

MINUTES
PAGE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
June 26, 2018

Members Present

Bernie Miller, District 1	Paul Otto, District 1
Donnie Middleton, District 2	Steve Atkins, District 2
James Turner, District 3	James Holsinger, Secretary, District 4
Duane Painter, District 4	Craig Lancto, District 5
Jonathan Comer, Chairman, District 5	

Members Absent

Keith Weakley, Vice Chairman, District 3

Staff Present

Tracy Clatterbuck
Nathan Miller, County Attorney

Call to Order

Chairman Comer called the June 26, 2018, Page County Planning Commission work session to order in the Board of Supervisors Room at the Page County Government Center, 103 S Court Street, Luray, Virginia, at 7:00p.m. The call to order was followed by *The Pledge of Allegiance* and a *Moment of Silence*.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Lancto made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Otto. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

None

Citizen Comments on Agenda Items

Joanne Martin- Ms. Martin began by declaring that she is entirely for solar energy. Recalling that one of the presenters had stated at the first solar meeting discussion that there would be no impact on wildlife, Ms. Martin said that she has seen seven deer that currently live on her property near the 340 project. If this solar site is closed off with fencing and razor wire, she said, these animals will lose hundreds of acres that they have had access to for generations. Because deer can jump eight feet or more, she continued, razor wire presents a hazard to any that might try to clear the fence. She speculated that these animals would instead be on 340 seeking food and shelter, and citizens and tourist will be hitting them. If the fencing is for vandalism, she said, people will find ways to vandalize if they want to. She also asked who will be responsible for monitoring these sites for human interaction? Stating that our local sheriff's office is already over stretched, she asked who is going to be responsible for picking up dead animals along 340? Ms. Martin concluded that we have to think about these things as citizens of Page County.

New Business

A. Adoption of Minutes- May 22, 2018 & June 12, 2018

Mr. Otto made a motion to approve the May 22, 2018 & June 12, 2018 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lancto. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

A. Cape Solar, LLC & Dogwood Solar, LLC Special Use Permits

Ms. Clatterbuck stated that the goal of the meeting should be geared toward how and if these applications fall into the Page County Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan), and also to review the proposed conditions of the special use permits (SUP) as provided by staff. The applicants have not been given a copy of these draft conditions since they have not been discussed by the full Planning Commission (PC).

Mr. Otto presented a slideshow of photos taken of the proposed solar sites. He said he was prompted to take these photos after reviewing Liz Lewis' review of the Comp Plan on specific sections that mention preservation of farmland and protection of view sheds. We have an obligation under the Comp Plan, he said, to take these very important facts into consideration. Both applications are for "prime farmland" or "farmland of statewide importance," according to the Comp Plan.

Chairman Comer requested that staff present the list of proposed conditions for Cape Solar, LLC which read as follows:

- 1) THIS SPECIAL USE PERMIT IS TRANSFERABLE. IT WILL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN AND HAVE PRIVILEGES PROVIDED FOR IN THE PAGE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE AND ANY ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS FOR THE PERIOD SET FORTH WITHIN THE PARAMETERS IN THIS SPECIAL USE PERMIT. THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT SHALL REMAIN WITH THE PROPERTY FOR A PERIOD OF FORTY 40 YEARS.
- 2) THE SOLAR ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITY SHALL BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH ALL COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCY REGULATIONS.
- 3) THIS SPECIAL USE PERMIT MAY BE REVOKED UPON MATERIAL NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE PERMIT, OR UPON VIOLATION OF ANY OTHER RELEVANT TERMS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY OF PAGE, VIRGINIA.
- 4) ONLY THE IMPROVEMENTS SHOWN ON THE PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN MAP, DESIGNED BY TIMMONS GROUP AND DATED JANUARY 31, 2018 SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED PURSUANT TO THIS APPROVAL. ANY CHANGE OF USE OR EXPANSION OF THE SOLAR ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITY WILL REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL, NEW, OR MODIFIED SPECIAL USE PERMIT AS REQUIRED BY THE PAGE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE AT THAT TIME.
- 5) INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS IS PERMITTED TO PROVIDE UP TO A MAXIMUM OF 100 MEGAWATTS OF POWER GENERATION ON THE APPROXIMATE 559 ACRE SITE.
- 6) BEFORE BEGINNING ANY CLEARING, GRADING, OR OTHER LAND DISTURBING ACTIVITY, THE APPLICANT SHALL OBTAIN APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION/ELECTRICAL PLANS AND/OR PERMITS FROM THE PAGE COUNTY BUILDING OFFICIAL, INCLUDING EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION PLANS AND/OR PERMITS AS REQUIRED BY THE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE AND/OR DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY.
- 7) THE APPLICANT SHALL ADHERE TO THE LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPING PLAN SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANT THAT WAS APPROVED BY THE COUNTY OF PAGE, VIRGINIA. IF AMENDMENTS NEED TO BE MADE RELATED TO LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPING, PROPOSED AMENDMENTS MUST BE AT LEAST EQUIVALENT TO WHAT WAS ORIGINALLY APPROVED BY THE COUNTY OF PAGE, VIRGINIA. APPROVED LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPING SHALL BE INSTALLED PRIOR TO ACTIVATION OF THE FACILITY. ALL LIGHTING SHALL BE MAINTAINED IN AN OPERATING CONDITION AT ALL TIMES. ALL LANDSCAPING SHALL BE MAINTAINED IN A HEALTHY CONDITION AT ALL TIMES. DEAD PLANT MATERIALS SHALL BE REMOVED WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME AND REPLACED DURING THE NORMAL PLANTING SEASON.
- 8) THE SOLAR ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITY, INCLUDING THE SECURITY FENCE, SHALL BE FULLY SCREENED FROM ANY ROADS OR RIGHT OF WAYS, AND ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES WITH EXISTING OR PROPOSED VEGETATION AS DETAILED IN THE LANDSCAPING PLAN APPROVED BY THE COUNTY OF PAGE, VIRGINIA.
- 9) ALL EXTERIOR LIGHTING SHALL BE SHIELDED TO DIRECT LIGHT AWAY FROM ADJACENT PROPERTIES AND ROADS. LIGHT FIXTURES SHALL NOT EXCEED 20 FEET IN HEIGHT.

- 10) HOURS OF CONSTRUCTION OR CLEARING, GRADING, OR OTHER LAND DISTURBING ACTIVITY SHALL BE LIMITED TO MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY, 6:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M. NO CONSTRUCTION SHALL TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAYS OR NATIONAL HOLIDAYS.
- 11) THE TOTAL HEIGHT OF THE SOLAR ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITY TO INCLUDE THE PANELS AND MOUNTS ONLY, SHALL NOT EXCEED 20 FEET ABOVE THE GROUND WHEN ORIENTATED AT MAXIMUM TILT.
- 12) ALL ELECTRICAL WIRING SHALL BE UNDERGROUND EXCEPT FOR THE INTERCONNECTION POINT AND THE TRANSMISSION LINES TO THE LOCAL UTILITY POWER GRID.
- 13) THE APPLICANT SHALL BE SOLEY RESPONSIBLE FOR DECOMMISSIONING THE SOLAR ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITY. THE SOLAR ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITY SHALL BE DECOMMISSIONED AND REMOVED WITHIN TWELVE (12) MONTHS AFTER THE FACILITY CEASES ELECTRICITY GENERATION FOR A CONTINUOUS SIX-MONTH PERIOD. DECOMMISSIONING SHALL INCLUDE REMOVAL OF SOLAR COLLECTORS, CABLING, ELECTRICAL COMPONENTS, ANY BASES OR FOOTERS, AND ALL OTHER ASSOCIATED ITEMS. THE APPLICANT IS SOLEY FINANCIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR DECOMMISSIONING THE SOLAR FACILITY.
- 14) BEFORE THE SOLAR ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITY IS ENERGIZED, IT SHALL BE SECURED WITH A FENCE AT LEAST SIX FEET IN HEIGHT. THE FENCE SHALL BE PROPERLY MAINTAINED AT ALL TIMES TO INCLUDE REPAIRS AND LANDSCAPING MAINTENANCE.
- 15) THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR OR THEIR DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE MAY VISIT THE SITE AT ANY TIME TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH ANY COUNTY ORDINANCES AND SPECIAL USE PERMIT CONDITIONS.

Chairman Comer requested staff to present the list of proposed conditions for Dogwood Solar, LLC. Those conditions are identical to the Cape Solar conditions except for item 5, which is site specific:

- 5) INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS IS PERMITTED TO PROVIDE UP TO A MAXIMUM OF 20 MEGAWATTS OF POWER GENERATION ON THE APPROXIMATE 340 ACRE SITE.

Ms. Clatterbuck concluded her presentation by stating that she had reviewed the decommissioning plan provided by the applicant and found it very well written. She noted that it includes many of the items the Commission had discussed in prior meetings. Chairman Comer asked Mr. Nathan Miller his opinion of the decommissioning plan, to which Mr. Miller replied that he found it well-written and the key to the plan is to include security for the cost of decommissioning as a condition of the permit, whether by bond or surety.

Chairman Comer pointed out that condition numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, and 15 were standard conditions put in all SUPs, but the others are more project specific. Mr. Bernie Miller asked for clarification on megavolt vs. megawatt. Chairman Comer explained that the county code states "electric facilities operating above 40 kilovolts" require a SUP. The proposed solar facilities are operating in megawatt which is higher than a kilovolt. Mr. Bernie Miller stated he was still trying to understand how existing transmission lines will support these facilities. He requested that the applicant provide an engineering plan to explain how all of this works with existing lines. Ms. Jessica Berger, representing Urban Grid, stated that she would be happy to bring an engineer to the next meeting so that they could explain how all of this works related to the transmission lines. Mr. Painter asked if an engineer would be able to shed light on how this works, and Ms. Berger said yes. He also stated it would be helpful to see a flowchart, as well. Ms. Berger said that she would provide one to Ms. Clatterbuck before the next meeting, for distribution to the Commission, and that she would also bring an engineer to that meeting.

Mr. Painter said that he would like to discuss options related to security fencing after hearing Ms. Martin's concerns related to wildlife. Ms. Berger noted that in Maryland they are not allowed to use razor wire. She will explore other options and report back to the Commission.

Ms. Clatterbuck requested that Ms. Berger explain the details about how the sites are monitored. Ms. Berger stated that everything is monitored remotely as it is a web-based platform. The system sends an alert if something is not working properly. They do not anticipate any reliance on local police or EMS. These sites are insured as well. She said that they take security and safety very seriously. Ms. Berger reiterated that they would be happy to train local EMS for any emergencies that could occur if necessary. Ms. Clatterbuck asked if Ms. Berger knew of any occurrences at other facilities related to human tampering, to which Ms. Berger responded that she was not aware of any incidents. Mr. Lancto asked if there was a signal of breach that occurred, where is the person located who would respond to the problem. Ms. Berger stated they like to guide the contractor that builds these facilities to use local citizens for things such as cutting grass, installation, maintenance, etc.

Mr. Otto asked about the risk of fire or explosion. Ms. Berger stated she had not heard of either happening, but that she could not state definitively that it couldn't, because wherever there is electricity, there is a risk of fire. She added that when the projects are constructed, they must meet all local, state, and federal guidelines. Mr. Otto asked if there had been any instances of lightning strikes, and Ms. Berger responded not to her knowledge. Chairman Comer asked if the proposed projects included lightning rods. Ms. Berger stated that the only thing that has height would be the substation and they cannot put a cap on what the utility designs. That is probably why you have the public utility exemption rules. When a utility comes in if they choose to invest in the property, own it, whatever it may be, they are going to get a lot of exemptions because they are governed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the State Corporation Commission (SCC). Unfortunately, she said, this is not as clear cut as she would like it to be. There is a lot that goes into these projects and a lot of capital that is invested to make sure they operate efficiently and are well-maintained. All they can do is offer the information they have at this point in the projects. Mr. Atkins asked if there was a fire, did the applicants have any restrictions as to what the local fire department could put on it such as water. Ms. Berger stated they would provide training on how to handle those types of situations. She stated she would further investigate what type of substance could be used on the equipment should a fire occur. Mr. Middleton pointed out that if the facility is not grounded then it will just attract lightning which would be a concern of his. Ms. Berger stated she would further research that issue and get back to the Commission.

Mr. Bernie Miller asked if they were required--or planned--to do an environmental impact study on these proposed solar sites. Ms. Berger replied that they go through many environmental studies. She has completed a study of endangered and threatened species, a cultural resources preliminary, preliminary geotechs testing, phase one environmental site assessments, GIS site validation, database screening, and historical resources. This is all done prior to applying for the SUP. They cannot disturb any species that is federally protected. They have to avoid disturbing them and present a mitigation plan that shows they are not disturbing critical habitats. That part comes after local approval when the permit by rule process is started with the state.

Mr. Otto asked if the applicant could give any figures to the Commissioner of Revenue's (COR) Office so that they could provide the PC with an estimate on what the annual tax revenue for equipment would be. Ms. Berger stated she has provided that to the COR previously, and would defer to COR Becky Smith for disclosure. Chairman Comer recapped the following provided by Mrs. Smith of the estimated tax revenue for the county presented at a prior PC meeting: 1) Approximately \$150,000 in roll back taxes (one time) 2) Approximately \$50,000 for amount coming out of land use (annually) 3) Whatever 20 percent of the equipment value is which is solely determined by the SCC once the equipment has been installed. Ms. Clatterbuck noted she had followed up with Ms. Smith prior to the last PC meeting to see if those amounts had changed, and Ms. Smith stated they were the same as what she had originally presented to the PC. Ms. Smith has reached out to the SCC, but she said that they cannot even provide her with an estimate because

every project is different. Ms. Berger stated she has given the estimated value of equipment to Ms. Smith. She further stated that other localities across the Commonwealth have seen an increase in real estate tax revenue between two and four times what they are currently getting. This will be an ongoing economic benefit for the next 30-35 years to Page County. Mr. Turner asked how she arrived at the two to four times value. Ms. Berger explained she meant two to four times of what it would be not having it in land use. These proposed projects are difficult because portions of these lots will remain in land use and other portions will come out of land use, which is why the COR used different calculations than what we did. Mr. Otto stated the Commission needed a reasonable estimate of tax revenue because if the permits would go through, the county would be giving up an asset which is the farmland. Two of the biggest economic drivers for Page County are Agriculture and Tourism. We are talking about a compromise of the likelihood of scenic value of that land. We have to weigh what we are getting to what we are giving up. Mr. Turner agreed. Mr. Bernie Miller asked once it is sold to the utility, what is the tax plan then? The utility companies are under a whole new set of rules so we need to have what the income will be now and when or if the applicant decides to sell the power to the utility company what would it then be. Ms. Berger stated that she has had multiple conversations with Ms. Smith and she has asked if it would be safe to give "x" number and Ms. Smith is not comfortable giving any number because it is too early to tell. That being said, coming up with a definitive estimate will be nearly impossible because it is subject to the SCC. Mr. Turner stated in his opinion there has to be an upside to the citizens of Page County. The upside for the applicant and landowner is a no-brainer, he said. He is concerned about what the citizens of Page County will have to live with for the next 30 years. Mr. Otto requested that staff reach out to Mrs. Smith to see if she is able to attend the next meeting to discuss the tax information further.

Mr. Turner asked if there would be any way to provide pictures of what these properties will look like with solar panels from the road and from Skyline Drive, and Ms. Berger stated she could check to see if there was a way to provide a visual; however, it will be difficult to have it by the next meeting. Mr. Lancto stated it probably wouldn't mean much because technology changes so quickly. Ms. Berger stated that right now they are using 370 watt panels, and by the time installation is here which is projected to be in 2020 and 2021, they could be using 450 watt panels. It doesn't necessarily mean design will change but it will be very much depended on which manufacture they use. The design is done by professionals. They are also required to submit an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan which is taken very seriously.

Mr. Otto asked how accurate the preliminary site plans were that were submitted with the applications. Ms. Berger explained that these plans were provided to provide a general concept of what they would love to do. If anything happens on these plans it would be that panels are removed and/or that the location of the parcels within the tax parcels would change. These plans won't be definitive for a very long time. She will not get further into specific details until the process is farther along but they can't move forward without local government approval. Mr. Otto pointed out that it made it even more difficult for the PC to assess what the county could be getting into approving these permits.

Mr. Atkins questioned the noise of the panels since one of these projects are located near subdivisions. Ms. Berger explained that the panels do move with the sun. Typically, you don't hear it past the property lines. What you will hear is the invertors that are changing the DC to the AC. That's why they say solar panels are the best neighbors because they don't produce trash, noise, odor, wild parties, etc. She thinks you would hear a transmission line humming before you heard the panels humming. Ms. Berger continued to say that some of the neighbors in Old Farms Subdivision had reached out to her being very supportive of the project. Some have even inquired to see if they wanted to put solar panels on their property as well. The proposed substation is near that subdivision. She has moved it as far away from those neighbors as possible while remaining near the transmission lines. The trees near this subdivision will not be removed, as provide a natural buffer. There is nothing she can do about what is seen from Skyline Drive, although she noted that

because the panels absorb light, you would see chicken houses before a field of solar panels from Skyline Drive.

Mr. Holsinger questioned what portions of the land included the security fencing. Ms. Berger stated they are required to secure the sites. The total acreage for Dogwood Solar, LLC is approximately 340 acres; however, the footprint (of solar panels) is approximately between 80 and 120 acres. The total acreage for Cape Solar, LLC is approximately 559 acres; however, the footprint (of solar panels) is approximately 365 acres. They will build the security fencing around the footprint (of solar panels). Mr. Middleton stated when he pictured a site with fencing and razor wire, a convict camp came to mind.

Chairman Comer asked Mr. Nathan Miller his thoughts on how the process with the Comp Plan needed to go. Mr. Nathan Miller explained that the projects themselves have to meet the standards of the Comp Plan. You do try to follow the Comp Plan. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) do have the authority to say the project meets the Comp Plan and is not necessarily absolute. He has not yet reviewed the areas of concern in the Comp Plan specifically related to how and if the applications fit into the plan. He further detailed that public notice ads have to state that the applications are "substantially in accordance" with the Comp Plan. Mr. Lancto pointed out that the articles Ms. Clatterbuck sent out show that they do need to be careful in determining that the projects fit into the Comp Plan to avoid potential legal conflicts. Chairman Comer stated he wasn't sure he understood the process on how this works as far as matching or detailing compliance with the Comp Plan. What is it they have to show or document conformance with the Comp Plan. Mr. Nathan Miller stated the BOS have to review the Comp Plan and pass a motion to affirm its compliance. Mr. Otto pointed out that years ago Billy Aleshire would have in his staff report whether the SUP application met the Comp Plan or not. Ms. Clatterbuck noted that has been done with previous applications in staff reports; however, with these particular applications as Zoning Administrator she is not comfortable saying it conforms to the Comp Plan based on how it is currently written. Mr. Otto stated everyone needed to take a hard look at the Comp Plan to determine whether solar fits in or not. He also noted that they can override the plan if they decide the project is for the greater good.

Chairman Comer asked how the Commission wanted to proceed. Mr. Holsinger suggested that the draft conditions be released to the applicants since they have now been preliminary discussed by the PC, with the understanding that the conditions are only in draft form and could change.

Mr. Jared Burton, an attorney for Urban Grid, asked if they could briefly discuss the condition related to the time limit of the SUP. The decommissioning plan (30 years) is geared toward the expected life of the equipment. They have a 25-year lease and they have four or five year options, with the potential for that to extend further. Under current studies, these panels could potentially last 50-60 years. The panels will depreciate with an expected 20% degradation of this equipment over time and the company will then decide when they want to decommission. The potential of the length of the permit being only 30 years is a cause for a little concern because by-right with the landowner they can be there 25 years plus another 20 years. They believe this equipment, let alone any equipment that is being replaced, perhaps more efficient panels, will last even longer than that. They would find it very problematic but they acknowledge the code requires a time period for the SUP. Ms. Berger stated they have the option to lease right now, but the lease does not begin until the option is executed. They would need an additional five years for the state permit process, so you are looking at 50 years as of right now. Chairman Comer requested they provide a number they are requesting the time period, which could be discussed further from there. Mr. Burton pointed out that Jellystone got 99 years. Mr. Otto replied that they've learned a few things since that was done. Ms. Berger stated these projects would not be marketable if there is a time limit on them. At 30 years it is not reasonable for the company to move forward with the projects. Mr. Otto asked if they have a basic 25-year lease they must have figured they could recover the cost at a minimum of 25 years. Why would you make

your lease any shorter than that period of time? Mr. Burton stated he was not involved in negotiations with the landowners. Ms. Berger stated that 25 years was a pretty standard time frame. Mr. Otto recommended they understand where the county is coming from though and that is that 30-50 years down the road they may realize they made a big mistake granting these permits and not want to do them again. Ms. Berger stated coming from the developer standpoint, there is not one person who would invest in a solar project with a 30-year time frame. Mr. Burton stated it was kind of an iffy project with a time limit, and Mr. Otto replied that it was also iffy for the county as well. Chairman Comer again asked that they provide a number they are seeking for the time limit of the permit. Ms. Berger stated that they would go with 99 years just like the Jellystone SUP that was approved in Page County three years ago. Mr. Holsinger asked if the projects would be viable at 50 years. Ms. Berger explained that the solar facilities are designed to operate for as long as they are efficient.

Mr. Holsinger revisited the proposed condition related to the preliminary site plan, and asked if staff had a recommendation on how to handle or word that condition. Ms. Clatterbuck stated she would recommend it be worded to say the projects are confined to the boundaries of the property lines shown on the preliminary site plan, but she is not sure how adjoining landowners would feel about that. Mr. Holsinger stated based on the presentation tonight, certainty on location of panels is unknown. Mr. Lancto asked if the applicant planned to expand boundary lines. Ms. Berger again stated outside boundary lines will not change but location of panels could differ from what is shown on the preliminary plan. Mr. Otto suggested they could say the footprint of the panels would not exceed the acreage of the footprint shown on the preliminary site plan regardless of shape. Chairman Comer questioned if we are telling them they can't exceed acreage and megawatts, why do we need to tell them where they can put their solar panels? Ms. Clatterbuck suggested they strike condition #4 and add the second sentence of #4 to #5 and leave it alone. Chairman Comer and Mr. Holsinger stated they thought they would resolve the issue. Mr. Otto stated they are trying to imagine what this solar facility is going to look like and what the impact to citizens and tourist will be. If you don't define the intensity allowed there is no way to access the impact. Otherwise, you are left to imagine all 900 acres covered in panels. Mr. Lancto asked if they had come to the PC asking that would that make a difference, and Mr. Otto stated it would to him. Ms. Berger noted that restricting footprint could pose an issue with the design detail. They feel putting the acreage that was applied for along with maximum megawatts would be more reasonable for them as the developer. Mr. Holsinger asked if it is done that way how does the county confirm they haven't increased something. Ms. Berger stated they would have to go through the SUP process if they were to expand or increase. Mr. Holsinger said if the condition only says you won't produce more than a certain amount of power, how do we keep it from getting larger even though it doesn't produce more power? Ms. Berger replied they would have to apply for another SUP. Chairman Comer suggested the condition specify total acreage and megawatt applied, or proposed footprint of panels and megawatt which would not be total acreage. Ms. Berger stated she would be concerned with putting a limit on the footprint (of solar panels). She is okay with the total acreage and maximum megawatts. Mr. Otto stated if you say you're going to use 365 acres for panels out of 559 acres, you could configure those panels anyway you wanted (shape). Ms. Berger stated it was not that easy. The inability to be flexible within the total acreage applied for in the SUP would potentially be a construction design problem. Chairman Comer suggested changing wording to "the utilization of this land shall not exceed 75% of acreage or whatever" and that number can be changed.

Chairman Comer asked how the commission felt about buffering. Mr. Otto stated he felt buffering along 340 and any residential dwellings was very important. The Dogwood Solar site seems to have a lot of natural buffer already. Mr. Bernie Miller stated he felt buffering needed to be around the entire site (to include the security fence). Mr. Painter stated that condition #8 already says the security fencing includes roads and neighbors. Ms. Berger asked what type of vegetation would be required. In other localities, they plant three foot vegetation that grow 12-24 inches per year that will mature between 8 and 12 feet. They like to use

ones that will survive through winter and spring such as evergreens. Mr. Otto stated he would like to see native noninvasive species. Chairman Comer asked how they could word that condition. Mr. Nathan Miller suggested putting the landscaping plan as a condition of the permit to be approved by the county. Ms. Clatterbuck clarified that the applicants have not been told a landscaping plan is required yet because of wanting the Commission to discuss it first, so let's be sure to give them guidance in preparing the plan. Mr. Bernie Miller questioned if it would be possible to have the vinyl green that goes in the fencing along 340. Ms. Berger asked if they did that would they also be required to have a buffer around the fencing and Mr. Bernie Miller responded yes. Ms. Berger said she would check into options.

B. Proposed Sign Ordinance Amendment Draft Review

Chairman Comer suggested this item be discussed at the next meeting.

C. Comp Plan Committee Report

Mr. Otto stated they continue to make progress in preparing a draft. The next meeting is scheduled for tomorrow at 3:00 p.m.

D. Subdivision Committee Report

No Report

Open Citizen Comment Period

Allen Louderback- Mr. Louderback stated his property bordered a portion of the Cape Solar project. That is not so much an issue but his concern is what does it do for the economic benefit to Page County? It was an issue many years ago when we started losing industry and didn't have anything for the local people. The first question would be how many full time residents will be employed at these sites? From what he gathers, none. What other benefits will there be? Are we going to get cheaper electric? After talking with some people at Shenandoah Valley Electric (SVE), he learned that they are not even buying the power, so what is being produced for 25,000 households will go on the grid to supply other higher areas of growth. It's not going to benefit tourism unless you have a really great screening system because three foot vegetation is going to take years to grow which will impact the tourists. As far as the taxes, the SCC sets those rates and since there is a push for renewable energy they will continue to cut those rates. How will this benefit citizens of Page County? Do we make adjustments just because they are incurring a lot of costs? The initial fees were around two million dollars so the BOS rolled it back to twenty thousand. He can understand one being excessive but the other is ridiculous. If we really want to supply 25,000 households in Northern VA, how about we government- subsidize 25,000 homes in Page County and we will get our rates reduced that way. In conclusion, the landscaping has been discussed at length. How about getting photos of what buffering looks like on other projects. If you want to see what a solar farm would look like in Page County, go online and look out west. You will then see what it would look like in Page County.

Jennifer Flynn (Superintendent for Shenandoah National Park) - She began by stating she originally came to listen tonight; however, a few points were brought up she would like to discuss. The park has done some preliminary viewshed analysis on how projects would impact viewshed Skyline Drive. She provided maps that the park developed that showed the level of visibility from various points in the park of the proposed locations to the Commission. As you will see, she said, most of these areas are considered very visible from the Park. She would like the Commission to consider that when discussing these applications. The Park Service does an annual financial impact study of the Park. Every year they analyze economic impact to neighboring counties. In 2017, the economic impact to the eight counties the park is surrounded by was over \$95 million dollars. She asks the Commission consider the trade-offs. Obviously, they are in a green business. They are not advocating against the project but would ask that impacts to the park and visitors on Skyline Drive are as greatly considered as the ones along 340. Visitors come to Shenandoah National Park because of what they see from the Park. Almost everywhere you stand, you are looking out. There are very

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few places other than Old Rag, where you are looking back into the Park. Visitors tell us they enjoy looking out on your county because it has a diverse landscape of small development, agriculture, small towns, etc. The Superintendent is concerned that the impact of the view is considered as highly as the other factors when weighing this decision.

Jessica Berger- Ms. Berger responded to the Park Service comments, that while she appreciates their attempt, what you see on the maps they provided is an aerial view, not looking out at the projects from the Park.

Chairman's Report

None

Clerk's Report

None

Adjourn

Chairman Comer adjourned the meeting at 9:37 p.m.


Jonathan Comer, Chairman


Jamie Holsinger, Secretary

