

PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board of the Town of La Grange, NC met Monday, July 20, 2015 at 7 pm in the Town Hall Council Chamber for a Regular Session with the following present:

Present: Chairwoman Christi Wilhelm; Members Edward Moore, Carolyn Ellis, Penny Dawson, Julia Wooten, and Dorothy Sutton arrived at 7:15pm, Planner Nathan A. Rhue, CZO; Town Clerk Wendy S. Morton, MMC.

Absent: Vice-Chairman John T. Miller

Guest: 4

Staff: Tyrone Morgan, Public Works Director

Chairwoman Christi Wilhelm called the meeting to order and thanked the guests for attending. She then asked Member Penny Dawson to open the meeting with prayer.

Chairwoman Christi Wilhelm asked if everyone had a chance to look over the June minutes as they needed to be approved. Motion was made by Member Carolyn Ellis and seconded by Member Penny Dawson to approve the June 2015 minutes. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Meeting was turned over to Planner Nathan Rhue.

Planner Nathan Rhue thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He then stated that Charles Halsall, Senior Planner, Division of Community Assistance, for the Land Use Plan update will not be here tonight but thought that by the next meeting he would have everything in order to present.

Planner Nathan Rhue stated that there were (3) three request tonight and nothing on the controversial level. The first request was from James Jones of 452 Forrest Park, Greenville, NC for a proposal to subdivide an existing tract (approximately 74 acres) located on Hwy 903 North (Record #16064) into three (3) tracts of approximately 5.71 acres, 17.03 acres and 51 acres. Due to the size of the proposed subdivision, it is defined by ordinance as a Major Subdivision. There will be no new roads or easements proposed for this subdivision and no road dedications to the town. The subdivision is requested in order to allow for construction of a solar energy facility that is being proposed by Scarlet Solar, LLC. The requested subdivision is contingent on the approval of the Condition Use Permit associated with the solar energy facility.

After further discussion, Motion was made to approve Mr. James Jones request to subdivide the existing tract (approximately 74 acres) located on Hwy 903 North (Record #16064) into three (3) tracts of approximately 5.71 acres, 17.03 acres and 51 acres by Member Penny Dawson and seconded by Member Julia Wooten. Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Planner Nathan Rhue stated, that the second request was from Mr. James Jones of 452 Forrest Park, Greenville, NC to rezone 17.03 acres (approximately 741,826 square feet) with a front lot width of approximately 717 feet and rear lot width of 925 feet located at 3107 Hwy 903 North from Agriculture Residential (AR) to Highway Commercial (HC). The purpose of the Highway Commercial District shall be to provide for and encourage the proper grouping and development of commercial uses and larger scale developments intended to cater mostly to vehicular traffic outside of the traditional downtown commercial area and a solar farm is only permitted within the Highway Commercial District as a Conditional Use.

After further discussion, Motion was made to approve Mr. James Jones Rezoning Request for his property located at 3107 Hwy 903 North by amending the Zoning Map from Agriculture Residential (AR) to Highway Commercial (HC) by Member Carolyn Ellis and seconded by Member Penny Dawson. Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Planner Nathan Rhue stated that the third and final request was from Scarlet Solar, LLC for a Conditional Use Permit in order to install a solar energy facility on a 17.03 acre lot located at 3107 Hwy 903 North (Record #16064). Mr. Jones (owner of the property in question) has agreed to lease the property to Scarlet Solar, LLC (applicant) in order to install on the property in question a solar energy facility. Planner Nathan Rhue introduced Mr. Keith Billy a contractor with Cypress Creek Renewables to explain and answer any questions the board members may have. Mr. Keith Billy a contractor with Cypress Creek Renewables explained in detail that a buffer of evergreen trees with two rows staggered would be planted with a height of 6' and the existing crossing would be access in and out of site and DOT would move the driveway. He then stated there would be 8,000 Solar panels and explained in detail how energy would be transformed. Member Penny Dawson asked if the Solar panels would make any noise and Mr. Billy stated no more than a humming sound. The facility itself will only encompass 15 of the 17 acres and the proposed solar energy facility will consist of ground mounted, fixed tilt racks supported on driven piles. The plant will be interconnected to the local distribution system owned by Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation. The energy produced from this plant will be sold to the NC Electric Membership Corporation.

Planner Nathan Rhue stated that based on the submittal of the aforementioned items, the proposed solar energy facility appears to comply with all applicable Ordinances and approval is recommended. Section 13-22 of the Town's Zoning Ordinance outlines all requirements needed for the solar energy facility. They include the following:

- Minimum of fifteen (15) acres of land;
- Permitted Use within the Highway Commercial (HC) District;
- All systems, equipment, and structures proposed do not exceed twenty-five (25) feet;
- All equipment and structures are a minimum of fifty (50) feet from all property lines;
- Exterior boundaries are a minimum of one-hundred (100) feet from any residence;
- A site plan has been submitted outlining panels, existing structures, etc.;
- A lease agreement has been submitted;
- Decommissioning plans have been submitted outlining anticipated manner in which facility will be decommissioned and site restored (within 12 months of decommissioning);
- Proposed security fencing at a minimum of six (6) feet in height along entire perimeter;
- Proposed buffer yard of two (2) staggered rows of medium evergreen shrubs reaching a height of six (6) feet within two (2) years of planting, as outlined in Article 16 of the Town's Zoning Ordinance.

Chairwomen Christi Wilhelm stated that we as a Planning Board could only make a recommendation to the Board of Adjustments and they would have the final say. She then asked if any of the board members had anything to add and they did not.

Motion was made to approve Scarlet Solar, LLC Request for a Conditional Use Permit in order to install a solar energy facility on a 17.03 acre lot located at 3107 Hwy 903 North (Record #16064) by Member Penny Dawson and seconded by Member Julia Wooten. Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Chairwoman Christi Wilhelm asked that a motion be made to adjourn. With no further business to discuss, motion was made by Member Edward Moore and seconded by Member Dorothy Sutton to adjourn the meeting at 7:50pm.


Christi Wilhelm
Chairwoman
8/24/15
Date


Wendy S. Morton, MMC
Town Clerk
8/24/2015
Date