Charlotte County Planning Commission
Work Session – Battery Storage & Utility-Scale Solar
September 27, 2021
Charlotte County Administration Office

| Present: | | Absent: |
|---|---|---|
| Andrew Carwile | Clark Poindexter | James Benn |
| Cornell Goldman | Eugene Wells | Kenny Howard |
| Deborah Haskins | David Watkins, II | Kerwin Kunath |
| W.V. Nichols | Kay Pierantoni* | Gladys Reid |

**Board of Supervisors Representative (non-voting)*

Guest Speaker: Joe Lerch, Director of Local Government Policy, Virginia Association of Counties

Staff in Attendance: Dan Witt, County Administrator
Monica Elder, Assistant County Administrator

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Chairman Carwile called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. Staff introduced guest speaker Joe Lerch, with the Virginia Associate of Counties and turned the meeting over to Mr. Lerch.

Mr. Lerch provided an introductory overview of battery storage facilities and addressed Commissioner concerns and questions regarding utility-scale solar. Key points included:

Battery Storage Overview

- Average project size is usually 5-8 acres, but depends upon technology used.
- Developers will be looking at where storage is needed and proximity to the grid when identifying sites.
- Sites may require and include new substations.
- Battery storage can be sited in more dense or urban locations to better serve areas with higher energy needs; however, it would depend upon project size and land availability as well as zoning.
- A report from the energy storage task force, which Mr. Lerch serves on, should be available soon.
- Virginia DEQ anticipates developing a "permit by rule" process similar to their solar facility review process by the end of 2021.
- SCC's review process may be an alternative to the DEQ review process.

Battery Storage Issues & Risk

- Batteries have a 15-20 year useful life currently and will need to be replaced.
- Disposal solutions for old batteries remains an unknown.
- First responder training is a must due to associated fire hazards.
- Additional information needs to be obtained regarding the potential for the release of toxins during a fire and the associated risks.

Battery Storage Project Status in Virginia

- Sussex County has approved an application.
- Halifax County has also received an application.
- APCO has a 4 MW project in place in association with a hydro project.
- Siting agreements such as those used with utility-scale solar can also be used for battery storage projects greater than 5 MW

Utility-Scale Solar

- Commissioners expressed concerns that solar was overwhelming staffing resources in rural jurisdictions and, while the goals of the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) will create significant solar development in rural areas like Southside Virginia, the state has provided few resources to assist with permitting, inspections and monitoring.
- Revenue share provides regular annual payments to the locality based on power produced by a utility-scale solar facility if the locality adopts a revenue share ordinance (which Charlotte County did.)
- An alternative to revenue share is the machinery & tools (M&T) tax. The tax formula includes use of the SCC depreciation schedule which was recently revised to reflect the longevity of solar equipment. This revision will provide increased revenue to localities collecting M&T tax on solar development.
- While the VCEA included renewable energy quotas for Dominion Energy, projects in Dominion's territory that are sold to other buyers do not count towards that quota.

Additional Issues to Consider/Research Further

- Whether battery storage provide backup power for local customers during outages
- How to address potential changes in technology that may be implemented at an approved battery storage site
- Impacts on adjacent property values
- Large-scale disposal due to damage or project failure
- Security associated with a line of credit from a limited liability company

Work session was adjourned at 11:55 AM.