

MEETING MINUTES

IN

BROOKS COUNTY SOLAR ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: March 6, 2025
Time: 3:00 PM
Meeting called to order by: Kyle Swann

ATTENDANCE

Linda Troutman, Justin Goodman, Zurich DeShazor, Kyle Swann, Stuart Chappell, and Peg Howard.

Guests SGRC: James Horton, Alexandra Arazayus, and Adapture Renewable Representatives
Absent: Patrick Folsom, Lee Larko, 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 February meeting approved. Motion and seconded, unanimously approved.

Discussion:

James Horton and Alexandra Arazayus from SGRC brought a Character Use Map to identify what has been in the Comprehensive plan to identify future growth. Brooks county is mostly agriculture with residential and noted towns/cities. Another Brooks County specific colored map of prime farmland was shared for discussion with the group. Current existing solar facilities were noted in red for reference of size and scale of a project. James also brought resources to help the committee better understand the significance and distinct characteristics of the prime farmland and the topsoil that makes that distinction. Conversation continued with discussion of the process of industry specific development and any destruction and costly reversal of the disturbance of prime farmland for developed industrial solar. Conversation remains informative and the committee agrees land land disturbance and all it entails needs further exploration and defining moments.

Representatives from Adapture Renewables (who currently hold leases and wish to develop a project) were in attendance and shared a map that noted the different size setbacks and how that would convey to buildable land. They are interested in the dialogue within the committee and if there are specific questions. The representatives and committee held open dialogue and questions and answers to specific practices of the company. Topics included noise, land disturbance practices of the company, as well as setbacks. Open dialogue included economy of scale and the standards the company looks to meet when moving forward with a project.

The committee and representative discussed further if there was any example of decommissioning, the time line, outcome, and length of operation were points of interest.

Next Meeting scheduled for Mar 20. Topics for focus of discussion will be setbacks and Land Disturbance.

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-Map was provided for review of a real proposed project and what different set back would do to the land that is currently leased by Adapture Renewables. It was decided we would discuss more extensively set back at the Mar 20 Meeting. Setback will be measured from property lines and right of ways. Visual buffers will be in addition to setback and will be planted and maintained to obscure the visibility of the facility. Adjoining properties,

motorist will not see the ground mounted facility. Details will be required to make this benchmark measurable at all phases of development.

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. Moratorium was voted on March 3,2025. The committee continues to be concerned for the safety of the citizens and the hazards associated with fires on these systems. The committee has requested a moratorium on these storage systems to be presented to the commissioners for the March meeting.

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-Extensive conversation on soil disturbance and this subject was identified to focus further on for the March 20 meeting. 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

No formal motions were presented at this meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting was scheduled for March 20, 2025, 3:00 Pm

Motion to Adjourn / Seconded

Respectfully submitted,

Peg Howard