

**MINUTES  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
NOVEMBER 10, 2011  
6:00 PM**

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT**

Commissioner Diane Sheffield, Chair  
Commissioner Larry Ganus, Vice – Chair  
Commissioner Ronnie Butler  
Commissioner David Tranchand  
Commissioner Frank Rowan  
Commissioner Mari Vanlandingham  
Commissioner Catherine Robinson  
Commissioner Edward Allen  
Commissioner Dr. Gail Bridges- Bright  
Commissioner Isaac Simmons, School Board Representative

**STAFF**

Anthony Matheny, Growth Mgt. Director  
Willie Brown, Principal Planner  
Beryl H. Wood, Deputy Clerk

**ABSENT**

Commissioner Willard Rudd  
Commissioner Dr. Anthony Arnold

***Note: There were technical difficulties with the Video for this meeting.***

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Sheffield called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with a quorum present and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS/ROLL CALL**

Each member present stated his/her name and District for the record.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES- SEPTEMBER 15, 2011**

**UPON A MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VANLANDINGHAM AND A SECOND BY COMMISSIONER DR. GAIL BRIDGES-BRIGHT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2011 REGULARLY SCHEDULED P&Z MEETING WITH THE NECESSARY CORRECTIONS, THE BOARD VOTED 10-0, BY VOICE VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.**

**4. DISCLOSURES AND DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT**

Chair Sheffield expressed congratulations on the Award -1000 Friends of Florida. She commented that they will award the County for the Citizens Bill of Rights– November 15, 2011 at BOCC Meeting at 9:00a.m. She said that Gadsden County is receiving 1000 Friends of Florida’s Better Community Award for its passage of the Citizens Growth Management and Planning Bill of Rights (ordinance #2010-05), which provides citizens with enhanced opportunities to participate in the local planning process. “Gadsden County is to be commended for giving its residents a more meaningful role in shaping the future of their community,” 1000 Friends President and CEO Charles Pattison, FAICP, explains. Adopted in May of 2010, the Planning Bill of Rights was adopted to provide the citizens of Gadsden County the opportunity to have a voice in development and its impact on their enjoyment and investment in their community. She explained that lone-time planning board member John Yerkes would always ask applicants if they had communicated with citizens surrounding a proposed development. “The Planning Commission voted unanimously to require this communication,” Sheffield continues. “Affected property owners have the right to know about and have input in proposed changes to land use where they live.” The 1000 Friends’ Better Community Award is presented annually for plans that have been implemented and projects that are completed that use the principles of smart growth to create livable, vital environments. Chair Sheffield asked all that would to come and take part in the awards presentation at the BOCC Meeting, November 15.

**5. APPROVAL OF 2012 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE (Anthony Matheny, GC Planning and Community Development Director) Motion- VanLandingham/ Simmons 10-0**

Mr. Matheny presented the Planning Commission Meeting Schedule as follows:

<b>January 12, 2012</b>	<b>July 12, 2012</b>
<b>February 16, 2012</b>	<b>August 16, 2012</b>
<b>March 15, 2012</b>	<b>September 13, 2012</b>
<b>April 12, 2012</b>	<b>October 11, 2012</b>
<b>May 10, 2012</b>	<b>November 15, 2012</b>
<b>June 14, 2012</b>	<b>December 13, 2012</b>

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VANLANDINGHAM AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER SIMMONS, THE BOARD VOTED 10 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR THE APPROVAL OF 2012 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE.**

**6. EAR – BASED AMENDMENT AND AREA PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS UPDATE (Jon Sewell, Project Manager, Kimley -Horn)**

Jon Sewell, Project Manager of Kimley – Horn addressed the Board. He commented that he was here to give a brief update. He discussed first the Gadsden County EAR Based Amendments. He presented a power point presentation and stated that he would be coming back before the Commission at a later date in workshop format to get into details with the updates to the Comprehensive Plan. He discussed the Special Area Plans (SAPs) that were required by the former Department of Community Affairs. He discussed strategies they had initially on the SAP’s moving forward with some and deleting some to benefit the strategy. He said that at the end of the presentation he would entertain any comments.

**Gadsden County EAR Based Amendments**

- EAR adopted September 2009
- Draft EAR Based Amendments developed
- EAR Based Amendments approved by the Planning Commission
- 2011 State Legislature passed HB 7207

**Gadsden County Ear Based Amendments - Completed Task**

- Reviewed draft EAR based amendments
- Identified possible edits based on HB 7207
- Identified amendments that do not address EAR recommendations
- Identified policies that are vague or difficult to interpret

**Gadsden County EAR Amendments - Next Steps**

- Revise draft EAR Based Amendments
  - Address HB 7207 changes
  - Address EAR recommendations
  - Incorporate special area plan changes
- Planning Commission Workshop and Approval
- BOCC Workshop and Adoption Hearing

**Gadsden County Special Area Plans**

- Stipulated Settlement Agreement requires:
  - Lake Talquin – Wetumpka Area – 1/01/09
  - US 90 East Corridor -2/01/10
  - US 27 Corridor – 3/01/11
  - State Highway 12 Corridor (Quincy-Havana) -12/01/12
  - St. Johns – Robertsville Area – 11/01/13
  - West Quincy – Gretna-Greensboro – 10/01/14

**Gadsden County Special Area Plans (SAPs) should address:**

- Urban service boundaries
- Central water and sewer
- Roads
- Schools
- Police, fire, EMS
- Storm water facilities
- Land use needs analyses

**Gadsden County SAPs**

- Removed the section of Ch. 163 related to urban service boundaries
- Removed the requirement for needs analyses
- Revised the indicators of urban sprawl
- Added a new test for determining if an amendment will generate urban sprawl

**Gadsden County (SAPs) Lake Talquin – Wetumpka Area**

- Emphasize protecting and enhancing natural features
- Provide a mechanism to address future development in the area

- Be a tool to engage area citizens and other stakeholders

#### **Gadsden County Special Area Plans –US 90 East Corridor**

- Place emphasis on corridor preservation and US 90 view shed between Midway and Quincy
- Identify options for intergovernmental coordination with Midway and Quincy

#### **Gadsden County Special Area Plans**

- Other Special Area Plans
  - US 27 Corridor
  - State Highway 12 Corridor
  - St. Johns – Robertsville Area
  - West Quincy – Gretna – Greensboro Area
- Needs of these areas can be addressed in EAR Based Amendments

#### **Gadsden County Special Area Plans**

##### **Special Area Plans – Proposed Approach**

- Schedule meeting with Secretary of the Division of Community Development
- Request that stipulated settlement agreement be amended to:
  - Include only special area plans for Lake Talquin –Wetumpka Area and US 90 East
  - Address changes resulting from HB 7207
- Establish SAP working group
- Proceed with completing draft and final SAPs

#### **Gadsden County Special Area Plans**

##### **Special Area Plans – Next Steps**

- Feedback from Planning Commission
  - SAP working group
  - Meeting with Division of Community Development
- Present project update to BOCC
- Approval from BOCC to meet with Division of Community Development

#### **Questions:**

Commissioner Ganus inquired about page 5 of the handout HB 7207: removed the section of Ch 163 related to urban service boundaries, does that mean they eliminated the existing boundaries for urban service areas or is it just for anything new from here on.

Mr. Sewell replied that there is a lot in HB 7207 that still has not been determined. He said that he believed that particular area has not. He added it would apply to anything new and it reduces the requirement for analyzing a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. As it relates to Urban Service Boundaries review criteria for that amendment, that's a question that still needs to be answered. I understand that the Legislature is actually meeting early this year sometime in January where they will address some of the aspects of HB 7207.

Commissioner Ganus also asked about page 6 of the power point handout, regarding other Special Area Plans. He discussed the 4 SAP's and asked Mr. Sewell was his recommendation that he deal with them through an EAR Based Amendment. He inquired how quickly he thought this would occur. He wanted to know which EAR are they talking about, the present one that we are dealing with or future ones.

Mr. Sewell said that the present one, one advantage of dealing with it now, you don't have to wait until the next generation you can deal with it right now. One of the things that we will do is through our stakeholders group and through our public involvement process that we have set up for this project, it can be done quickly. It included this round of EAR based Amendments. I also wanted to mention because of the switch between state review to shift the decision making process back to the local government. The amendment process went from a 9 month process down to a 3 month process. It's a much faster process.

Commissioner Allen inquired about the Citizen's Meeting.

Mr. Sewell replied that they would be holding a Citizen's meeting after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year.

### **7. BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN UPDATE (Jon Sewell, Project Manager, Kimley – Horn)**

Mr. Sewell addressed Commission regarding the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan he stated that they were initial stages. He explained that they were members on the Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency (CRPTA). He stated that the purpose of the Metropolitan Planning Organization is to plan transportation regionally. He commented that one of thing Gadsden County had missed out on in the past is not having plans in place and not having projects brought forward in the CRTPA process. He said that it would identify bicycle trails and corridors, safe routes to schools, improving sidewalks, improving walking and creating a safer environment for pedestrian & bicycles in Gadsden County. He stated that the CRPTA currently has funds set aside for Gadsden County for this purpose. He said that some of the identified top rank projects will be implemented very quickly after presentation of this plan. He said that basically we will come up with recommendation plans for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the County. We will do a feasibility study for a trail project, right now he communicated they are looking for abandoned rail corridors down to one in Chattahoochee, which is to create a paved 12 foot bike path somewhere in Gadsden County. He said they are planning on a public workshop in late January. He mentioned they are doing a lot of things, but one key thing is the safe routes analysis to school. He said the Federal Government has set funding that is specifically for areas around schools and qualifies for elementary and middle schools anything within a 2 mile radius of schools. We will do an analysis of side walks around each of your schools. He detailed further his Master Plan for the County.

### **Gadsden County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan**

#### **Master Plan will include:**

- Bicycle and pedestrian facility recommendations
- Policies and design guidelines that promote walking, bicycling
- Feasibility report to expedite implementation
- Strategies to identify possible funding sources

#### **Gadsden County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan – Key task include:**

- Data Collection
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Project newsletter
- Safe Routes to School Analysis
- Public Workshop (Scheduled for January 23,2012)
- Design Guidelines
- Design Consideration and Costs

- Final Report
- Bicycle Route Map

### **Gadsden County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan**

#### ➤ **Stakeholder interviews have been conducted with:**

- 1.) Gadsden County School Board
- 2.) Department of Public Works
- 3.) Chamber of Commerce
- 4.) Gadsden County Sheriff's Office
- 5.) Office of Greenways and Trails
- 6.) Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency

Future stakeholder interviews will include: Parks and Recreation, Tourism Development Council; City Representatives

### **Gadsden County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan** **Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan – Next Steps**

- Complete stakeholder interviews
- Develop draft project recommendations
- Complete Safe Routes to Schools analysis
- Public meeting for input and project prioritization
  - Schedule for January 23, 2012, 6:00 p.m., Gadsden County Commission Chambers
- Complete feasibility report
- Develop Master Plan

#### **Questions:**

Commissioner Tranchand inquired about the funding sources of the Bike Trail.

Mr. Sewell said the funding sources are basically the CRTPA planning funds. They have dollars that are associated with implementation; some are between \$100,000-\$200,000 currently being identified this fiscal year. For future fiscal years those dollars will be there for the projects that were identified in the plan. The school funds come out of different funds.

Commissioner Vanlandingham asked would Gadsden County be competing with other Counties.

Mr. Sewell replied the County would be competing with other counties. He said that typically if you have a plan you won't have a problem receiving monies. He said the way it works you will rank the projects, they will spread the funds around throughout the 4 county area. They will probably fund your first 3 or 4 projects. The other projects will get moved up and they will reevaluate those after a year.

He then thanked the Planning and Zoning Commission for allowing him to work with them and that he would get back.

**8. SOLAR FARM UPDATE(National Solar Power (NSP) or Anthony Matheny, Gadsden County Planning Department)**

John Fisher, National Solar Project gave a brief power point presentation. He gave background on the Solar Farm. He commented they were founded in 2010 in Melbourne, FL by John Broughton and James Scrivener. He said the co-founders have a combined 30 years experience in the solar industry. The NSP's business model is a paradigm shift away from traditional solar models due to our ability to integrate solar power at market prices. Their goal is to be the lowest-cost renewable energy provider to utilities in the Southeastern US, selling at or near a utilities' avoided cost. This is made possible by forming strategic alliances, an innovative finance technique and the recent decline in the prices of land, solar panels and construction cost. National Solar power has contracts in place with Progress Energy to sell energy produced by our solar farms. NSP is seeking to purchase 4000 Acres in Gadsden County and have contracts in place. NSP will construct twenty, 20MW solar farms which represents 1.4 Billion total capital investments. It would generate property tax revenue averaging an estimated \$300,000.00 per year 20MW farm over 30 years. It should create 140 jobs per farm during construction with local subcontract opportunities (10 year build out) 100-120 permanent full- time jobs.

He then entertained questions from the Commission.

**Commissioner Simmons:**

I heard you say when you build these solar farms they would be closely related to current existing substations and transmission lines and the power would be sold to Progress Energy.

**Fisher:**

The way the projects are setup is using a utility scale. They are set up and will be sold to utilities. The current contract in place is Project Energy. National Solar is in the process of negotiating with other utility companies.

**Simmons:**

I guess my primary concern. What benefits. How will this impact utility service, as far as cost savings for the citizen's of Gadsden County? Do you for see that it might cause reduction in costs?

**Fisher:**

Actually it does not. In the past topography we had people that won't to object to that. They don't want to pay more for it. They only pass for 12 or 18 months. Under per regulations generators can produce power the same price and sell to a utility at the same cost. The utility has to produce power, they are required to buy it and sell it to the public at the same price.

**Simmons:**

Our contract with Progress Energy is for 20 mega watts. Are there any plans to increase megawatts at various locations?

**Fisher:**

There is kind of a multifaceted answer to that, the short answer is yes, but there is a lot the 20 mega watts actually falls up under small generator, large generator you have 20 mega watts which is small. Trying to compare apples to oranges. 20 is very good building block to build these.

**Simmons:**

If the utility companies like the City of Quincy have their own facility, utility company or any other municipality. Say the City of Quincy has their transmission distribution center in place could they go ahead and tap into and purchase power instead of selling to Progress Energy.

**Fisher:**

Correct, these farms can be built to be sold directly to the co ops of municipalities. It does not have to go to an investor in utilities. It's just a matter of having an agreement making sure it's in compliance with Federal and State Laws, then constructing the Farm.

**Simmons:**

I guess that's what my concern was, has there ever been dialogue with municipalities in this area about the purchase of power that we generate from solar?

**Fisher:**

National Solar is currently talking with municipalities and co ops in the area, to what degree or how far they have progressed. There are currently no signed contracts, but their conversation is going extremely well and we expect to see that in near future.

**Simmons:**

I think that's something I would like to see. I think it would be beneficial to the citizens of this county. If we would choose the power, rather than letting Progress Energy be the wheeler. Getting the power then turn around and sell it back to municipalities. If we could be the one who purchases the power. I think it would be a better cost savings to the citizens of this county. No doubt about that. I would like to see us look in that area in the near future. I think that will be more beneficial to us.

**Fisher:**

Absolutely, I agree, that is the desire.

**Commissioner VanLandingham:**

If you don't mind could you define low index land?

**Fisher:**

Currently we are talking to timber companies and they have land that is not producing in 15 years they grow only 4ft, it's not producing at a rate that proves to be viable revenue producing land. That is land that is non productive or if it was a previously (like reclaim land) that was used for mining. Land that is deemed not usable by other people. It becomes useful for us, because we don't want to go to prestige areas clean out and try to tear down a bunch of stuff to build. We want to go somewhere that's previously been used. If there is a ground field site that we can go into.

**Chair Sheffield:**

Does the land they need, that they are going to build these own; does it need to be flat?

**Fisher:**

Within a degree. If ideally you have a piece of land out here that slopped 27.5 degrees from North to South. That would be perfect because I could just lay panels flat on it. No, We can handle topography rolling hills and valleys. Drop off's don't work well if the land is slopping north. No problem at all.

**Sheffield:**

I just know in the west end of the County there are some significant topography changes. I know that's where they were looking at. I didn't know if that would become an issue or not.

**Fisher:**

Correct, If there are rolling hills and there is kind of a formation change between peak and turfs in those instances we primary build on the wrapping the east and west of those. On the North we do a study to determine if it's feasible to put on the North Slope, we would probably just leave that as an open area.

**Commissioner Ganus:**

Will National Solar purchase or lease land that these will be located on?

**Fisher:**

They are actually open to several options. The desire is to purchase it. They can do a lease. You have to make sure how the lease is structured. For instance, if there was some land in the family and someone had passed away and left it to their inheritors of children they would have to agree to get all the equipment in 3 years after the project was complete. We prefer it to be an entity for a lease. Also if there was a large farm they are open to joint venture or revenue sharing. There are many business models on how they can solve land use issues with home owners.

**Commissioner Tranchand:**

Are these all voluntary sales on the part of the land owner?

**Fisher:**

Correct, absolutely they are looking for people, it's great if we kind find someone interested in selling their land, we can start working on a deal with them.

**Sheffield:**

In other words no eminent domain.

**Fisher:**

No, that does not apply to us what so ever.

**Commissioner Allen:**

I believe that was my question about eminent domain.

**Fisher:**

No sir.

**Allen:**

I believe it's been stated that no public monies involved. Is that correct?

**Fisher:**

No public monies, there is no tax dollars being used to construct. It's all being constructed with private funds.

**Allen:**

None from the Stimulus Package or anything like that.

**Fisher:**

No Sir, the idea is for us to take advantage of the Federal Tax Credit, but they are not taking in pay outs from the governments. It all comes from private funding from National Solar.

**Allen:**

Economic Development Agreement that you have. As it pertain to Planning and Zoning. If the County agrees to expeditiously process all those applications for approval and permit of each solar farm included without limitation and comprehensive plan zoning and rezoning for various special exception site plans or plotting within 14 days of submitting. Are you asking for use by right?

**Fisher:**

No, We know that in some areas it can take an extremely longtime or if their scheduled meetings only happen bi-monthly. If you don't have a meeting that's going to take place within the next few weeks we request you have a special meeting called, so you can review the changes that are being made to the plan.

**Ganus:**

In this proposed agreement, that has not been approved yet, but has been asked for by National Solar about tax abatement, tax refund and that sort of thing. I presume that they are still going to be perceived.

**Fisher:**

Correct and what they are doing. Other states are having sales of solar equipment. They were actually briefly here in Florida then removed referendum. They are trying to equalize Florida with states like North Carolina and California others that have it. They are looking for that as a tax incentive. Only on the approved real tax, so essentially the tax currently collected on heat land. You will benefit by receiving more tax that's currently there, they are asking for relief on that total tax for improvement.

**Ganus:**

You quoted \$300,000 in tax to be realized by the County where is that coming from?

**Fisher:**

That would be the tax paid; obviously the school tax cannot take any exceptions or rebates on school tax. Any remaining percentage on real property tax, that's increase amount paid on based off the \$70 million investment per 20 mega watt farm. The bulk of that is school tax. Around \$200-250,000 is the amount that would go to School Board. The abatements are needed to make the numbers work, make the product viable. It will be a very large benefit to the County and School Board.

**Allen:**

According to this all county fess for the construction and permitting of each solar farm up to and including \$10,000 for each solar farm shall be a reimbursed to owners within 30 days of payment by owner. In other words the county has to reimburse you \$10,000 for each farm.

**Fisher:**

Yes Sir, they are asking for that amount.

**Allen:**

That's over and above the tax incentives.

**Fisher:**

Correct

**Allen:**

Of course, this hasn't been signed yet.

**Fisher:**

No Sir, National Solar knows there will be some concerns and probably some response back. That is ideal that they make the farm viable and flow very well. What they are trying to do outweighs the transmission studies and the upfront cost. It can actually cost somewhere around 2 million dollars per farm to get it up and running. They are trying to do anything they can to minimize the out weight. 10 farms at 2 million apiece you need 20 million dollars in cash before they ever get financed. Even the smallest amount helps speed, push these projects along.

**Allen:**

I see Mr. Vanlandingham out in the audience, have you done a revenue analysis on this.

**Vanlandingham:**

No Sir, I have not.

**Ganus:**

I know that the Board of County Commissioners has proposed some changes to our Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code. Maybe Anthony can answer a little better are you going to address that issue with us tonight? I'll save questions until then.

**Tranchand:**

How many 20 megawatt operations does National Solar have at the present time?

**Fisher:**

Currently operating, None. They have been working on developing for 3 years. The National Solar that exists now was only founded in the beginning in 2010. That's why John Broughton who actually helped develop Solar farms on NASA property. They have built solar farms before just not under the name; National Solar is where they found this new method to produce the farm without added cost.

**Tranchand:**

How many 20 megawatts units, has he built?

**Fisher:**

John Broughton, the first one was 1 mega watt, 2<sup>nd</sup> one was 10 mega watts. To the best of my knowledge none of 20 megawatt. Keep in mind the largest farm in Florida is 27 megawatt. The largest farm in the world currently is a 90 mega watt in Canada.

**Simmons:**

Solar, you are talking about the sun in your calculations of the projected revenues and of the amount of energy that will be generated. How do you, what factors do you take into consideration of what we call in the country "cloudy days". 20 Mega Watt, it's not a 365 day operation, it has some fluctuation in there.

**Fisher:**

20 Mega Watts, Mega Watts are measurements 20 mega watt, you see at any given moment if you take a nano second it was a 100% radius on a day, it would be 20 megawatts. Over the course of the year it would become a 20 mega watt hours output, that's what you are referring to. Absolutely, when we move into an area we do solar radius study, we use satellite and ground base technology and we are typically coming back 10 or 12 years and see what the solar radius is or was in the past 10 or 12 years for that given location where we are building the farm. We do it based on latitude adjust the angle of the panels, in this region somewhere between 25 to 30 degrees so it is at the prime angle for collecting solar energy. They run the numbers to tell you how many mega-watt hours per year based on that given area which takes into account clouds, rainy days and sun in the winter session, which is your worst day, during your summer session (hottest days).

**Allen:**

In your agreement here it says each party hereby identifies each harmful and agrees to define the other parties officers, directors, agents and employees. Does that mean the County is going to help defend your actions if somebody happens to die on one of your farms?

**Fisher:**

The way I believe the identification clause reads: Either party that identifies each other which is basically say each party is responsible for their own, but that's probably a question for the legal team.

**Allen:**

I guess the County will address that. What is your price per kilowatt hour on the farm?

**Fisher:**

Average on production right now we are seeing numbers that we believe 7 ½, 8 cent per kilowatt per hour.

**Allen:**

Ok, Is that in ball park of other utility companies?

**Fisher:**

Of what it cost right now, it is around 6 ½, 7%, but what they actually do is they produce a commodity, which is the solar SRX they are selling the off brand as well. If they can get 2 to 3 cents which is very reasonable for Solar Energy Credit it actually produces then, If you look at the 2-3 plus 5 or . They get factored above what it actually cost. The idea is to be the Wal-mart of Solar Facilities, get a bunch of them and take a little bit of revenue without passing on cost to the public.

**Allen:**

The County has guaranteed the tax credits to you, are you guarantying jobs to the County.

**Fisher:**

Correct, there is an amount of jobs that are stated in the Developer's Agreement.

**Allen:**

It says 6-8, but is there some number in the agreement that you will guarantee.

**Fisher:**

Yes Sir, from what I see. Of course there is a caveat that if you have jobs and one in the County what's to fill that job or there is no one qualified then of course we have to go elsewhere to feel that, but in building the farms the construction jobs as well as full-time positions are to hire and train people in the County. Hansel Phillips along with some of the engineers will come into town and do community outreach, what we will do in an area here locally is working mostly with the local workforce entity, we can have section whether it's hotel ballroom, community center where people looking for employment can go and see what's going to be available for employment. People who just have general questions for the public, so we kind of break it up.

**Matheny:**

Thank you for that presentation. I'm trying to cover a couple of things and it may answer your questions Commissioner Ganus. First on the incentives, no, that has not been worked out. I know the County Attorney is looking at that. The County Commissioners are considering which way to go on that, so nothing has been worked out, they have merely asked for a list of incentives and those are being considered. That's where we are at with that. What we've done so far on expediting and kind of approval process is we first had, several months ago some suggestions by several County Commissioners that we might allow solar farms in Agricultural districts by right. They all have to be site review which is an internal review and it doesn't require coming to Planning Commission and County Commission as Class 2 Review, like ya'll are use to with special exception or something like that, so we started that process and had a Citizen's Bill of Rights Meeting, which some of these folks here did attend. We talked in general about what we were doing and we received comments. The County Administrator was then informed by other members of the Commission, that they misunderstood the process that they weren't sure that was the best way to go with making it a Class 1 approval process, they want to have the final decision on each project as it comes up, so we pulled back and that's where we are sitting right now. It's still in our Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code as Class 2 Special Exception. That has to go through full process, site plan review, Planning Commission Review and then County Commission Review and approval or denial. That's where we are right now and they have not instructed the County Administrator to instruct my office to do anything differently, that at this time. I can't say whether are not that will change as they go forward. The expedited process. Most likely if we don't have a change. The County Commission can call a meeting anytime they want. Ya'll can call a special meeting. The company may ask us in the future to do those kind of things and that will be your decision and the County Commissioner's decision whether not to call a special public hearing and expedite the process in that manner. No, as far as any other thing, don't know, haven't been instructed to move on them at this time. If I can answer any more questions for you, I will be happy too.

**Ganus:**

Yes it did, If I can exercise, anyway to the message out to the County Commission that would be to allow public hearing, so that the public can have their input, that will go a long way toward the expectance of whatever is going on. If we cut the public out of it. We are going to have more serious problems than we have now.

**Matheny:**

We will take any public comments, and then Willie will be up with a short presentation.

**Public Comment:**

**Mike Dorian**, 145 Alligator Run – I’ve been a citizen for Gadsden County for about 30 years. I’m pro – solar. I think about coal plants, bio-mass plants, nuclear power plants and I think the solar projects are a good thing for the County, but I do have some concerns: Larry, you were talking about will we have public hearings and real quick, Byron Spires “quoted Sherri Taylor as saying before any decisions could be made the Commissioners would have public hearings.” Doug Croley stated there would be workshops on issues brought before the meetings. Can you tell me now; Larry asked the question will there be public hearings?

**Sheffield:**

I think Anthony has already answered that by saying that there is no set direction yet. That they are working on that. There is not an answer to that question.

**Dorian:**

Diane, would it be ok If I address some questions, to these gentlemen. I really think once some questions are answered the public is not going to have any problems with it. A lot the questions that were to be asked, the Commission has asked and you guys have supplied the answers. One thing I would like to ask, “Are there 20 mega watts coming out of each farm as it goes to the grid, going through farm to the grid, how powerful are those lines?”

**Fisher:**

It takes several different stages as you go through there. Site that covers 200-300 Acres, what we don’t want is to do local CT’s and we lose all the power. We will step it up to a 35kb power. That 35kb then will be a substation that we have GSU or generation step –up. That unit has to step up to whatever line we are connecting to, so if connection to 230kbline or 69kb line that’s what we step –up to. It’s essential from the point we step-up we have to meet off takers requirement for their line and match for safety and requirement as they have to run their transmission.

**Dorian:**

Is that governed by the National Electric Code/ FCC?

**Fisher:**

It gets into both.

**Dorian:**

When you get into transactions of power generations, that primary becomes governed. Bottom line what I’m worried about, is a citizen walking out one day and there is a huge power line going down his road. Can you see that happening?

**Fisher:**

If we run long stretch power line like that, it falls up under transmission line body act, which is similar to power plant body act. It takes more time and it cost a lot of money. That’s why our site selection is critical. We need to have lines running through our property underneath and have adjacent to a substation and we can just tie into their existing.

**Dorian:**

Are you saying you are going to avoid neighborhoods and go across?

**Fisher:**

Absolutely, we have ours on rural land with vegetation and buffers around it. We are not looking to be inside a neighborhood or going over houses that get into easements. On transmission lines you have a clear zone with a buffer underneath; by law we can't run transmission lines over houses.

**Dorian:**

Can you go down a neighborhood street?

**Fisher:**

If we were probably on distribution level, which is lower, that's what we are trying to avoid.

**Dorian:**

You want powerful lines, but you want it over empty land.

**Fisher:**

Correct, power lines have to be over empty land.

**Dorian:**

I just know a little bit. I talked to Mr. Vanlandingham about the problem he had in Greensboro 115 volt 230-240 volt.

**Fisher:**

If you are in distribution level, yes.

**Dorian:**

Would 240 volt be run down a street?

**Fisher:**

We convert from the GV to the AC power at 480 and that is very low. You are talking 480, we then step it up to 35,000 then tie into transmission lines at 69,000, 130,000 or 230,000 that's why we can't do around residential.

**Dorian:**

Bottom line is you are just going to try to stay away from neighborhoods.

**Fisher:**

Correct, not to mention the price of land in neighborhoods is lot more expensive than non producing land.

**Dorian:**

Thank you Diane. I like this project but I think it's important that we have public hearings and that folks have a chance to ask their questions. I think questions are going to be answered.

**Sheffield:**

Any other comments.

**Marion Lasley:**

5 Dante Court, Quincy, FL; I have quite a few questions regarding this draft agreement.

**Sheffield:**

Not all of us have it and I don't think this would be the place to discuss that. Maybe that should be saved for the County Commission. I've never seen the agreement.

**Lasley:**

The Tax Abatement issue is a pretty big concern.

**Sheffield:**

I don't think that's something that this Commission is going to have anything to say about.

**Lashley:**

Eminent Domain, they are not interested in being around neighborhoods, what about 1 house. One person's property. The original distance I think was 2 miles from substation or transmission line. Question: What if a solar farm is not directly adjacent to substation over a power line happens in between.

**Fisher:**

Once you reached about the 2 mile mark because price can get up to over a million dollar a mile in transmission lines. You start receiving long runs of transmission it becomes a financial deal breaker to the project. So adjacent, we are looking to a substation or to the lines if it's not directly on our property then we have to get easement rights, if we are crossing over anybody's property. In terms of utility the same way the utilities have their easement rights for crossing over land that's the same thing we would do if there is currently a utility easement in that area. Our goal would be to work with utilities and share that easement. Our goal is not to go out. That's why our site becomes so specific on where we get. Yes, feasibility 2 miles is kind of a deal breaker construction wise. What we want to see is on the land or adjacent to the land. Obviously, we can't own the land that the utility company is on but we can build our own substations on the land. Did I address your concerns?

**Lasley:**

I don't think you really addressed the easement right issue. I know that with utilities if they want it they can have it.

**Fisher:**

We are not like that, we don't qualify like that. We can't do that. We would have to have an easement through whomever the land owner is.

**Lasley:**

And if they didn't want to give it.

**Fisher:**

That's the part that's worked out in the due diligence and if we can't get it, if that makes that location non viable, we would not construct.

**Lasley:**

The land owner can say no and you will have to do something different.

**Fisher:**

Correct, understand are intent is to be good neighbors. We don't want people throwing rocks at our glass panels. Our mission is to build clean energy that is not adding heavy metals into the atmosphere.

Looking for the win, win we want the community to be with us. We have no problem talking to and or answering questions, but absolutely if there is somebody that flat our refuses that you can't connect the grid. Then that is a 70 million dollar, that's a catastrophe, that's 70 million dollars spent and there is no way of covering and no way of ever providing clear energy to the public.

**Sheffield:**

You don't have the same rates as a utility.

**Lasley:**

You mentioned, setting up contracts with other entities, like Seminole Electric. I appreciate Mr. Simmons on having them expand the list of buyers. So that people in the County can possibly have a reduction in their power bills. By having plenty of power available. I bet you not very many people in here use Progress Energy's power. It's mostly Seminole Electric.

**Fisher:**

Progress Energy has a very small service area. We actual connect to Progress Energy and they will power to another county. We prefer to avoid that and sell directly to the utility off takers who provides to the actual beneficiaries.

**Sheffield:**

So could you sale to Talquin Electric?

**Fisher:**

We could through Seminole. I do know they are looking for Seminole to do some of the work up here, The press release has been received very well and there are a lot of other entities in negotiation looking to set up farms in the service area.

**Simmons:**

For the record, who is Seminole Electric?

**David Gardner, Chamber of Commerce:**

They're 8 utilities, its co op that buys from Seminole and Talquin Electric is one of those. And they have their own power generating facilities and I think they buy from others.

**Sheffield:**

Where are they located?

**Gardner:**

Seminole is the mother company and the other 8 Talquin Electric type entities would buy from Seminole.

**Fisher:**

They are a lot of co ops that sell power to cities that don't have generation s resources themselves or don't have enough resources to provide, so they actually go to larger co ops and purchase power from them and sell it own down. You pay a higher rate.

**Lasley:**

Is water required for the operation?

**Fisher:**

For the actual power generation it is not, no to optimize the panel performance ideally for this region it is good to wash panels twice a year, because of the rainy season. The way we look, the process we have for washing panels, 2 people basically there full time job is to wash windows. In terms of like your household you run 9 gallons and we are nowhere near that. We are taking a tank of 500 gallons and can wash streams and streams of panels.

**Lasley:**

Do you expect to drill a well at each site?

**Fisher:**

We do expect to drill a well. We will have a maintenance facility at the site and that well will provide domestic water for that facility. When we come into an area each farm will have a maintenance facility. A certain part will have a learning research center and area that is open to the public and field trips for schools. They can come in and see how solar works, the idea is to have monitors on the walls, to see the current production and how much is being produced over the life time of the farm. If it is a fieldtrip for elementary school children, they can see the presentation and see how solar works. There is a well, not agricultural or irrigation, strictly domestic for water fountains, lavatories and kitchens.

**Lasley:**

Water is not used in any other way for electrical process.

**Fisher:**

No, there is no need.

**Lasley:**

National Solar Power has on their corporate by-laws that it can conduct any business that's legal. In agreement you mentioned that you would submit a report annually to County Commissioners on how many people you have employed to justify these abatements. You didn't mention how much money you would be paying out on an annual basis. Which I imagine would have to be correlated to the amount of the abatements you are getting. The criteria I think is a little slim. According to Florida Statutes there is a report that has to be given to the County Commissioners on some schedule, you listed annually.

**Sheffield:**

I think any questions relating to the contract between National Solar, we have no say over any of that.

**Fisher:**

It's all still being worked out.

**Lasley:**

I was just trying to answer to some answers from somebody who was answering questions. When does Hensel Phelps fiscal year end?

**Fisher:**

Our fiscal year actually ends May 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Lasley:**

You also mentioned energy credits and maybe you discussed energy credit. Also incentives, state economic incentives.

**Sheffield:**

Isn't this the sort of thing you should discuss when we get to our public meetings, instead of right now?

**Lasley:**

Is this the public hearing for the Solar Plant?

**Sheffield:**

This is just an update to meet them and see what's happening. It's not a public hearing.

**Lasley:**

Well, I'm a little concerned that things are going to happen and we aren't going to have our meetings.

**Sheffield:**

Well I think there is going to become a point and time when it's appropriate to ask all those questions. You keep referring to this contract, which we have nothing to do with. I have never seen one.

**Lasley:**

I'll be glad to give you my copy, it's pretty interesting.

**Matheny:**

Right now the sighting of any solar farm will be a special exception. That's the way it stands right now. It requires a public hearing here, public meeting in front of the County Commission, so all those concerns will be hashed out in those public hearings in great details.

**Ganus:**

Also with the Citizen's Bill of Rights.

**Matheny:**

That's right Commissioner Ganus you have to have a Citizen's Bill of Rights with each farm. The way it stands now, at some point if the County Commission decides to change they will instruct the County Administrator to instruct my department to start that process to change the Comp Plan and the Land Development Code, which would come back to you. That's how it will start. You will have full comments and in put on that and send recommendations like you do with any other projects. All the public hearing regardless of whether they want to change the Comp Plan or the Code or whether they want to keep it the same, there is going to be a round of Public Hearings for all that and plenty of public input.

***At this juncture of the meeting the Commission recessed for a 5 minute break.***

**County Planning and Community Development Department)**

Willie Brown, Principal Planner addressed the Commission he presented a brief power point presentation on the GIS/Mapping changes, updates & improvements. He explained that there is a lot of data sharing going on within the Agencies. He presented his credentials, the GIS county supported projects. He presented the GC Industrial percentages and acreage and the Gadsden County Major Industrial Land Holders and different mapping changes. In conclusion he discussed the ongoing maintenance of existing overlay data, new projects goals such as Map Gallery on the BOCC Website, Interactive on-line maps on BOCC and the Supervisor of Elections Website.

**10. STATUS/DISCUSSION/INTRODUCTION OF NEW AT-LARGE PLANNING COMMISSIONER (Anthony Matheny, GC Planning and Community Development Director)**

Mr. Matheny discussed the replacement of the At Large Commissioner – Dr. Anthony Arnold who has completed the 2 terms that he was allowed to serve. He said they have already started the replacement process of putting an ad in the paper and have received several applicants. He said a decision should be made at one the December BOCC meetings. He stated that it was by County Ordinance that the Chair of BOCC, the County Administrator and Director make a recommendation which they will do.

**11. GENERAL UPDATE OF 2010-2011 PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS – Status report of projects that have been heard from October 01, 2010 through September 30, 2011 (Anthony Matheny, GC Planning and Community Development Director)**

Mr. Matheny gave update on all the Gadsden County Planning Commission 2010-2011 Planning Commission Items.

GADSDEN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION					
2010 – 2011 PLANNING CASES					
COMP PLAN AMENDMENTS:					
CASE NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	BILL OF RIGHTS MTG	PLANNING COMMISSION	BOCC	STATUS
CPA-2011-03	Solar Farms in Ag Districts	8/23/2011	Pending Direction BOCC	No Action	No Action
CPA-2011-02	Bostick Rd LU Amendment	8/25/2011	9/15/2011	10/4/2011	Approved and sent to State for review
CPA-2011-01	Seay LU Amendment	5/3/2011	5/12/2011	6/7/2011	In effect
CPA-2010-01	Neighborhood Commercial District Policy 1.1.5(D)	n/a	4/14/2011	10/4/2011	In effect
LDR TEXT AMENDMENTS:					
LDR-2011-01	Solar Farms in Ag Districts	8/23/2011	Pending	Pending	No Action
LDR-2010-02	Neighborhood Commercial District	n/a	4/14/2011	10/4/2011	In effect
SPECIAL					

<b>EXCEPTION CASES:</b>					
SE-2011-01, SP2011-01	Bennett Shady Rest Adult Daycare	3/1/11	5/12/2011	6/7/2011	Certificate of Occupancy (CO) Issued/No Certificate of Completion (CC)
SE-2010-10, SP- 2010	New Israel Church of Jesus Christ	7/17/10	10/2010	12/7/2010	Development Order issued/No CO
<b>MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS:</b>					
EAR Based Amendments					
	Update of 8 Comp Plan Elements	n/a	December 2010	Pending	Consultants Kimley-Horn hired
	US-90 East Corridor Area Plan	n/a	“ “ “	“ “	“ “ “
	Lake Talquin/Wetumpka Area Plan	n/a	“ “ “	“ “	“ “ “
Grants					
	EPA Brownfield’s Assessment (3 year grant)	n/a	n/a	Approved 4/2009	Consultants Cardinal TBE assessment under way
	Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan	n/a	11/10/2011	Pending	Consultants Kimley-Horn hired
	EDA Infrastructure Gussies Garden Asst Living Facility	Pending	Pending	Approved 8/2011	Application to be submitted under 2011 cycle, 2 <sup>nd</sup> public hearing has been held
<b>SOURCE: Gadsden County Planning and Community Development Department</b>					

**12. DECEMBER 2011 MEETING**

**December Meeting**

Mr. Matheny discussed with the Board the possibility of not having a December 13, 2011 Regular Scheduled Meeting.

Chair Sheffield asked was there anything that needed to come before the Commission by the December 13, 2011 scheduled meeting date. She said if there was not, it was her suggestion that it be cancelled.

Mr. Matheny stated that he didn’t see anything coming in or scheduled for December.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GANUS AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER ALLEN, THE BOARD VOTED 9 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO CANCEL THE DECEMBER 15, 2011 MEETING AND RESUME AT THE FIRST OF THE YEAR, JANUARY12, 2012.**

*Commissioner Robinson had left at this juncture of the meeting.*

**John Yerkes Memorial Tree Donation**

Chair Sheffield reminded the Commissioner's of the donation for the John Yerkes Memorial Tree of \$11.00 for all who agreed to contribute.

**13. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Mike Dorian, 145 Alligator Run Road addressed the Commission concerning the Bottle Plant in Gretna concerning global warming and the possibility of wells going dry.

Mr. Matheny replied that he was not speaking of a specific location concerning the Bottle Plant.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VANLANDINGHAM AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER ALLEN, THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN AT 7:27 P.M.**

---

**Diane Sheffield, Chair**

**Attest:**

---

**Beryl H. Wood, Deputy Clerk**