

# MEETING MINUTES

## BROOKS COUNTY SOLAR ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

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Date: April 3, 2025  
Time: 6:00 PM  
Meeting called to order by: Lee Larko

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### IN ATTENDANCE

Lee Larko, Linda Troutman, Kyle Swann, Stuart Chappell, and Peg Howard.

Guests SGRC: James Horton,

Absent: Patrick Folsom, Justin Goodman, Zurich DeShazor, and Larry Cunningham,

**All future minutes will lead with the goals of the committee**

**The primary benchmarks the ordinance should address are as follows:**

1. No tax abatement.
2. Quality of land /Quantity of Land - Solar Facility defined limit-Prime Ag or defined limit of total acres in county
3. Solar Facilities will NOT be seen from any road or adjoining properties
4. Solar related Equipment Sound/noise will NOT be heard from adjoining properties.
5. No Lithium Battery Storage Systems- hazard and noise concerns
6. End Of Life for Solar Facility should not financially burden Brooks County

**Secondary Bench Marks for further definition and discussion are as follows:**

- 1A. Lease Options filed
- 2A. Fees for application- to planning and zoning
- 3A. Land Disturbance- Storm Water Runoff- EPD- Fees for Issuing Authority
- 4A. Locations permitted- proximity to transmission line/easement (Scope/Scale will affect)
- 5A. Soil /Water Samples
- 6A. Maintenance Logs- to define value of newly installed replacements and compliance.
- 7A. Escrow account to cover cost associated with enforcing ordinance

**These benchmarks will correlate the numbers with the categories of each meetings discussion, and changes will be reflected in the category or no change will be noted.**

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Prior Minutes from March meeting approved. Motion and seconded, unanimously approved.

**Discussion:**

Lively discussion on moving forward with drafting setback and buffers. Bullet points recognized on the limits that are desired to be met were defined. They are reflected in the motions moved and seconded. Understanding they may need further revision before turning over to county attorney. Next meeting we will discuss fees, maintenance logs and noise buffers. Discussion of the process of implementation and enforcement continues. The committee is realizing with the knowledge from James Horton, SGRC- it is possible to advise a standing committee that would help the county as project are presented for review could become part of the ordinance.

See below for any changes within categories reflected at this meeting.

### **Benchmarks and Current Standings**

**1. Tax Abatements-NO CHANGE** the committee remains steadfast to not allowing an abatement.

**2. Size and Scale-NO CHANGE** this subject shall include the quality and quantity of the land. We continue to discuss if we would like to enforce a limit per project or if it is best to limit the total amount of solar allowed in the county. We are discussing the limit of proximity by miles for any project to any other project.

**3. Setbacks/Visual buffers-Both were discussed at length. Draft for review was moved and seconded for both and are entered below.**

**4. Noise barriers/ Inverter and transformer placement-NO CHANGE** It is agreed that all transformer and inverters units will have a central location in the center of the facility and will further be surrounded by noise mitigating barriers. There will not be any allowances for this equipment to be separated from the compound it is being required to be located in.

**5. Battery Energy Storage Systems.** Further discussion on a stand alone ordinance to be looked at in the future.

**6. Decommissioning-NO CHANGE** it remains the goal of the committee for the county to not be burdened by the end of life of a solar facility- further discussion will take place in the future to define this.

**1A. Lease Option Filed -NO CHANGE** it was discussed these should be filed timely at the courthouse with a penalty of non- filing.

**2A. Fees- continue- NO CHANGE** to agree fees should be increased to allow a better capture of the time and efforts it take to enforce and maintain future enforcement from application to possible annual fees.

The county needs to benefit at some level from these fees and the work entailed in the processes stated James Horton from SGRC

**3A. Land Disturbance-this subject has been moved until EPD can advise best practices.** We need to continue to explore becoming the issuing authority in the future because it is related to forty dollar per acre fees that county is not getting from the fees collected by EPD. This area needs to address stormwater runoff also and the process to identify it and enforce it during construction and after.

**4A. Locations permitted- NO CHANGE** we will further discuss in the zoning aspect we are exploring.

**5A. Water / Land Samples-Discussion of the need for the county to have the classification for a benchmark of any land that will be disturbed and how best to insure it can be returned to that standard in the future.** This continues to be a concern as we move in to the future.

**6A. Maintenance logs-NO CHANGE** continues to be a tool to define non- compliance and to capture addition of new equipment.

**7A. Escrow Account-NO CHANGE** Further agreement this would be beneficial to add to the ordinance.

\*\*\*Note: Resource Information was provided for review/ study by committee and is used as a tool for reference for considerations and concerns.

Sample current updated Solar Ordinances from Thomas County and Lee County.

Current Brooks County Solar Ordinance. Georgia Recommended Siting for Solar

## **MOTIONS**

Moved- Kyle Swann / Seconded Howard.

### **SETBACKS**

Formal motion for 1,000 feet setbacks from all public right of ways and all properties adjoining . Clarification of essential wording will be forthcoming.

Moved- K Swann/ Seconded L Troutman-Formal Motion

### **BUFFERS**

- 1.Planted buffer will be approved before installation by proper authority
2. Installation will take place prior to any land disturbance and after approval of project. Screen must be 80 percent obscured upon installation and must reach 100 percent within three years.
3. All buffers installed will become a part of a maintenance log to insure they are maintained for continued compliance
4. All entrances and exits from any part of the facility will not have ANY view of the facility- and will be engineered so a view of the facility is completely obscured.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Next Meeting was scheduled for April 17,2025, 6:00 Pm

Motion to Adjourn / Seconded

Respectfully submitted,

Peg Howard