

**SOLAR WORKSHOP
LEVY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
APRIL 12, 2021**

The Solar Workshop of the Board of Levy County Commissioners was held on April 12, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. in the Meeting Room of the Levy County Annex Building with the following Commissioners present:

Chairman John Meeks
Comm. Mike Joyner
Comm. Rock Meeks – by phone
Comm. Lilly Rooks – by phone
Comm. Matt Brooks

Also present were:

County Attorney – Anne Bast Brown
County Coordinator – Wilbur Dean

Chairman John Meeks called the Meeting to order at 6:15 P.M. Comm. Joyner gave the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Comm. Brooks.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS, MODIFICATIONS

Comm. Brooks made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Second was made by Comm. Rooks and the MOTION CARRIES.

Comm. Brooks spoke regarding the interest of Solar Projects in Levy County. The purpose of the workshop is to give the Commissioners the opportunity to share ideas of how they would like to handle solar projects moving forward.

Stacey Hectus provided a presentation to the Board of the recently approved solar project in Levy County and the next three proposed locations. She stated the Northeast area of the county is more favorable for corporations due to the presence of transmission lines.

Comm. Joyner stated he would rather see a solar farm rather than a subdivision, as the solar farm land could revert to agriculture at a later date.

Audience member, Linda Cooper questioned if the presence of a Solar Farm would reduce the adjacent property values. She encouraged protections to be put into place by the Board for the nearby property owners.

Duke Energy representative, Dorothy Pernu, Government & Community Relations spoke to the Board of the solar energy development opportunities for Florida. She then introduced Thomas Lawery, Renewables Manager who spoke of solar energy in a power point presentation to the Board and the pursuit of more clean energy sources. He spoke of the desired acreage for a solar project, which is about 500 acres. He explained the impacts of a solar project to the land and area, and how the site would be utilized.

Matthew Ruscio, Business Development explained how the electricity generated by the solar panels is made available to energy customers. A project development journey is broken down into different stages: Evaluate Development Market, Prospecting, Early Development, Advanced Development and Construction. The time in which a site could be developed would be 2-4 years. There are vegetative buffers and set-backs for each site.

Comm. Brooks questioned how much electricity could be produced at each site. Mr. Ruscio answered each site could produce about 75 megawatts. The number of sites in an area is determined by the availability of transmission lines and the amount of electricity each can handle.

The life cycle of solar panels is 30+ years, at which time they can be decommissioned. The panels are then either shipped to an existing site or salvaged and over 90% of a solar panel is recyclable. Any remaining material is disposed of with local requirements. Following the removal of equipment, the site is returned to its initial condition.

Stacey Hectus spoke of possible restrictions/guidelines for future solar farms trying to locate in Levy County for Board consideration.

Discussion by the Board members followed regarding the direction of the county for Solar Project applicant stipulations. Direction was given by consensus for Mrs. Hectus to proceed with structuring changes to the Comp. Plan. Mrs. Hectus stated there could be language added to the zoning maps for FRR and ARR as Special Exceptions. Direction was also given by the Board to add these Solar Projects to the Zoning Code.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Linda Cooper encouraged the Board to question, what's in this for Duke and encouraged them to be cautious in approving solar projects in Levy County. She had concerns of increased energy rates for customers.

Dana Sheffield spoke of the interest of Solar Farms to the Levy County area and stated he would rather see a Solar Farm rather than a subdivision developed.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION, THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:58 P.M.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEVY COUNTY, FL

Clerk of Court, Danny J. Shipp

Chairman, John Meeks