

MEETING MINUTES

BROOKS COUNTY SOLAR ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: December 5, 2024
Time: 2:00 PM
Meeting called to order by: Lee Larko

IN ATTENDANCE

Lee Larko, Patrick Folsom, Larry Cunningham, Linda Troutman, Kyle Swann, Stuart Chappell, Justin Goodman and Peg Howard. Absent: Zurich DeShazor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Prior Minutes from November 2024 meeting approved. Motion by L. Cunningham. Second by K. Swann. Unanimously approved.

Resource Information was provided for review/ study by committee

Sample current updated Solar Ordinances from Thomas County and Lee County.
Current Brooks County Solar Ordinance. Georgia Recommended Siting for Solar

DISCUSSION. These minutes will reflect an informal meeting with conversations on relevant subjects and concerns to individual and the committee as it relates to creating recommendation to the BOC for a stronger Solar Ordinance. No formal actions were taken. These minutes shall help the committee identify the subject matter more extensively as the areas of specificity are identified.

Jason Kemp identified the goal will be to provide a report(s) In the event the conclusion in not unanimous, a majority and a minority report will be provided to the commissioner.

Committee members were encouraged to respond to the resources provided at previous meeting and address concerns they had.

Troutman voiced concerns of the part the comprehensive plan plays in our next steps and her concerns for the economic impact with future decommissioning.

Cunnigham voiced concerns also with decommissioning and the current state recycling facilities are at and current capacity. Additional concern to Mr. Cunnigham was abatements and conflict of zoning. Cunnigham voiced the need for monitoring of production and his concern to the green aspect when oxygen producing matter is removed from the ground for solar facilities i.e. carbon offset.

Swann presented a compare of current Brooks County Solar Ordinance with current Thomas County Solar Ordinance. He identified concern for a land owner to have lien placed on the property in a worse case scenario at end of life of facility. Swann identified all leases not just options be filed in Thomas County Ordinance. In addition to the added value of the improvement the landowner would carry the tax liability after end of production if not properly decommissioned.

Following there was a rapid back and forth of relevant subject with valid concerns the committee should be aware of and take in to consideration. Extensive discussion and concern focused on a clear and concise way to address **decommissioning**, including a party to address the value of such and the timely reevaluation of that cost every three years with a cost to do so incurred by the developer.

In addition to discussion of:

Setbacks- need to be measured from property line not residence if it exists on adjoining property.

Size and Scale- need to address concise language that prevents daisy chaining projects together to manipulate categories if left in place.

Visual buffers- current BC ordinance allows for earth berms- consensus is planted trees and shrubs that obscure the view- like Lee County and Thomas County Ordinances. More enforceable language and requirements that address the aesthetic for the community and citizens.

Noise barriers- be entered into as a requirement in plans for application. In addition to the central location of transformers and inverters for the layout of the facility. It is not realistic to use a decibel level to identify noise issues- do to the nature of the sound- in frequency

Lease Option Filed at county courthouse- within a month of being signed by landowner.

Escrow Account- \$10,000 Escrow account established to be used for complaints. Balance to be kept at \$10,000 annually.

Tax Abatements- no abatements to be offered for future Solar facilities.

Fees- allowing a better capture of the time and efforts it take to enforce and maintain future enforcement from application to possible annual fees.

Land Disturbance- Issuing authority and fees associated with this. Currently EPD. At one time- Brooks County was issuing authority- Jason will research would it would take to reinstate that.

Maintenance logs- identify lightening strikes and replacement of equipment that would affect the taxable aspect of new equipment.

Wording and enforceability of next ordinance- Who- how and by what measure of quantifiable rules

Battery Energy Storage Systems. After discussion Jason will investigate a stand-alone ordinance to put into place to forbid lithium batteries.

Glare- current project do not have issues with this- but they have also not been cleaned since installation.

Consensus at close of meeting was:

Very Extensive and cost backed Decommissioning Plan

No lithium batteries.

No further abatements.

Earth berms are not an option for buffers.

Remove the scaling of systems

Discuss future projects capacity

Discuss if a land mass maximum should be considered.

Comprehensive plan, zoning review and consideration if solar should fall under rezoning or land use specifics for existing zoning and not in the special exception category.

Discuss class of farm land that should or would be allowable not prime

Kyle will look at other ordinance for model languages.

Advised by Jason to put zoning fee in ordinance.

MOTIONS

No formal motions were presented at this meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting was scheduled for January 9, 2025 3:00 Pm

Motion to Adjourn / Seconded