

The Dorchester County Board of Appeals met in a special session on Thursday, January 8, 2015 in Room 110 of the County Office Building at 7:00 PM. Present were Ed Howard, Vice-Chairman, , Wendell Foxwell, Catherine McCulley, Chairperson, , Walt Gunby, Attorney, Steve Dodd, Director of Planning, Janice Henderson, Environmental Planner Absent were Catherine Hill and Dwight Cromwell.

Case #2568 – Roland W. & Lois Webster, owner

Gia Clark of One Energy Dorchester, LLC, applicant

To request, as a special exception, a solar energy system utility scale project. Property located at 3714 Linkwood Dr. and contains 107 acres. AC – Agricultural Conservation Zoning District.

An introduction was made by Chairperson McCulley, explaining that because this was a continuation of the November 20, 2014 meeting that she would not read the procedures of this meeting to the audience. She then asked everyone to turn their cell phones to vibrate only. Also noted that there additional packets of information that had been sent to the Board by the applicant and there were extra copies on the back table. Ms. McCulley asked that the questions brought up in the last meeting will be addressed in the meeting tonight to avoid duplication. Ms. McCulley stated that there are (4) areas of focus this evening:

- (1) Effect of health issues including chemical exposure
- (2) Level of noise produced by the site
- (3) Property values of surrounding properties
- (4) Impact on wildlife and cultural resources

Ms. McCulley asked that anyone that will testify tonight to be sworn in, sign their name and address on the sheet provided.

Ms. McCulley asked someone from One Energy to please introduce the group that came. Mr. Shearon thanked everyone for the opportunity for the continuation meeting. Mr. Shearon then introduced the group, Mr. Brice Smith, CEO, Mr. Bryan Travis, CFO, Ms. Gia Clark, Project Mgr., and Mr. Roland Webster, property owner.

Mr. Travis then proceeded to address the questions brought up in the last meeting.

- 1) Effect of health issues including chemical exposure – He first stated that is very difficult to find a site that meets all the criteria for a solar array farm and this particular is one of just a handful in Dorchester County. Mr. Travis then preceded by saying that there are no toxic materials in the panels, Solar Photovoltaic panels have no hazardous materials and are made from just silicone and glass. There are no gas emissions from the materials.
- 2) Level of noise produced by the site – Mr. Travis stated that there will be minimal noise, about 60 to 80db which is about the same as a doorbell. The impact is minimal, less than 1db at a distance. The only noise generated from the electrical equipment at the facility will be the transformers and inverters at the pad site some distance away. The further away from the project there is a significant reduction in noise.

- 3) Property values of surrounding properties - Since the project will have low visual impact due to landscaping and fencing of the project and that the project is in a low traffic area, no impact on water or sewerage it should not have an impact on property values. It is a quiet passive neighbor.
- 4) Impact on wildlife and cultural resources – Mr. Travis stated One Energy hired a firm to study the impact on endangered species and found that there was no native habitat of the Bald Eagle or Delmarva Fox Squirrel in that area. Also that this project would have minimal impact of the wetlands.

Mr. Howard asked the question at this time “What would happen in the event of a fire”? - Mr. Travis answered by saying that EMS has to access to all properties and that the entry is large enough for the fire company to gain entry through. The system equipment is monitored and the system is dormant at night.

Ms. McCulley then proceeded with the audience members that had signed up to speak.

- 1) Mr. Gary Phillips – 3612 Lindwood Dr. – His concerns were the decrease of property values, taking the land out of agriculture, the effects of the wildlife, and to put this project in a different location.
- 2) Mr. Brad Hughes – 3746 – His concerns were the health effects, property values, and the local fire company being equipped in an emergency situation. Mr. Hughes did thank One Energy for returning and the opportunity to voice their concerns.
- 3) Mr. Pete Robbins – His concerns were wildlife, the solar generating system not working, a contract to sell energy, and who was the biggest investor. Also since there was a restriction of news coverage thought that this was an attempt to silence the community.
- 4) Gary Yorton – 3570 Linkwood Dr. – His concerns were that he has small children and the level of safety, property values, no creation of jobs, inherit risk of children in the area, the noise level and the land being taken out of agricultural use

Mr. Travis then asked to go back to the chemical impact. The nature of the run off for this site – the storm water plans that they have in place are subject to code and will be part of the plants to be reviewed at multiple layers by MDE and Core. Mr. Travis also stated that all developments have impacts. This site was chosen because of low visual impact and low traffic rate.

Mr. Foxwell asked the question about the depth of the trees to be planted? Mr. Shearon explained on the aerial photo how the trees were to be planted on each side of the property and at the 20 ft. buffer.

Each of the above questions was again answered by One Energy. Ms. McCulley was then reminded that (2) individuals that had signed up were not given the opportunity to voice their concerns, Mr. Mark Eberspacher and the applicant Mr. Roland Webster.

- (1) Mr. Mark Eberspacher – His concern was that in reading that there was not a close survey done to find out the effect on property values, and could the property buffer be changed to require the trees to be taller? Also asked how

much more income will this project bring to the Treasurer's Office? Mr. Eberspacher also stated that renewable energy will be a part of the equation very soon.

- (2) Mr. Roland Webster - Wanted to thank everyone for coming and expressing their views and concerns and to thank to BOA Commission for the continuation.

Mr. Gunby responded to the letter from Lois Baker of 12/20 objecting to the project. Mr. Gunby stated that the people who decide what is best for Dorchester County are the County Commissioners. All this Board is empowered to do is to see if the applicant's case meets the requirements of what the County Commissioners have adopted.

Ms. McCulley announced the end of testimony and the Board began their deliberations.

At this time, each Board member explained his decisions regarding the criteria. The motion was made by Mr. Howard and seconded by Mr. Fowell to approve this case. Time of adjournment was 9:17 pm.

Minutes of the November 20, 2014 meeting were approved at the time of this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Dodd".

Steve Dodd
Executive Secretary