

**RICHMOND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

June 8, 2020

The Richmond County Planning Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, June 8th 2020, in the Public Meeting Room, County Administrative Building, Warsaw, VA.

The following members were present:

Rick Cox
Glenn Bowen
Harry Smith, Jr.
Brian Mothershead
Cassandra Jackson
John W. Lewis
Marion James Packett
Darnell Clayton
J.R. Fidler

Absent:

Brian Jackson

Also present:

R. Morgan Quicke, County Administrator
Hope Mothershead, Director of Planning and Zoning
Jay Garner, NNEC (By Zoom Meeting)
Geoff Suttle, EDF Renewables (By Zoom Meeting)
Approximately 11 others. (By Zoom Meeting)

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Glenn Bowen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Cox gave the invocation and Mr. Lewis led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There is no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 9TH, 2020 MEETING

Glenn Bowen asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from the March 9th, 2020 meeting. Cassandra Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes. J.R. Fidler seconded the motion and they were approved unanimously.

PRESENTATION FROM EDF RENEWABLES/ ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING & TECHNOLOGY, INC. (ECT)

Mr. Smith commented with him being an employee of Northern Neck Electric and a member of Old Dominion Electric Cooperative being those are a part of this project, he has asked to recused himself from this discussion.

Mrs. Mothershead noted it has been agreed to keep the discussion strictly to the EDF Renewables application. Mrs. Mothershead mentioned none of the discussion will be related to the Strata application.

Mrs. Mothershead mentioned the meeting is being considered an introduction to the Heming Solar Partners, LLC project. Mrs. Mothershead also mentioned she hopes the Commissioners will gather their thoughts and questions and bring those back to the July meeting for discussion. Mrs. Mothershead noted Vivian Giles, Sands Anderson Attorney will also be listening in through zoom to learn more about this project and to be able to assist moving forward.

Geoff Suttle, Director with EDF Renewables presented the Hemings Solar project to the Commissioners. (See Exhibit I)

Mr. Suttle noted he is joined by Chris Gordon and a couple other members of EDF Renewable along with Steve Minor and Jay Garner from Northern Neck Electric Cooperative.

Mr. Suttle mentioned they are the project applicants on behalf of the property owners Mr. Clifton Jenkins and Ms. Nancy Wills.

Mr. Suttle noted the proposed location of this project is on a single parcel located at 2201 Richmond Road. Mr. Suttle also noted this property is currently open Agriculture fields with no structures and minimal trees except around the periphery.

Mr. Suttle mentioned the anticipated footprint of this project is approximately 35 acres. Mr. Suttle noted this project is just under 5 MWac.

Mr. Suttle noted this project is sized specifically to meet the electricity needs of Northern Neck Electric Cooperative customers located in that vicinity. Mr. Suttle mentioned they would be connecting to the distribution grid via the existing line on Richmond Road. Mr. Suttle also mentioned 100% of this output will go directly to homes and businesses in Richmond County and the immediate surrounding area.

Mr. Suttle mentioned this project meets or exceeds the required 500+ ft setback from Richmond Road.

Mr. Suttle noted inverters, transformers, optional battery storage have minimal footprint and located interior of the project area.

Mr. Suttle mentioned the perimeter will be fenced to ensure public safety.

Mr. Suttle noted there are some proposed supplemental vegetation plantings along the South and Eastern portion of the fence line intended to supplement the existing trees that are along the property boundary to the West and to the North where there are existing trees with the intent to offset any visual impacts from the project.

Mr. Suttle mentioned they will conduct significant due diligence on this site. Mr. Suttle noted the wetlands have been eliminated on site and will be avoided with putting the appropriate buffers.

Mr. Suttle noted there is no threatened or endangered species observed on site.

Mr. Suttle mentioned stormwater runoff will be tightly controlled in accordance with state and local regulations.

Mr. Suttle noted no impact to natural drainage patterns are anticipated.

Mr. Suttle mentioned in terms of the overall project schedule they have started working with Mr. Jenkins and Ms. Wills in the middle/end of 2019 and initiated the Cooperative interconnection studies with Northern Neck towards the end of 2019. Mr. Suttle noted early this year they have been conducting site diligence and have now initiated the permit applications with County staff. Mr. Suttle also noted EDF is getting ready to initiate an engagement with the neighbors by sending out a mailing to neighbors immediately surrounding the project in hopes to set up a community meeting.

Mr. Suttle noted construction start to finish is expected to take about 6 months including site prep and installation through to the commercial operation.

Mr. Garner with Northern Neck Electric Cooperative, stated Hemings Solar will be the first cooperative-dedicated renewable energy generation located in NNEC's service territory.

Mr. Garner mentioned the power generated from this solar farm 100% of its output will go to homes and businesses in Richmond County and the Northern Neck. Mr. Garner also mentioned by being locally generated it reduces the need for costly transmission system upgrades as well as connecting to existing cooperative infrastructure that would not require construction of a new substation.

Mr. Suttle noted some benefits of Solar Energy projects is:

- Generates clean, renewable electricity without using water, creating emissions or producing waste products.
- Places no demand on County infrastructure or services such as roads, water, sewer, emergency medical services or schools.
- Low visual profile and quiet operations
- Land may be returned to the previous agricultural use at the end of the project life
- Creates jobs during construction of the project

Mr. Packett asked will this solar project affect user rates in any way in the future. Mr. Suttle mentioned one of the benefits of the solar projects is the rate for the power is already agreed to upfront and known over the 25-year term of the power purchase agreement. Mr. Suttle noted the power purchase agreement has been signed with Old Dominion Electric Cooperative for this project and that contract is already in place. Mr. Suttle also noted the power is run directly to the cooperative here and the local members. Mr. Garner mentioned they see little to no impact on the current Co-op rates and no immediate change to members rates from this project.

Mr. Cox asked will there be any toxic materials used in the construction or in the actual solar arrays themselves. Mr. Suttle noted there are no toxic materials used. Mr. Suttle mentioned the panels are primarily crystal and silicone. Mr. Suttle noted there are steel post, copper wire, and some concrete foundation that sits underneath the inverter or the transformer. Mr. Suttle mentioned the closest that could possibly be an environmental temptation is the transformer could have some oil. Mr. Suttle noted typically he believes it would be either mineral oil or vegetable-based oils.

Mr. Bowen stated the Commissioners would review the packet and be back in touch with questions. Mr. Suttle noted they look forward to getting back before the Commission next month and will be in touch with Mrs. Mothershead in the meantime.

Mrs. Mothershead noted she would send a copy of the presentation to the Commissioners which will have the frequently asked questions discussed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Mothershead mentioned she has been contacted by a family who wishes to construct and open a small community variety store on Sharps Road in Emmerton. Mrs. Mothershead noted the store would be ran out of an existing home and will do an addition to the home to accommodate the store. Mrs. Mothershead also noted she would most likely have the application in hand before end of the week in hopes to have it on the July agenda for a public hearing to discuss the re-zoning matter.

Mrs. Mothershead noted this store would be a dry goods store and sell common household goods with some groceries.

Mr. Quicke mentioned Strata is intended to be back on the July 6th agenda.

Mr. Quicke noted the Board of Supervisors will go in closed session Thursday June 11th after the regular meeting to talk with legal counsel regarding some legislative changes that have been made with the past General Assembly session that have happened since the last time the Planning Commission has met. Mr. Quicke noted as far as legislative changes are more in relation to steps and procedures for the Board of Supervisors to be able and come back at the July meeting and talk with the Planning Commission.

Mr. Quicke mentioned there has been some minor modifications and wording that have changed from the Strata application and will be brought up at the July meeting.

Mr. Quicke noted there was a lot of Legislation that went through the 2020 General Assembly session that was very good to localities as far as solar goes. Mr. Quicke also noted the State of Virginia adopted a Clean Energy Plan that is requiring by 2045 or 2050 all electric to be produced in a clean way.

Mr. Quicke mentioned the Planning Commission still has the special exception in front of them with the conditions and a recommendation that needs to be made. Mr. Quicke noted whether or not the 2232 review is still required based off some legislation and some new paths forward will be in discussion with the Board of Supervisors on Thursday.

Mr. Quicke noted there will be discussion throughout the month about moving the future meetings to the High School Auditorium for more space to accommodate the public.

ADJOURNMENT

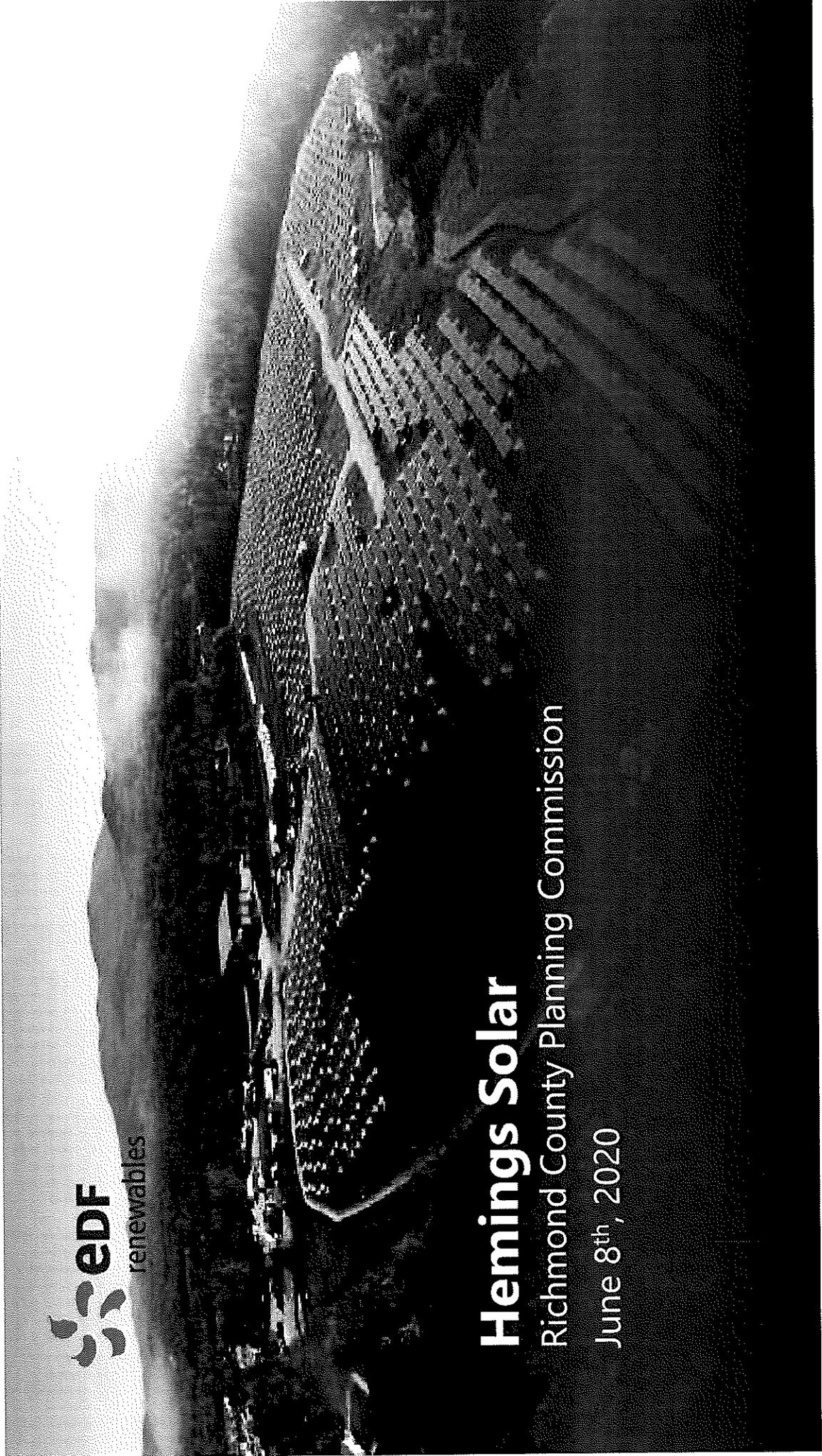
There being no further business, J.R. Fidler adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Hylan
Commission Secretary

Exhibit I



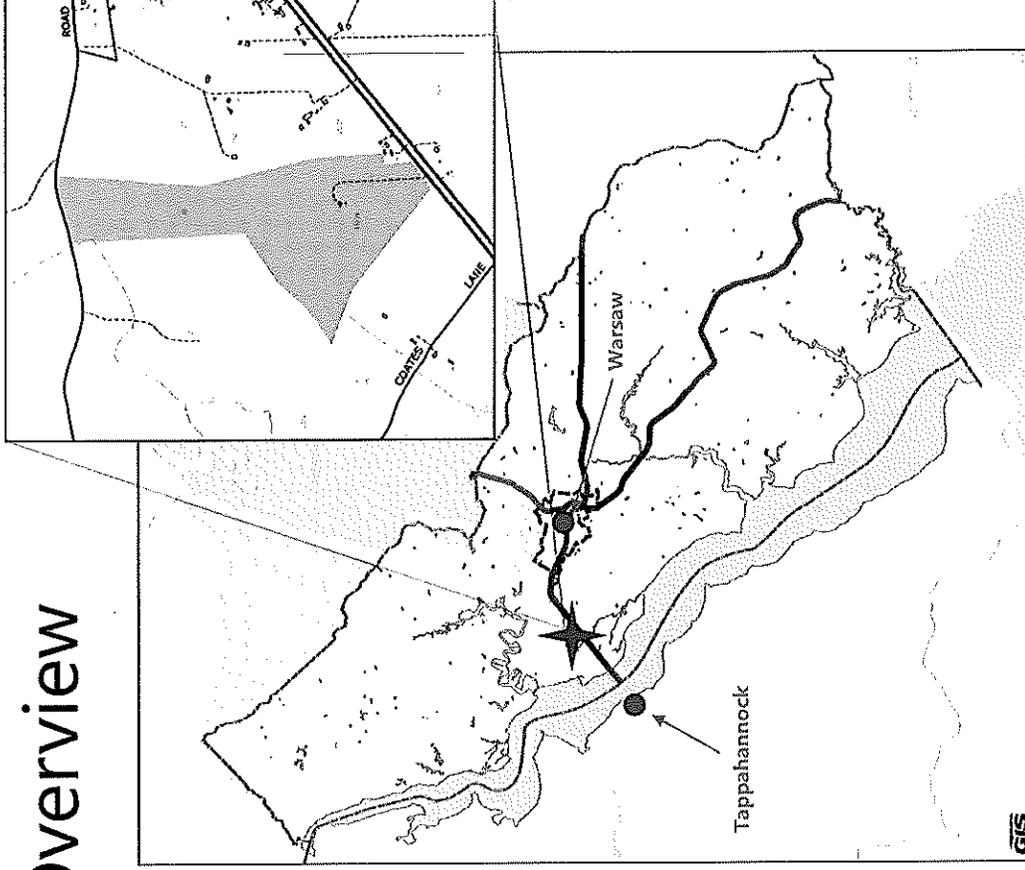
Hemings Solar
Richmond County Planning Commission
June 8th, 2020



Project Overview

Hemings Solar Partners, LLC

- **Location:** 2201 Richmond Road (West of Warsaw)
- **Technology:** Solar photovoltaic
- **Project Size:** 4.9 MWac (approx. 35 acres)
- **Interconnection:** Connects to NNEC's distribution system via existing line adjacent to substation
- **Parcel Info:**
 - Owner(s): Mr. Clifton Jenkins and Ms. Nancy Wills (Trustees of Lyell E. Jenkins Revocable Trust)
 - ID: 15-26
 - Size: 83.4 Acres
 - Zoning: A-1 Agricultural
 - Planning District: District 5



Site Investigation and Due Diligence

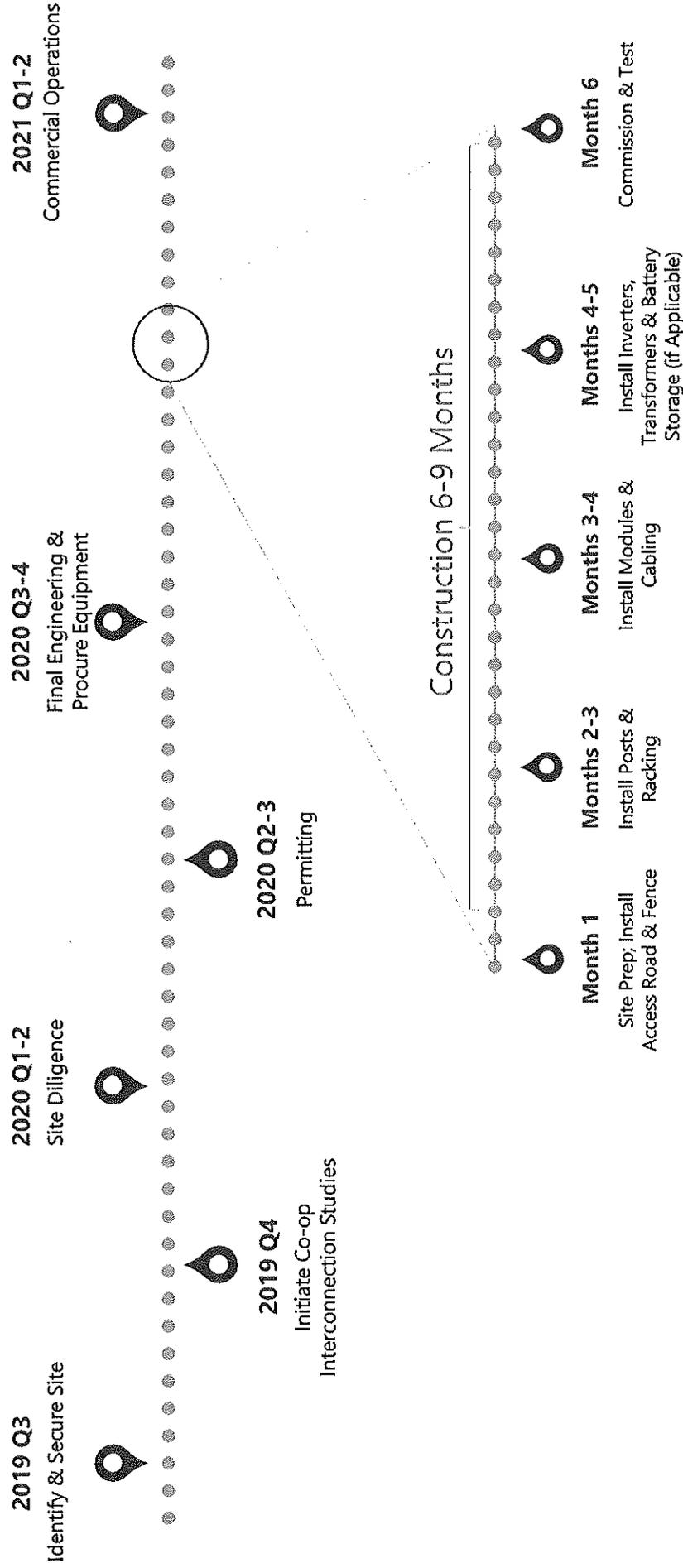
- Wetlands mapped and avoided; minimum 100-ft setback from CBPA
- No threatened or endangered species observed on-site; field reconnaissance indicates low potential for on-site occurrence
- Avoids all known cultural or historic resources; no such resources have been previously identified on-site

Compliance with Local & State Regulations

- Stormwater runoff tightly controlled in accordance with state and local regulations; mitigation measures implemented on-site as needed to control quantity and quality of stormwater runoff
- Rain passes through gaps between panels & spaces between arrays to infiltrate into ground (groundwater recharge); <1 acre of impervious surface proposed
- Natural drainage patterns maintained due to limited grading required; driven posts allow for conforming with existing topography
- In harmony with County's Comprehensive Plan & Solar Ordinance
- Project will obtain all required local, state, and federal permits

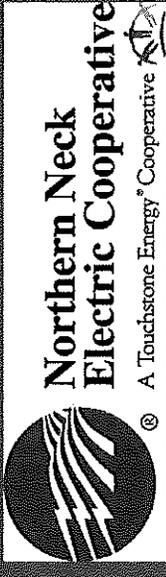
Due Diligence & Compliance

Project Timeline



EDF Renewables is developing Hemings Solar in partnership with Northern Neck Electric Cooperative (NNEC) and Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC)

- The Cooperative Story: NNEC
- How is NNEC connected to ODEC?
- Hemings Solar will be first cooperative-dedicated renewable energy generation located in NNEC's service territory.
- Locally generated power that will be used by your local electric cooperative
 - 100% of its output will go to homes and businesses in Richmond County and the Northern Neck.
 - Reduces need for costly transmission system upgrades
 - Connects to existing cooperative infrastructure; does not require construction of a new substation



Partnership with Northern Neck Electric & ODEC



Benefits of Solar Energy Projects



- Generates clean, renewable electricity without using water, creating emissions or producing waste products
- Places little to no demand on County infrastructure or services such as roads, water, sewer, emergency medical services or schools

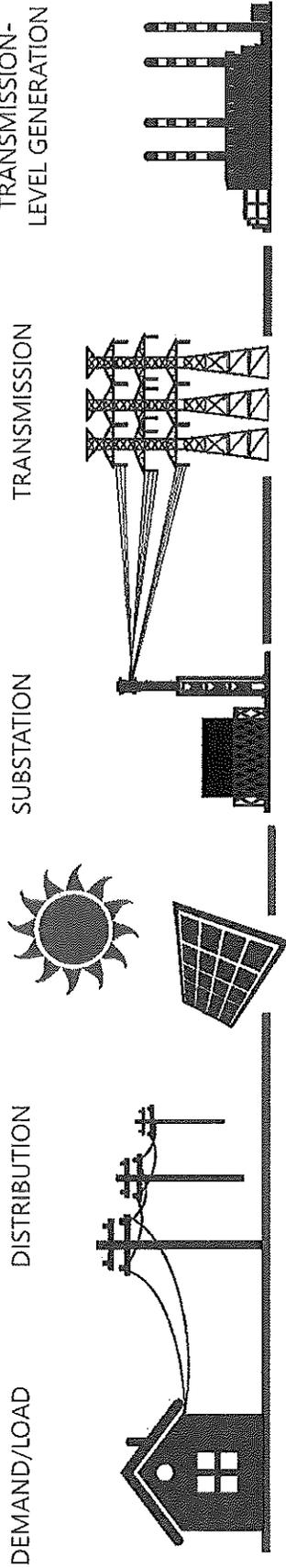


- Low visual profile and quiet operations preserve the rural, open-space character of the area



- Land may be returned to previous agricultural use at end of the project life
- Creates jobs during construction of the project; indirect economic benefits include local contracting opportunities, equipment sales and rentals, material purchases, and spending on hotels, restaurants and other local goods and services

Benefits of Distributed Solar



1

Generates electricity in communities where power is consumed

2

Connects to existing infrastructure; does not require construction of new substation or distribution lines

3

Increases resiliency of local distribution grid; reduces need for costly transmission system upgrades

4

Smaller footprint means smaller impact; project occupies tens of acres vs. 100s or 1,000s of acres

EDF Renewables North America

Trusted Partner in Renewable Energy with 35 Years of Industry Experience and Expertise in North America

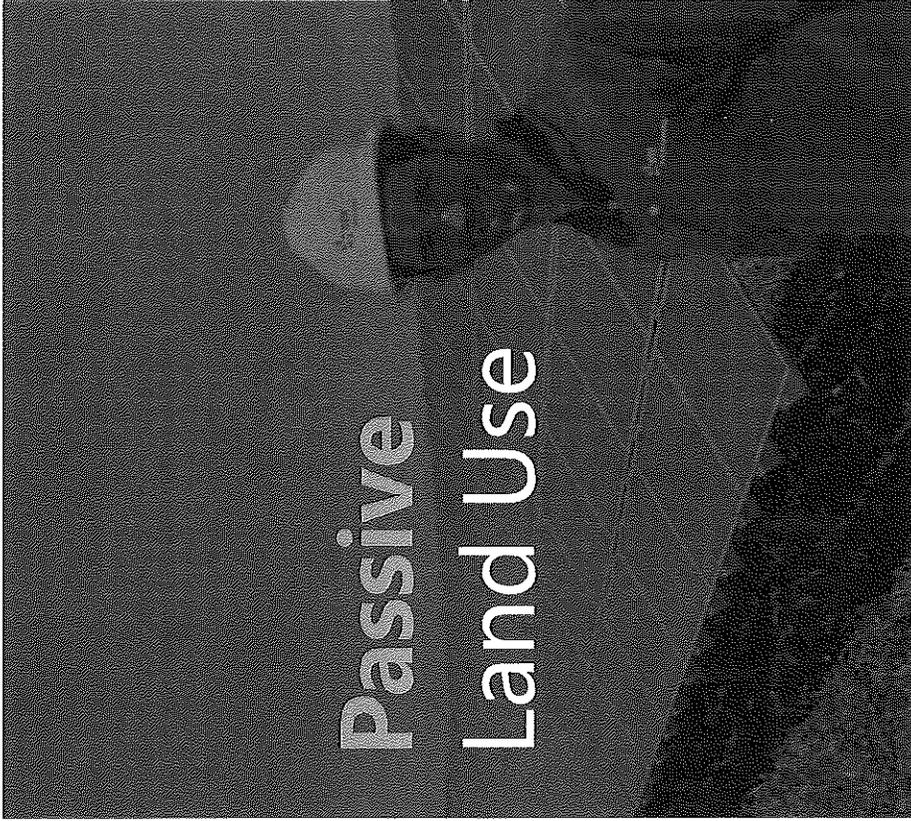
- Grid-Scale Power: Wind (onshore and offshore), solar photovoltaic, and storage projects
- Distributed Solutions: Solar, solar+storage, electrical vehicle charging and energy management
- Asset Optimization: Technical, operational, and commercial skills to maximize performance of generating projects.

Creating value from Origination to Commercial Operation



Frequently Asked Questions





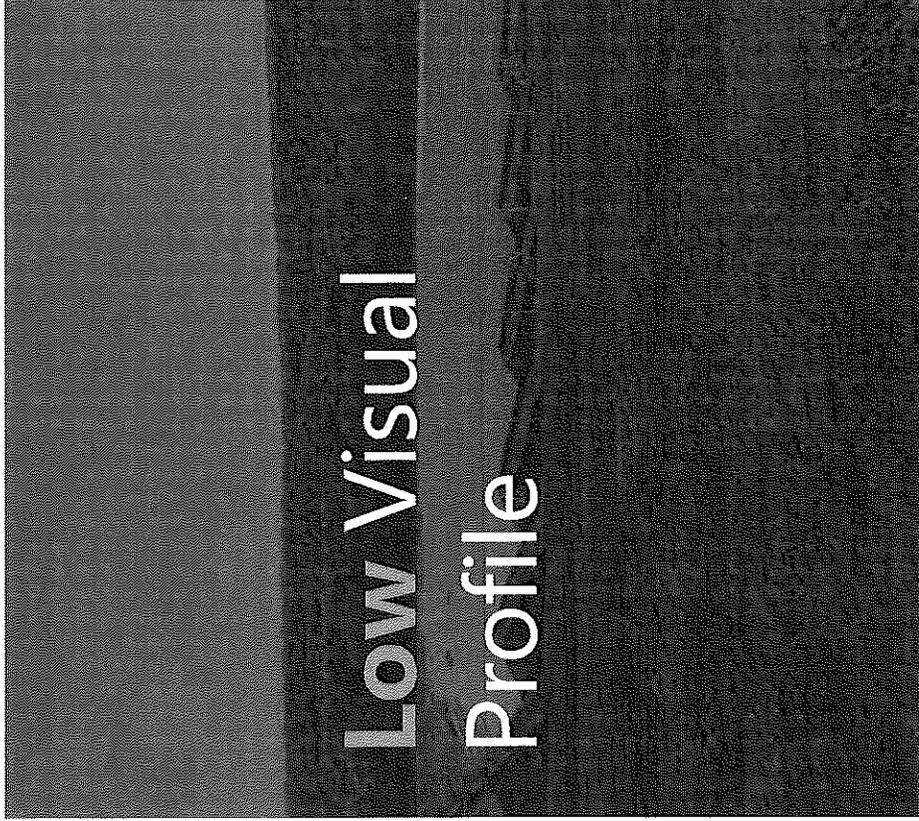
How will the Project affect the community?

- Project offers low visual profile and quiet operations that preserve the rural, open-space character of the area
- Solar is a passive land use and a less intense use than farming; does not use fertilizers or pesticides, and does not involve land disturbance after construction
- Operation of the facility produces no emissions and does not generate smoke, debris or dust
- Project places little to no demand on County infrastructure and services including roads, water, sewer, fire, emergency medical services or schools
- Unmanned facility; no buildings or other walk-in structures
- No impact on traffic during operation

How will the Project affect the environment?

- Generates clean, renewable electricity without using water, creating emissions or producing waste products
- Extensive due diligence conducted prior to construction identifies and addresses potential environmental impacts; includes evaluation of wetlands, sensitive species, and cultural and historic resources
- Project avoids wetlands and will not adversely impact groundwater resources; utilizes best management practices for erosion and sediment control during construction
- Retains existing trees and vegetation along the property boundary to extent possible, adds supplemental plantings in select areas, and only removes existing trees as necessary to construct the facility or prevent shading of solar modules

Sustainable Design



Will I be able to see the Project?

- Maximum equipment height will be 15 feet or less except for weather station pole(s) necessary to monitor site conditions
- Project meets or exceeds County setback requirements, with minimum 50-foot setback from the edge of the array to any property boundary
- Equipment will not be located within 500 feet of Richmond Road; limits views of the Project from public right-of-way
- Existing vegetation along entire northern and western property boundaries to limit views from adjacent properties to north and west, also eastbound travelers of Route 360
- Supplemental plantings in select areas to limit views from adjacent properties to the south and southeast, also westbound travelers of Route 360
- Solar panels are designed to absorb the sun's rays, not reflect them; panels also utilize anti-reflective coating to further minimize light reflected from their surface
- No lighting or signage other than for safety; Project can provide informational kiosks for educational purposes if County requests

Is the Project safe? Will it affect my health?

- Solar modules are safe and cannot release toxic materials; are typically comprised of silicon (similar to computer chips), copper, and aluminum sandwiched between glass or plastic with an aluminum frame
- Inverters and transformers used to condition power for use on the distribution grid do not contain heavy metals or toxins; pose limited environmental risk even during a malfunction or when damaged
- Operation of the facility is monitored online 24/7, and both emergency and normal shutdown procedures can be implemented remotely or manually on-site
- Project perimeter is fenced and includes warning signage to maintain public safety

Health and Safety

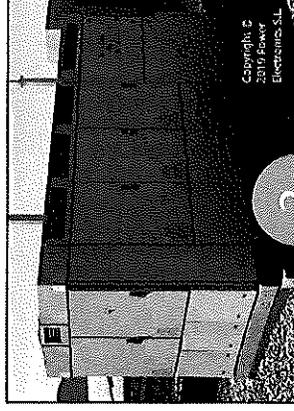
Project Equipment



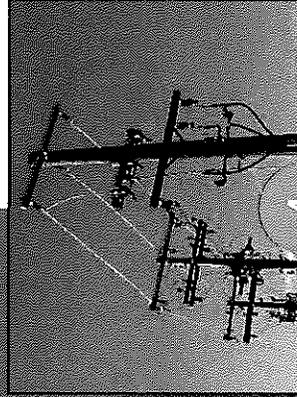
Racking
Mounted
on Support Posts



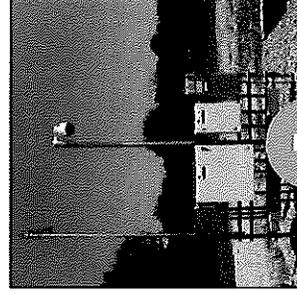
Panels Installed on Racking



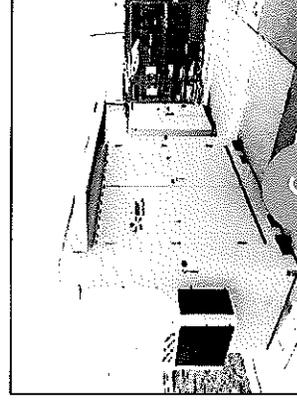
Inverter / Transformer Skid



Interconnection Equipment



Weather Station



Optional Battery Storage
Equipment

What happens at the end of project's life?

- Project is decommissioned and removed at the end of its 25-35 year life; land may be returned to previous agricultural use
- Decommissioning and removal is paid for by the Project, and not the landowner or the County
- Many project components have salvage value including steel posts and copper wire; solar modules and other equipment may be recycled
- Description of decommissioning and final land restoration provided in the permit application; project owner at the end of useful life bound by permit requirements, including equipment removal and land restoration

Decommissioning and Removal

Thank you.

Visit us at edf-re.com



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