

Minutes of the Yadkin County Board of Adjustment

June 25, 2020

Board Members Present:

Richard Foster- Chair
Charles Collins
Scott Pipes
Bud Matthews- Alternate
Benny Myers- Alternate

Board Members Absent:

Jeff Smith –Vice chair
Ricky Roberts

Staff Present:

Dawn Vallieres, Planner

Guests Present:

Edith Collins
Rich Kirkland

Beth Trahos
Sean Andersen

Tommy Cleveland

Call to Order

Chairman Richard Foster called the June 25, 2020 meeting of the Yadkin County Board of Adjustment to order at approximately 6:00 PM. Scott Pipes was recusing himself. Ben Myers and Bud Matthews were made voting members for tonight's meeting.

Chairman Richard Foster swore in all those planning on talking tonight. The Board suspended the regular hearing to go to the public hearing for the expansion of the solar farm.

Public Hearing

Chairman Richard Foster asked applicant to read the statement included in the submission packet. Sean Andersen with Pinegate Renewables read aloud the decommissioning plan for the Sugar Solar, LLC solar farm.

Attorney Beth Trahos introduced their group and gave a brief overview. After approval in June of last year there were some environmental features and topography that were not fully understood at the time. They propose to add some additional land. There is not an increase in electric output. They could be better stewards if they added land, so that there would be no encroachment on sensitive areas. So that is the reason for the additional acreage, making better use of the land given the environmental features and slope. This project was one fortunate enough to be approved by Duke in the first round of reviews. Sean Andersen can give more detail than herself. Duke Power mandates the date that it will go into service. It is not until next summer. Construction won't begin until fall. They don't want to build a facility and have it sit unused and decay. There has been no actual work on this yet. No construction.

Sean Andersen spoke about the project. He spoke about the megawatts. The earliest this project can be placed into service is June 21, 2021 due to Duke Powers upgrades. Their design assumptions are different from Cypress' which was the previous owner. He said that Pinegate

would build and operate this project. They are a full suite developer. Different racking, solar modules, ground cover ratio were spoken about. Adding Dr. Long's and the Shore Bothers properties is crucial to build the best possible project that they can and still abide by all storm water and permitting requirements. Ideally construction will start later this year. Contractual service dates with the utility were talked about.

Restrictions on the original approval were discussed.

Adding the acreage allows the company to avoid the areas with significant terrain challenges. Single axis tracker was discussed. Previous design was fixed. Maximum height was discussed. Mr. Andersen said no higher than 15 feet. The northern area is likely the highest. The natural buffer to shield was discussed. The area in front of the country club has a stand of trees that will not be disturbed. Additional buffering will be done stretching down in front of the country club.

Decommissioning bonds were discussed. They have the bond set to post on January 1, 2021. Topography challenges were discussed. This additional acreage allows for less grading. The panels can be more spread out.

Richard Kirkland spoke. He is a certified appraiser. This plan is very similar to the one approved a year ago. He covered the matched pairs in his appraisal report. It is his professional opinion that this project is in harmony with the surrounding area.

Tommy Cleveland, a licensed engineer in NC, spoke about the safety of the panels. He spoke regarding his qualifications. He spoke about the health and safety of the solar technology, and that it is clean power. Accumulation of electricity and operation of this specific project was discussed.

Elevation of the panels was discussed. Panel length and its impact on height was discussed. These are single panel configurations. Two panels which would be longer would go higher. All the rows will run north south 20-30 foot long sections so depending on the topography under the panels...the panels may be set higher to accommodate uneven topography below.

Lightning was discussed. They (solar panels) can be hit by lightning but they do not attract lightning.

They have to be engineered to meet the building code wind speed for this area. So it is possible to have some damage in high winds but they have sensors that will cause the panels to flatten out to avoid damage to the panels. The panels will go into "stow" mode in high winds.

Chairman Richard Foster asked about footings. Tommy Cleveland said there would not be footings, that the pylons would just be beams driven into the ground.

Chairman Richard Foster asked twice if there was anyone else to speak in favor of the proposed project. No one came forward.

Chairman Richard Foster asked twice if there was anyone to speak against the proposed project. No one came forward.

Regular Board Meeting

Chairman Richard Foster asked the Board if there was any discussion on the request. The Board discussed the application. Charles Collins made a motion to approve the conditional use permit subject to the following conditions:

1. Increased setback from 30 feet to 50 feet all along the north side of Long Farm Road and on the western side back to Country Club Road.
2. That the parking lot area is screened during construction.
3. That a wider vegetative buffer with more trees is installed on Country Club Road across from the country club property to shield the neighbors directly across the street from the 8 foot chain link fence.

Bud Matthews seconded. The vote was 4-0.

Adjournment

With no other business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded, the vote passed unanimously 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Vallieres, Secretary to the Board


Richard Foster, Chair

Approved on 7/13/2020

