

Charlotte County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
August 25, 2020
Charlotte County Administration Office

Present:

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| Andrew Carwile | Gladys Reid |
| Cornell Goldman | George Sandridge |
| Deborah Haskins | Eugene Wells |
| Kenny Howard | David Watkins, II |
| W.V. Nichols | |

Absent:

Kerwin Kunath
Clark Poindexter

Board Representative in Attendance: Kay Pierantoni

Staff in Attendance: Monica Elder, Assistant County Administrator

Chairman Haskins called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and Andrew Carwile gave the invocation.

George Sandridge made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. David Watkins seconded the motion and the motion carried with all members present voting yes.

Kenny Howard made the motion to approve the June 23rd & July 28th meeting minutes. Andrew Carwile seconded the motion and the motion carried with all members present voting yes.

No one signed up to speak at the general public comment period.

At the request of Chairman Haskins, staff presented a summary of the 2232 review staff report third-party reviewer The Berkley Group, LLC had provided for the proposed Courthouse Solar utility-scale solar project.

Citizens were provided an opportunity to address the Commission regarding the 2232 review.

Staff read comments provided by Robert Wood and Brenda Fenwick requesting that the County protect the County's beauty and wildlife by not approving the solar farm.

Written comments provided by Edward and Janet Early were read requesting the County delay a decision and perform further study to determine the risk involved in the Courthouse Solar project and its impact on wildlife, plants, and the Roanoke Creek watershed.

Written comments provided by P.K. Pettus were read requesting delaying action on the Courthouse Solar application until early 2021 to allow time to identify potential negative impacts and possible mitigation actions, protect the Roanoke Creek watershed, provide the public with more information and make a well informed decision. Ms. Pettus also requested the Planning Commission consider providing additional information to the public regarding solar development and the use of proffers in conjunction with land use applications.

Stuart Topp addressed the Commission, stating that his group obtained signatures petitioning for placement of a referendum on the November ballot that would allow citizens to determine if utility-scale solar development should be allowed in the County, but the judge was unable to grant their request. Mr. Topp also expressed concerns regarding health and environmental risks associated with solar panels.

Robert Wood addressed the Commission to express disapproval of the project and concerns about using land in the County for utility-scale solar.

David Watkins made the motion to defer the decision on the 2232 to a future meeting. Kenny Howard seconded the motion and the motion carried with George Sandridge and Cornell Goldman voting no and all other members present voting yes.

Commissioner Cornell Goldman addressed the Commission stating his reasons for voting against deferring the decision.

Commissioner's discussed the need to establish a date for continuing the 2232 review. Staff explained there was a 60-day 2232 review requirement and inquired about additional information needed to complete the 2232 review. Kenny Howard requested the DCR maps in a larger format.

Citizen Stuart Topp inquired about the use of battery storage for solar. Commissioners and citizens then engaged in open discussion regarding placement of solar on agricultural land and potential environmental impacts.

Supervisor Pierantoni recommended that the Planning Commission move on to the next agenda item since they had voted to defer the 2232 review.

Staff requested clarification on the date the Planning Commission would take up the issue again. After additional discussion, Andrew Carwile made the motion to take up the 2232 at the next scheduled meeting. Cornell Goldman seconded the motion and the motion carried with all members present voting yes.

Staff reported that they were researching options to address cemetery lot sizes in the County as requested by the BZA, but had not yet found a solution.

David Watkins made the motion to set a special called meeting on September 8th following the joint public hearings to consider recommendations for the Shepherd's Tavern Inc. and Charlotte County tower conditional use permit applications. George Sandridge seconded the motion and the motion carried with all members present voting yes.

Board representative Kay Pierantoni stated her support of deferring the decision on the 2232 and the importance of obtaining additional input from the applicant and from the public during the public comment period.

Cornell Goldman expressed an interest in making sure the public was aware of solar zoning regulations that were in place. Francis Hodson with SolUnesco addressed the Commission,

noting that SolUnesco had developed a website including information and studies on some of the issues addressed.

Commissioners discussed issues with buffers and visual screening, and the possibility of visiting an operational solar facility with similar buffers and similar development guidelines. Mr. Hodsoll offered to provide information on potential projects that might be suitable.

George Sandridge made the motion to adjourn the meeting. David Watkins seconded the motion and the motion carried.