

**RICHMOND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

September 8, 2015

The Richmond County Planning Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2015 in the Public Meeting Room, County Administrative Building, Warsaw, VA.

The following members were present:

Glenn Bowen
Rick Cox
Chairperson Martha Hall
Clifton Jenkins
John W. Lewis
Joyce Pemberton
Patrick Weakland

The following members were absent:

Jesse Clark
Vice Chairman Darnell Clayton
Cassandra Jackson

Also present:

Joseph Quesenberry, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Mercedes Pierce, Planning Commission Secretary

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Martha Hall called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m. Mr. Rick Cox gave the invocation and Chairperson Hall led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - AUGUST 10, 2015 MEETING

John W. Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Patrick Weakland seconded the motion and they were approved unanimously.

SOLAR POWER FACILITY – PROPOSED LANGUAGE & PRESENTATION

Joseph Quesenberry informed the Planning Commission that two solar energy providers recently contacted the County with interest in possibly establishing facilities in Richmond County.

Mr. Quesenberry stated he researched model ordinance language for Richmond County and could only find three other localities with language pertaining to solar facilities. Mr. Quesenberry reviewed the model ordinance language that was provided to the Planning Commission in their meeting packets.

Mr. Quesenberry shared that SUNENERGY1, LLC is proposing a twenty (20) megawatt facility in Richmond County, but an eighty (80) megawatt facility is described in the presentation (Attachment 1).

Mr. Glenn Bowen questioned if the usage of “DC” should have been replaced with “AC” as referenced in the definition of “Solar Power Plant, Large Photovoltaic” in Section 4-21-1A in the proposed language. Mr. Bowen explained solar panels generate power in DC, but the electricity used to power a house runs on AC. Mr. Quesenberry stated the proposed language was taken from another locality and he was unsure.

For clarification purposes, Chairperson Martha Hall suggested adding to the “Solar Power Plant, Large Photovoltaic” definition that before the solar power can be used by a household, it must go through a conversion process.

Mr. Patrick Weakland and Ms. Joyce Pemberton further discussed the subject of the DC power needing to be converted to AC before it can be utilized in households.

Mr. Bowen pointed out that there is a major difference between 100 kilowatts DC and 100 kilowatts AC.

Mr. Quesenberry pointed out from Section 4-21-2 “General Standards” of the proposed language that there would be a minimum lot size of twenty (20) acres. Mr. Rick Cox asked where this number came from. Mr. Quesenberry stated the number of acreage came from another locality that went through a long vetting process and felt twenty acres would be a good minimum size for the special exception process for these uses.

Mr. Clifton Jenkins questioned where the proposed facility would be located. Mr. Quesenberry stated he was unsure of the exact location, but believes the company may be interested in the Newland area.

Mr. Quesenberry directed everyone to glance at the slide shown on the screen and pointed out the photo on the right, which showed a twenty megawatt facility, which is what the company is proposing for Richmond County. He also stated the company is out of North Carolina and this would be their first site in Virginia.

Mr. Bowen questioned the footprint of the similar plant in North Carolina that was shown in the photo on the slide. Mr. Quesenberry stated he was unsure.

Mr. Cox asked if the company will sell to Northern Neck Electric or Dominion and Mr. Quesenberry confirmed they would be selling to these power companies. Mr. Cox questioned if Sun Energy One will provide power directly to a consumer and Mr. Quesenberry stated they would not.

Mr. Cox asked if the proposed ordinance language would affect residential use in the event a resident would want to place solar panels on their roof. Mr. Quesenberry stated this language does not differentiate between commercial or residential, but does include the twenty acre minimum lot regulation. Mr. Cox questioned if the County should regulate anything smaller than what is specified in the proposed ordinance language. Chairperson Hall suggested discussing regulation for private use in subsequent meetings.

Mr. Bowen stated there are already individual panels in the County. Mr. Quesenberry stated the essence of the Zoning Ordinance is to prohibit what is not permitted and since the panels are not currently permitted they should theoretically be prohibited.

Mr. Weakland questioned if the electric company who purchases the solar power would still be charged if the sun does not shine. Mr. Bowen stated that even on cloudy days, the panels still produce electricity, but at a lower amount. Mr. Bowen added it all depends upon what the company is selling and what the business model of the company will be.

Mr. John W. Lewis stated that if this company will solely be tying the solar power into the lines of the power company then they will get paid only when the meter is running and there will not be a need for storage batteries.

Mr. Cox asked if the County has received any feedback from the power companies. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Jenkins both believed the companies are mandated to utilize the solar power. Mr. Cox encouraged Mr. Quesenberry to consult with the power companies to receive feedback on the proposed ordinance language.

Mr. Quesenberry went over slides four and five of the presentation, which outlined the benefits and positive economic impacts of solar energy.

Mr. Lewis questioned whether or not a twenty acre property housing the solar panels should remain an A-1 zoning district. Mr. Quesenberry stated counties try to stray away from spot zoning and prefer a special exception rather than rezoning. Mr. Bowen believes there would not be much cash flow until years down the road because of non-recurring engineering (NRE).

Mr. Bowen pointed out the last sentence of Item 7 under Section 4-21-2 "General Standards" of the proposed language which states, "use of above ground transmission lines shall be minimized" and asked if it is a condition placed on Northern Neck Electric or just being imposed on the solar power facilities. Mr. Quesenberry stated the language is geared towards these facilities and Mr. Bowen stated he just wants to make sure everyone is playing by the same rules.

Chairperson Hall asked Mr. Quesenberry if Sun Energy One provided any indication as to why they are considering coming to Richmond County. Mr. Quesenberry stated the company has not specified, but mentioned they are interested in rural areas close to metropolitans and they could possibly like the presence of an electric co-op. Mr. Bowen stated that land is going to be cheaper in rural areas, they would be close enough to cities and the co-op could purchase the power.

Mr. Quesenberry read aloud Item 8B of Section 4-21-2 "General Standards" which states, "economic analysis: provide economic cost/benefit analysis describing generated property taxes, sales taxes, other taxes, construction dollars spent locally, estimated construction jobs and construction payroll, estimated permanent jobs and continuing payroll, and costs associated with impact on roads and other county infrastructure in the area."

Mr. Quesenberry stated he believes these facilities will be taxed under the real estate tax rate, which is currently \$0.67/\$100 of assessed value.

Mr. Cox asked if the company provided any cost estimates on the project. Mr. Quesenberry stated the company did not provide him with much information besides the presentation. Chairperson Hall thanked Mr. Quesenberry for providing the Planning Commission with the proposed ordinance language ahead of the presentation.

Mr. Quesenberry informed the Planning Commission that Mr. R. Morgan Quicke, County Administrator, requested a public hearing be scheduled next month for the addition of the proposed solar facility language to the Zoning Ordinance. Chairperson Hall provided clarification on the reasoning behind holding a public hearing next month.

Mr. Cox suggested including a provision to require bonding on construction and performance to ensure the solar facilities do what they say they are going to do and to make sure there is money available to properly dismantle should something go wrong. Mr. Quesenberry stated he will make sure this provision is added.

Mr. Quesenberry ended the presentation by going over slide seven, which showed the general height of the solar panels, which would be a little less than eight (8) feet. He informed the Planning Commission he would get representatives from SUNENERGY1 and Northern Neck Electric to attend next month's public hearing.

Mr. Jenkins asked if anyone from Sun Energy One has contacted Northern Neck Electric. Mr. Quesenberry stated he does not believe they have. Mr. Jenkins also questioned if the output from the solar facilities could be taxed. Mr. Quesenberry stated he was unsure, but believes the taxing would occur on a state/federal level.

ANIMAL CONTROL AND CARE ORDINANCE – UPDATE

Joseph Quesenberry informed everyone that the ordinance is currently with Mr. Andrew McRoberts, County Attorney, and is hoping to present his findings during next month's meeting.

Mr. Quesenberry stated the Treasurer's Office will continue to sell the kennel tags in quantities of twenty (20) this year since the ordinance was not passed by the time they had to order the tags. They plan on lowering the quantity to ten (10) if the ordinance is passed.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

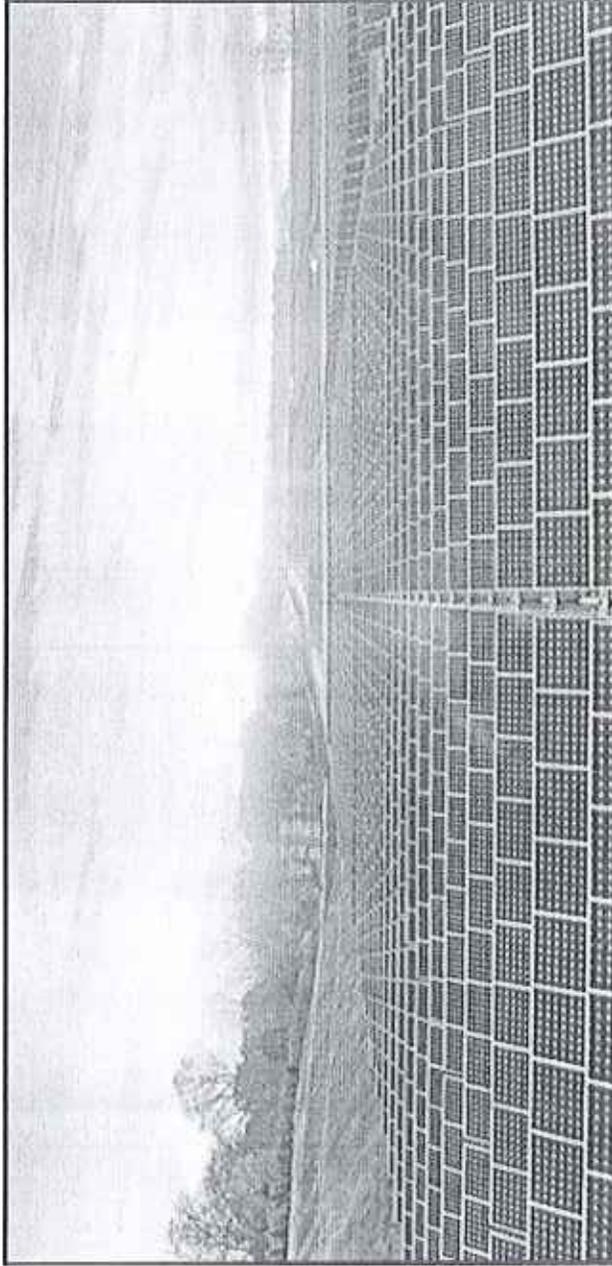
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Martha Hall adjourned the meeting at 7:33p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mercedes Pierce
Planning Commission Secretary

CONETOE II SOLAR FARM

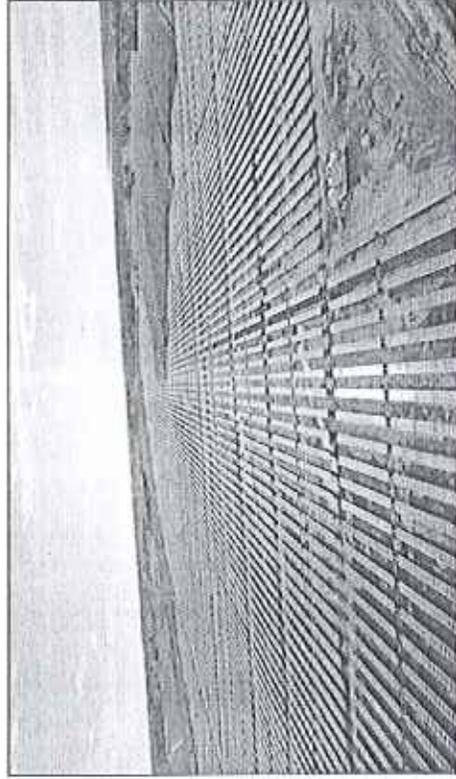


Edgecombe County, NC



SUNENERGY1, LLC:

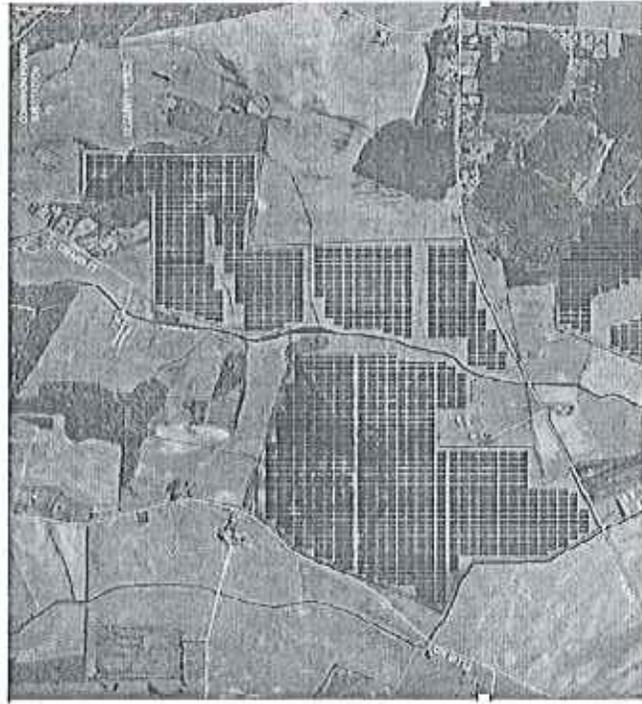
- ✓ Tier 1 Solar Developer & EPC Company
- ✓ 100+ MW of Solar Permitted & Constructed in 2014
- ✓ Largest Ground-Mount Solar Farm in Eastern NC
- ✓ Preferred Partner With Duke Energy Renewables



20 MW AC Solar Farm – Elizabeth City, NC



20 MW AC Solar Farm – Scotland Neck, NC



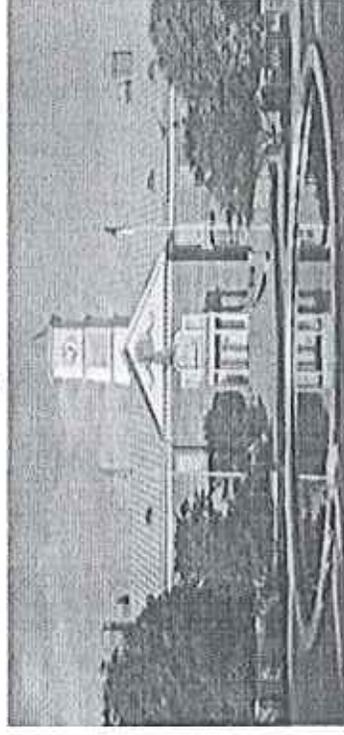
CONETOE II SOLAR FARM

- **80 MegaWatt (AC) Solar Farm**
- **Qualified NC Renewable Energy Facility**
- **367,213 (305 watt) UL Certified Solar Modules**
- **Ground-Mount Single Axis Tracker System**
- **~200,000,000 kWh Solar Power Per Year**
- **Clean Power Equivalent For ~10,000 Homes**

EDGECOMBE COUNTY SOLAR BENEFITS:

- ✓ LOCAL CLEAN ENERGY PRODUCTION
- ✓ MINIMAL IMPACT ON COUNTY SERVICES
- ✓ NO LONG-TERM IMPACT ON LAND USE
- ✓ NO NOISE ABATEMENT / HEALTH ISSUES
- ✓ SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN COUNTY TAX BASIS

Welcome to Edgecombe County!!





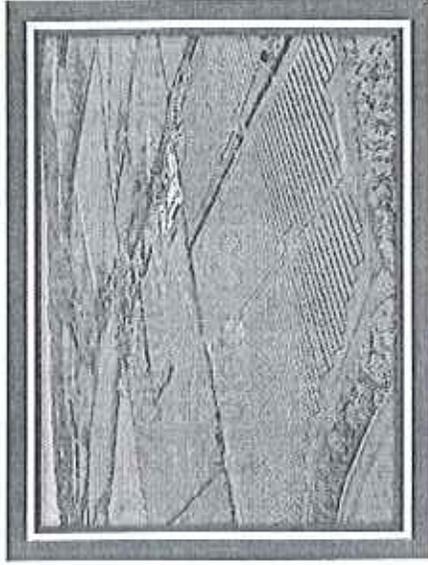
Positive Economic Impact:

- **400+ Construction Jobs in 2015 / 2016**
 - General Construction Jobs
 - Installers / Electricians / Trainees
 - Fencing / Security
 - Local Vendors / Services
 - Restaurants / Hospitality
 - New Business Opportunities

EDGECOMBE COUNTY SOLAR ORDINANCE:

SunEnergy1 is 100% committed to support:

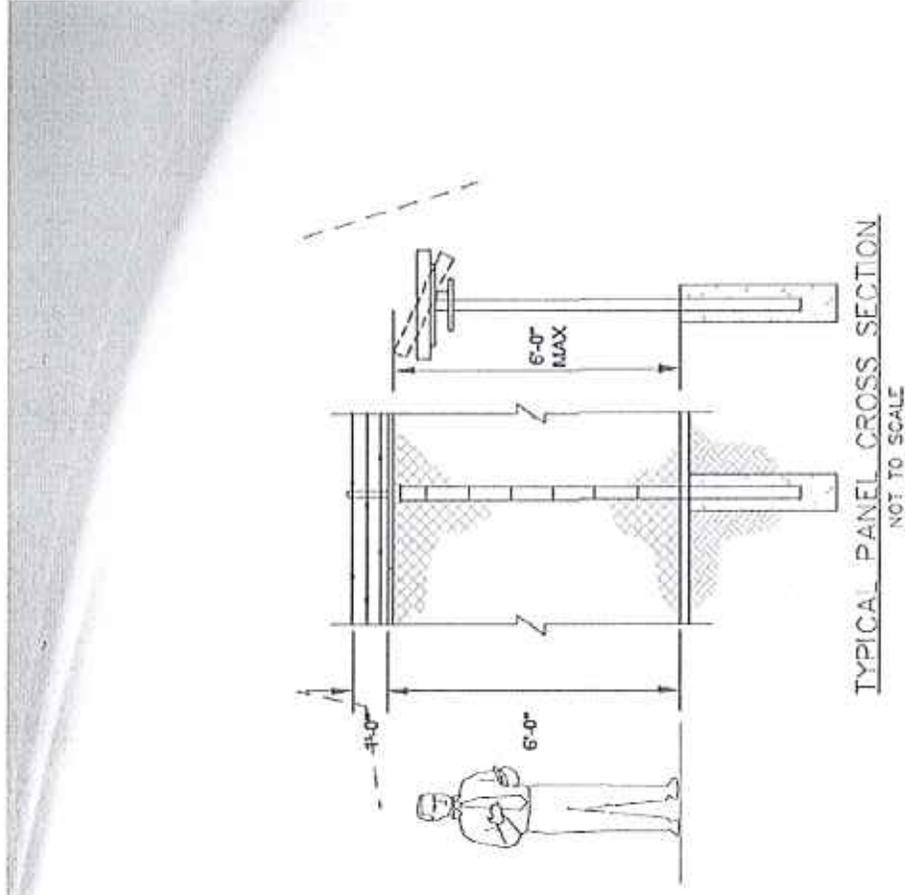
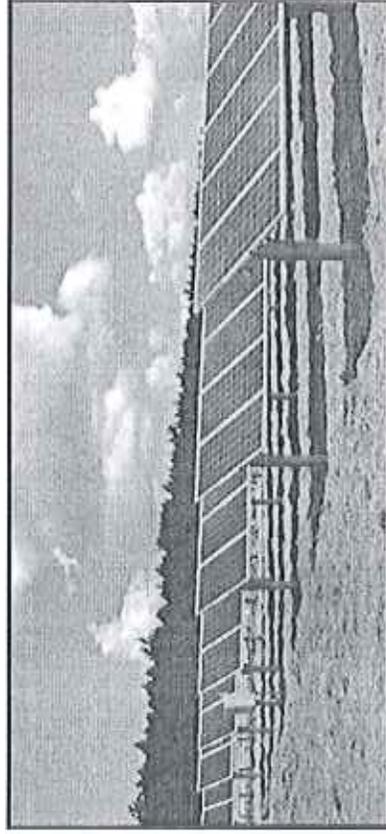
- ✓ **Edgecombe County's Solar Ordinance**
- ✓ **Promote Economic Development**
- ✓ **Protect Community Health, Safety, & Welfare**
- ✓ **Avoid Adverse Environmental Impact**



Minimal System Height:

Edgecombe County System Height Limitation:

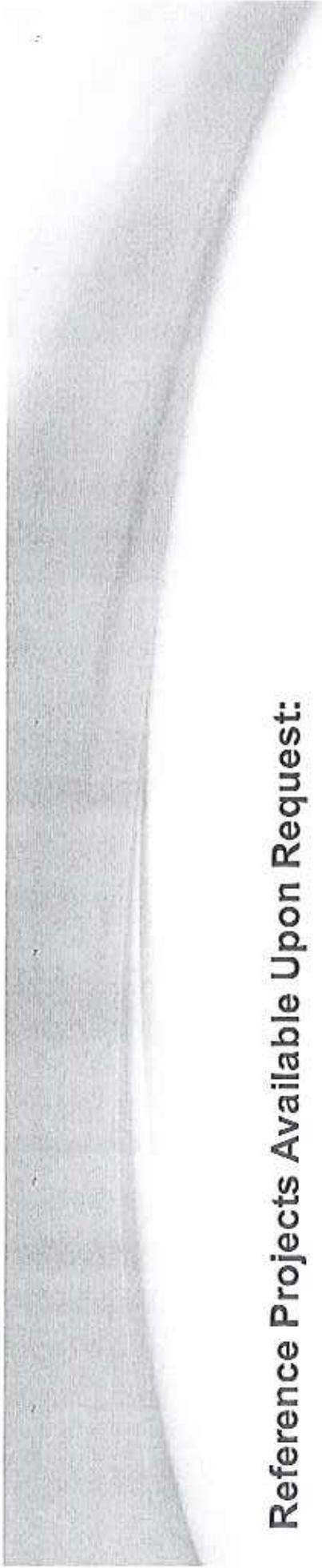
- Level 3 SES: 25'
- Avg. Solar Tracker Height less than 8'



NC Solar Farm: Good Neighbor Summary



- ✓ Clean Local Power Production
- ✓ Increase In County Tax Basis
- ✓ No Additional County Services
- ✓ No Adverse Health Effects
- ✓ No Noise / Odors / Traffic



Reference Projects Available Upon Request:





THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION!

For more information please contact:

SUNENERGY1, LLC

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Attn: Kenny Habul**



SUNENERGY1