

GREENSVILLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

6:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes – See Attachment - A.

1. April 9, 2019

IV. REGULAR SESSION

A. 2232-2-19 – Sadler Solar Project/Dominion Energy Virginia

1. Consideration of motion to rescind Planning Commission action of April 9, 2019 which deferred action on Application 2232-2-19 until the Planning Commission meeting scheduled for June 11, 2019.

2. Consideration of Application 2232-2-19

- a. Comments by Applicant
- b. Comments by County staff
- c. Discussion by Planning Commission members

3. Planning Commission determination whether, under Virginia Code Section 15.2-2232, Application 2232-2-19 is, or is not, in compliance with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

V. OTHER MATTERS

VI. ADJOURN

The Greensville County Planning Commission meeting was held Tuesday, April 9, 2019, 6:00 P.M., at the Greensville County Government Center, 1781 Greensville County Circle, Emporia, Virginia.

PRESENT

Walter Robinson, Chairman
Jeff Robinson, Vice-Chairman
Lofton Allen
Stephen Allen
Joe Antorn, Jr.
William Cain
Annie Odom
Dianne Barnes-Rhoades
Kim Wiley

STAFF PRESENT

Linwood E. Pope, Jr.
Treva Pernell
Darren Coffey
Denise Nelson

OTHERS PRESENT

Dan Potect – Dominion Energy Virginia
James Tew – Dominion Energy Virginia
Brennen Keene – Dominion Energy Virginia
Robert Cain

Vice-Chairman Robinson called the meeting of Tuesday, April 9, 2019 to order. He called on Commissioner Jeff Robinson to offer prayer.

Mr. Lin Pope, the secretary, called the roll.

In Re: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Stephen Allen made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Rhoades, with all voting aye, motion carried.

In Re: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion for approval of the minutes of March 12, 2019. Commissioner Robinson made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Rhoades, with all voting aye, motion carried.

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion to go into Public Hearing. Commissioner Stephen Allen made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Robinson, with all voting aye, to go into Public Hearing.

In Re: PUBLIC HEARING

2232-2-19 – Sadler Solar Project/Dominion Energy Virginia

Ms. Denise Nelson, with the Berkley Group, gave an overview of the Staff Report for 2232-2-19 – Sadler Solar Project. Ms. Nelson stated that the applicant, Virginia Electric Power Company, had requested the Planning Commission review its proposed solar energy facility for determination under Virginia Code Section 15.2-2232 and that the issue is whether the general or approximate location, character and extent of the proposed solar energy facility is substantially in accord with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Nelson stated that the applicant proposed to construct a 100 megawatt photovoltaic solar energy generation facility on two (2) parcels consisting of a total of approximately 1,500 acres. She stated that this site is located along the north side of Dry Bread Road up to the Meherrin River approximately midway between Jones Mill Road and I-95 approximately two miles west of Emporia and located in an A1-Agricultural District. She stated that there is currently an existing transmission line on the eastern border of the parcels that allows for the interconnection to the grid.

Ms. Nelson stated that the proposed site is approximately two (2) miles from the approved Greensville County Solar Project (Tradewind). She stated that this is the fourth application for a solar project in this section of the County.

Ms. Nelson pointed out two (2) key citations from the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that under Goals and Objectives the General Section, Item #3 is "preserve the rural character of the County by directing and controlling growth in designated areas." She also stated that under Land Use, General Section, Item #2 is "concentrate development in appropriate locations by encouraging more efficient site design and incorporating proper buffers between differing uses." She further stated that under Commercial and Industrial, Item #5 is, "evaluate large scale industrial economic development projects that will provide an economic benefit to the County but that may not be in designated development areas or near major transportation systems." She stated that under Planning Issues and Strategies, there is an item for local production of renewable energy that states that there "is a great interest in construction of solar energy farms throughout the County as the quest for environmentally friendly energy." She also stated that under Strategies and Policies, Item A says "if not detrimental to the surrounding area, solar energy projects greater than 20 megawatts are encouraged in agricultural zoned areas. She further stated that under Item C, "it is encouraged that a decommissioning plan be provided by the owner of such solar energy projects to insure proper dismantling of the project."

Ms. Nelson stated that the staff analysis of the proposed project, in light of the changing nature of the County landscape and with previous approvals of solar projects, staff found that the proposed site is approximately two (2) miles from the City of Emporia, two miles from the Greensville County Solar Project, and six (6) miles from two recently proposed, approved solar

sites. The four proposed solar project sites would cover over four thousand (4,000) acres in the County.

Ms. Nelson stated that staff had analyzed the Comprehensive Plan elements and proposed that the project appears to meet some but, not all, of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Renewable Energy Use goals, objectives and strategies. She stated that based on the information reviewed for this report, staff finds that the proposed solar facility may not be substantially in accord with the Comprehensive Plan or parts thereof.

Ms. Nelson stated that the question before the Commission with this 2232 review application is whether the general location or approximate location, character and extent of the proposed solar energy facility is substantially in accord with the Comprehensive Plan or parts thereof.

Chairman Robinson asked if there were any comments or questions from those present. Being none, he asked the applicant to come forward and address the Commission.

Mr. Dan Poteet, Dominion Energy, addressed the Commission. He thanked the Commission for considering the current solar project. He stated that Dominion is embracing change to take advantage of clean energy opportunities.

Mr. James Tew, Dominion Energy, addressed the Commission. He stated that there is the potential of 4.7GW of solar capacity by 2033 in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He stated that solar is a clean, efficient, renewable resource. He also stated that in July of 2018, Dominion Energy pledged to have 3,000 megawatts of new solar and wind energy in Virginia and have it under development or in operation by early 2022.

Mr. Tew stated that this proposed solar site is approximately 1,500 acres, the areas that will be covered by panels is approximately 1,100 acres. He stated that there is a transmission line that runs along the boundary of the project. He stated that there would be a switching station adjacent to the transmission line and the switching station would be adjacent to the project.

Mr. Tew stated that, in some areas, the project site would be 500' to 600' away from the road. He stated that they wanted to be a good neighbor to the residents across the road and in the community. He stated that these panels would be in use for 35 years and, upon approval, would be operation by December 2020. He also stated that there would be a decommissioning plan in place with the County. He further stated that screening and buffering is also included.

Mr. Cain stated that Mr. Tew acted like the project was already approved. He stated that it was the Commission's responsibility to make sure the Comprehensive Plan was followed properly. He also stated that he did not believe this project was in accord with the Comp Plan. He stated that he had an issue with the possible health hazards associated with this project.

Mr. Tew assured Mr. Cain that he tried to paint the most detailed picture of the proposed site in order for the Planning Commission to have all the information they needed to make an informed decision.

Mr. Brennen Keene, Dominion Energy, addressed the Commission. He stated that they believe this project does meet the goals and objectives of the County's Comprehensive Plan. He stated that this property has been used for many years for timber purposes and hunting. He also stated that there has been no active agricultural production of this land.

Mr. Keene stated that the project and this location is distinct from the other three (3) projects. He stated that the three approved projects are located along the Brink Road corridor. He also stated that the Sadler Solar Project being sited along the Dry Bread Road is geographically removed from the other proposed, approved projects. He further stated that this site, because of its location, really is distinct due to the way it is positioned.

Mr. Keene stated that the site is not detrimental to the rural character of the County. He stated that this project is different from the other three projects. He also stated that the project is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan, supports stated goals in the Comp Plan, and will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of the residents.

Mr. Cain stated that he does not believe this project is in accord with the Comp Plan.

Mr. Keene stated that the Berkley Group's recommendation boils down to aggregation of solar projects in a particular area. He stated that this should not apply in this particular case because this project is located in a different area and community.

Chairman Robinson asked if there were any other questions or comments. Being no further comments, he asked for a motion to go back into regular session.

Commissioner Rhoades made a motion, Commissioner Steve Allen seconded, motion carried to return to regular session.

In Re: REGULAR SESSION

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion concerning 2232-2-19 Sadler Solar Project.

Commissioner Cain made a motion to deny the approval.

Chairman Robinson asked if there was any questions or comments from anyone present.

Mr. Robert Cain addressed the Commission and stated he lived across the road from the proposed solar project site. Mr. Cain stated he was concerned by the screening and buffering.

Mr. William Cain stated that he wanted Mr. Robert Cain to be aware of the possible health hazards from solar panels.

Mr. Robert Cain asked about the affect these solar panels would have on televisions and telephones.

Chairman Robinson stated that, as far as he knew, these panels would have no harmful effects on televisions or telephones.

Mr. Tew answered Mr. Robert Cain's questions concerning the landscaping, effects on televisions and telephones, and health affects to his satisfaction.

Commissioner Robinson asked Mr. Tew about the possibility of using silicon based panels as opposed to cadmium based panels.

Mr. Tew stated that, as of this date, no decision has been made concerning silicon based panels.

Mr. Poteet stated that Cadmium is compressed between two layers of glass. He stated that, as long as the panels are regularly monitored, there are no health hazards to the public.

Chairman Robinson stated that there was a motion on the floor from Commissioner Cain to deny the approval.

Mr. Coffey stated that in order to follow proper procedure, Commission Cain would need to verbally read the motion provided in the staff report.

Mr. Cain made a motion that the Virginia Electric and Power Company's (Sadler Solar Project) proposed 100-megawatt photovoltaic solar energy facility as described in 2232 Review application 2232-2-19, is **not substantially** in accord with the Greenville County Comprehensive Plan or parts thereof for the following reasons:

1. The Comprehensive Plan indicates that solar energy facilities may be acceptable if not detrimental to surrounding areas. The proposed solar facility is the fourth and largest facility proposed and increases the concentration of land approved for solar use in the area to a point that does not preserve the rural character of the County.
2. The proposed solar energy facility is approximately two (2) miles from the City of Emporia and abutting an existing single family residential land use in the Urban Services District creating a potential to negatively impact development opportunities related to the Urban Services District.
3. The application property is designated in the future land use plan as Rural Residential and is planned for agricultural and farming uses and the solar energy facility is inconsistent with this designation.
4. The proposed solar energy facility will occupy 1,491 acres of agricultural/forestral land.

The Secretary of the Planning Commission is directed to communicate the Planning Commission's findings to the Board of Supervisors.

Chairman Robinson asked for a second to Commissioner Cain's motion. Being none, the motion died due to lack of a second.

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion to approve or defer the applicant's request.

Commissioner Jeff Robinson made a motion that the Planning Commission defer a decision on Virginia Electric and Power Company's request under Va. Code § 15.2-2232 regarding its proposed 100-megawatt photovoltaic solar energy facility as described in 2232 Review application 2232-2-19, until the Planning Commission meeting scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m. on June 11, 2019, in the Board of Supervisors meeting room.

Commissioner Lofton Allen made a second to the motion, with all voting aye, motion carried.

AYE

Commissioner Lofton Allen
Commissioner Steve Allen
Commissioner Antorn
Commissioner Barnes-Rhoades
Commissioner Cain
Commissioner Odom
Vice-Chairman Jeff Robinson
Chairman Walter Robinson
Commissioner Wiley

Chairman Robinson stated that this decision is deferred for 60 days.

In Re: OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Pope stated that the joint work session for the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission will be held May 7, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room.

In Re: ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Stephen Allen, seconded by Commissioner Lofton Allen, with all voting aye, meeting was adjourned.

Walter W. Robinson, Jr.
Chairman