

**RICHMOND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

December 7, 2015

The Richmond County Planning Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 7, 2015, in the Public Meeting Room, County Administrative Building, Warsaw, VA.

The following members were present:

Glenn Bowen

Jesse Clark

Vice Chairman Darnell Clayton

Rick Cox

Chairperson Martha Hall

Cassandra Jackson

John W. Lewis

Joyce Pemberton

Patrick Weakland

The following member was absent:

Clifton Jenkins

Also present:

R. Morgan Quicke, County Administrator

Mercedes Pierce, Planning Commission Secretary

Robert Pemberton

Harry Smith

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Martha Hall called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m. Jesse Clark gave the invocation and Chairperson Hall led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - OCTOBER 5, 2015 MEETING

Cassandra Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Joyce Pemberton seconded the motion and they were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING – SOLAR POWER FACILITY

Chairperson Martha Hall declared the opening of the Public Hearing.

Mr. R. Morgan Quicke, County Administrator, shared that Mr. Joseph Quesenberry worked very diligently and did a great job researching and gathering information on solar power facilities. Mr. Quicke read the public notice, which states:

In accordance with §15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended and pursuant to §15.2-2310 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, the Richmond County Planning Commission hereby gives notice that a Public Hearing will start at 7:00 P.M., December 7, 2015, in the Public Meeting Room, County Office Building, Warsaw, Virginia for the following:

- To receive public comment on a proposed new Solar Ordinance, which would permit the placement and installation of solar panel facilities to be constructed in A-1 (Agriculture General) zoned districts in Richmond County, with a granted special exception and a minimum size of twenty (20) acres. The complete Ordinance, as presented, may be viewed online at www.co.richmond.va.us or in person at the Richmond County Administrator's Office at 101 Court Circle, Warsaw, Virginia 22572 between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Chairperson Hall stated that Mr. Quesenberry added a section on surety bonds to the proposed solar power facility language and informed Mr. Quicke that the numbering needs to be adjusted. Chairperson Hall read the new language added to Item K of Section 8, which read "If the entity purchases the property, an agreement must be signed with County officials that ensures proper decommissioning and removal of all equipment."

Ms. Joyce Pemberton asked if the companies proposing the solar power facilities are looking to rent or buy land. Mr. Quicke responded stating he believes the companies are looking at both options, but believes it would be a case by case scenario. Mr. Quicke added that if the land is to be leased, it would be long-term, similar to the way telecommunication companies lease towers.

Ms. Pemberton questioned how the land under the equipment would be maintained. Mr. Quicke stated the companies would be responsible for maintaining the land, but is not sure exactly how it would be done. Ms. Pemberton shared her concerns of the well-being of the soil once equipment is removed if the companies are to use certain pesticides to maintain the land. Chairperson Hall asked if Item K addressed Ms. Pemberton's concern. Mr. Quicke feels Item K would address the concern, but reminded the Planning Commission they have the power to discuss this with the companies if they should apply

for a Special Exception. He ultimately believes this would be a condition of the lease between the company and the landowner.

Ms. Pemberton, Mr. Quicke, and Mr. John W. Lewis further discussed the maintenance of the lands and Chesapeake Bay regulations. Mr. Patrick Weakland pointed out Item D of Section 8, which referenced environmental analysis.

Mr. Lewis questioned what would stop landowners of 20+ acres from selling or renting land to these companies. Mr. Quicke stated it is a matter of supply and demand and there are very high capital costs associated with establishing these types of facilities and he cannot foresee the County turning into a solar power facility farm.

Mr. Rick Cox asked if the County received any feedback from the local power companies. Mr. Quicke stated he spoke with Dominion and they are very much in favor of the County getting the Ordinance in order in case it is needed in the future and found out through conversation with Mr. Greg White that there is a State goal to have a certain amount of solar power established by a certain time in the future.

Mr. Cox suggested changing “the” to “an” in the beginning of the last sentence of Item K in Section 8 and adding “and proposes an alternate use” after “If an entity purchases the property...” Mr. Quicke stated the Special Exception will run with the property so long as the purpose is still implemented. Chairperson Hall agreed with changing “the” to “an,” but does not feel the new language needs to be added.

There was discussion on which party would be responsible for decommissioning if Company A were to sell the property to Company B, depending on the new use. Chairperson Hall stated the County has to have some guarantee that there is going to be proper decommissioning and removal of the equipment. In hopes of addressing the decommissioning issue, Mr. Quicke suggested adding another item under Section 8 regarding having the Planning Commission rehear the matter if a new transfer, sale, or lease ever takes place.

It was clarified that since the amendments to the Ordinance are minor, another public hearing is not necessary.

Chairperson Hall opened the floor to the public.

Mr. Harry Smith stated he does not foresee many facilities being created in the County because the cost is so high. He stated it would cost about \$2.5 million to solely build lines to the facility property. Mr. Smith informed everyone the solar power would go on a major grid and could therefore be used outside of the County. Mr. Smith feels it would be a good idea to add language to the Ordinance addressing decommissioning.

Mr. Quicke reminded the Planning Commission they did not have to vote on the matter tonight. Chairperson Hall suggested waiting until next month to vote on the language.

Chairperson Hall closed the Public Hearing.

FY17-FY21 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mr. R. Morgan Quicke pointed out red arrows on the Capital Improvement Plan, which show his suggestions of moving several items to a later year and informed everyone of two new additions- to repair the parking lot at the EMS building and to remodel/renovate the records room in the Sheriff's Office.

Ms. Joyce Pemberton questioned the status of the County entrance signs. Mr. Quicke stated the Board of Supervisors granted him permission to apply for the VDOT permits and hopes to have the signs up around springtime.

Ms. Pemberton also asked about the Courthouse roof repair. Mr. Quicke stated the roof still needs to be repaired and the County will have to finance the project.

Mr. John W. Lewis asked what Phase 2 of the camera upgrade entails. Mr. Quicke stated Phase 2 consists of more cameras being purchased and explained how the County purchased three cameras last year and can add up to nine more with the system that was purchased. Mr. Lewis suggested placing signs around the County complex notifying the public they are under surveillance.

Mr. Rick Cox requested a status on the proposed EMS/Fire Station. Mr. Quicke stated he is unsure at this point and from a financial standpoint, is unsure how the County will pay for the new station. Mr. Quicke informed everyone there has been recent discussion of upgrading the current EMS building. Chairperson Hall suggested keeping this item on the plan as a placeholder.

Mr. Patrick Weakland and Mr. Quicke discussed Westmoreland County's assistance in EMS calls in the northern portion of Richmond County. Mr. Quicke stated there has been discussion of a regional entity.

Chairperson Hall asked Mr. Quicke to schedule a Public Hearing next month for the Capital Improvement Plan.

REPORT FROM NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Ms. Joyce Pemberton reported for the Nominating Committee and presented the following Slate of Officers for 2016:

Martha Hall – Chairperson
Darnell Clayton – Vice Chairman
Mercedes Pierce – Secretary

There were no nominations from the floor.

Mr. Patrick Weakland informed everyone he will be resigning from the Planning Commission as of December 31, 2015 and plans to abstain from the vote.

Joyce Pemberton made a motion to approve the presented Slate of Officers for 2016. Jesse Clark seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 8-0 (*Glenn Bowen – yay; Jesse Clark – yay; Vice Chairman Darnell Clayton – yay; Rick Cox – yay; Chairperson Martha Hall – yay; Cassandra Jackson – yay; John Lewis – yay; Joyce Pemberton – yay; Patrick Weakland – abstain*).

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Joyce Pemberton stated she would like to share a few words since her final term with the Planning Commission was coming to an end. Ms. Pemberton stated, “It has been an honor and a pleasure to have worked with each one of you and all of them before and we have had such a good time and passed good things and have had a good time doing so and I think that it is important that we do it in a fun way, too. To serve on something like this gives you insight into what the County is doing and what they are trying to do and that’s very important to me and is to anybody. I wish people in the community would step up and do things and be on committees and boards and realize how important it is.”

Ms. Pemberton requested the following sentence, “the lands, waters, and forests of the County support the agricultural, fishing, and forestry industries that have historically provided the economic base for the citizens of the County,” from page two of “Part I Introduction” in the *Comprehensive Plan* be updated to show the County is moving forward. Ms. Pemberton stated she would also like to make sure proffers are included concerning the erosion of the cliffs for the

Fones Cliffs project and asked the Planning Commission to keep an eye out for duplexes in the County.

Ms. Pemberton stated she has enjoyed being on the Planning Commission for sixteen years.

Chairperson Martha Hall expressed to Ms. Pemberton that all she has done for the County is greatly appreciated.

Mr. R. Morgan Quicke presented the following resolution from the Planning Commission to Ms. Joyce Pemberton:

**RICHMOND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
HONORING JOYCE PEMBERTON'S SERVICE**

The Richmond County Planning Commission wishes to honor the sixteen years of service given by Joyce Pemberton as a faithful member of the Commission.

WHEREAS, Joyce Pemberton was appointed to serve on the Richmond County Planning Commission on December 9, 1999; and

WHEREAS, Joyce Pemberton consistently served on the Richmond County Planning Commission until the expiration of her term on December 31, 2015; and

WHEREAS, The Richmond County Planning Commission is appointed by the Board of Supervisors to promote the orderly development of the County; and

WHEREAS, Joyce Pemberton has contributed greatly to the well being of Richmond County with her participation in Planning Commission activities; and

WHEREAS, Joyce Pemberton has served on the Zoning Ordinance Review Committee appointed by the Planning Commission on April 9, 1992;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Richmond County Planning Commission does hereby recognize and gratefully acknowledge the sixteen years of service given by Joyce Pemberton in fulfilling her duties as a member of the Richmond County Planning Commission.

Resolution adopted:

Martha Hall

Chairperson

Mr. John W. Lewis wished everyone a Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year and for everyone to have a safe holiday season.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Martha Hall adjourned the meeting at 7:55p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mercedes Pierce
Planning Commission Secretary