, a representative of Surry Solar LLC provided an overview of the overall solar energy project.

1. An additional 100' buffer between the fence and the setback. The project originally proposed with had a 420' buffer and with the addition would now make the project buffer 520'.
2. On the Bacon's Castle side would be an additional 100' buffer to the 265' with dense plantings.
3. The western boundary has been and will be preserved with an undisturbed buffer of a minimum 150'.
4. There's a 50' buffer between the project and the Epps's home.
5. The fence surrounding the project is 8' and the panel follow the sun. The panels highest angle is 18'
6. Pine Gate refer to the project as solar culture. Plants along the buffer and underneath the solar array will pollinator friendly planting. These will encourage bees and native species.
7. Pine Gate prefers a wildlife permeable fence. Bigger grids which allow small animals and birds
8. The project will create 37 construction jobs during the construction phase. A computerized model is used to show that the project will generate \$4.9 million of economic impact to the community.
9. When the project is built, over 40 years will bring \$800,000 of real estate tax to Surry County and the farm would generate about \$164,00 of real estate tax.
10. The proposed package will pay Surry County every year, \$1400 per megawatt. In addition, the project proposed to pay \$100,000 upfront pursuant to the terms of a siting agreement.
11. With the enhanced buffers, the project will use local contractors for mowing.

Chairman Brock then asked for questions from the commissioners.

Commissioners engaged in dialogue with the applicant's representatives to understand the project.

COMMENTS ON THE WORK SESSION:

Mr. Wade introduced Sarah Seward to the Planning Commission. He stated that staff is currently working on an agritourism ordinance, a floodplain ordinance amendment, a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act ordinance amendment, administrative variances, and variance ordinance amendments.

Ms. Cheek asked if a number could be put on the number of Solar Farms. Mr. Wade stated he did not know if you can legally do that. Ms. Powell, the county attorney, stated that you can put this in some type of plan to say where your ideal area would be, but can you enforce that?

The commissioners discuss viewing the area first before any other projects starts. Commissioners discuss keeping existing vegetation and how the projects are making money and not the county. Commissioners also discuss redoing the comprehensive plan.

Mr. Wade suggested having monthly special call meeting. Mr. Coggins asked are the solar projects taking up a lot of time and they could be working on the comprehensive plan instead. There was a brief discussion on Loblolly Solar Project.

Ms. Cheek brought up the need to update the solar ordinance and the comp plan to her representative on the board of supervisor.

Mr. Wade asked the commissioners to decide on electing a chair and vice chair and to appoint the members to the subcommittee at the same time frame. Mr. Brock the sending of a letter to the board of supervisor requesting that they would approve moratorium and the comprehensive plan. Mr. Brock suggest that the county needs to pause and see how the first two solar farms.

COMMENTS ON THE WORK SESSION FROM STAFF:

Mr. Wade provided a summary for the January 2022 meeting.

1. To elect a chair and vice chair at the beginning of the year.
2. The new bylaws.
3. Ms. Lyttle suggests we do add the Pledge of Allegiance at the meetings and did not know about prayer.
4. To set the meeting dates for the rest of the year.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairperson Brock adjourn the meeting at 9:21 PM