

**Minutes
City of Dunnellon
Planning Commission
April 20, 2021, 5:30 p.m.**

Chairwoman D'Arville called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Members Present:

Brenda D'Arville, Lisa Sheffield, Mary Ann Hilton, John Pierpont, David Lancaster, Kathy Dunn.

Members Absent:

All present

Staff Present:

John Patterson, AICP – ECFRPC; Patrick Brackins, Assistant City Attorney; Mandy Odom, City Clerk; and Teresa Malmberg, Recording Secretary

Proof of Publication: The Agenda was posted on City's website and City Hall bulletin board on Tuesday, April 13, 2021; and modified agenda posted on website April 20, 2021.

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the February 16, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting

Ms. Malmberg announced Julie Danowski is the new transcriptionist for the Planning Commission Minutes and offered thanks to her and to Mandy Odom for making it possible.

Member Lancaster motioned to approve the February 16, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes and Vice-Chair Sheffield seconded. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The vote was 5-0.

2. Quasi-Judicial Hearing – PZ20200259 Dunnellon Farms Solar

Quasi-Judicial Hearing – PZ20200259 Solar Farm – (At the March 16, 2021 Planning Commission meeting, this application for quasi-judicial hearing was continued to date certain, 04/20/2021): Application PZ20200259 by John Taylor, representing Kingston Properties, LLC requesting a Special Exception to Construct a 75-megawatt Solar Farm at parcels 40701-000-00, SEC 01 TWP 17 RGE 18; 40713-001-00, 40714-003-00, 40715-001-00, 40716-000-00, 40717-000-00, 40719-001-00, SEC 06 TWP 17 RGE 19.

Chairwoman D'Arville closed the regular meeting and opened the Quasi-Judicial Hearing at (no time given) Attorney Brackins performed the swearing in of all persons giving testimony. Chairwoman D'Arville polled board members to disclose any ex-parte communication or conflict of interest. All members present each stating none.

John Patterson stepped to the podium and announced for the record he is the AICP Planner II, contract planner with the East Central Florida regional planning council representing the City of

Dunnellon. He made a request to the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the City Council for special exception on the 75-megawatt solar farm on portions of property totaling approximately 82 acres. It's a portion of a much larger agricultural parcel with 437 acres. He stated the conservation area is not part of the project, the property has A-1 zoning-agricultural, the applicant is John Taylor, represented by Kimley-Horn, the location is on the south end of Bridges Road adjacent to the Withlacoochie River.

Mr. Patterson presented a zoning map and described areas that were agricultural, preserved and public. He discussed the initial concerns due to the narrow road, residential access and ball field access but that they were worked through. It is a state-owned road and the applicant is working with the State and the County regarding traffic conditions, during construction. After construction, there should be no additional traffic issues. The farm should not cause a substantial depreciation of property values. Applicant moved the projected location of the fencing and solar panels out of the river corridor protection area. It was found the Army Corps of Engineer has no jurisdiction on the wetlands on the property. The Southwest Florida Water Management didn't have a problem with it. Applicant is working on an environmental resource permit through SFWMD and would have to be approved before a site plan comes through.

Staff is recommending approval to the special exception subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Applicant will be required to work with the State to mitigate any damage to Bridges Road or impacts to nearby residential properties in a timely manner. And the same with the County at the intersection of Bridges Road and CR484.
- 2) They will be responsible for coordinating with the County and State in paying for improvements needed for Bridges Road and or the intersection at CR484 subject to the project.
- 3) Applicant will cooperate with the County and State regarding any traffic control measures deemed necessary
- 4) At the time of development review certification will be posted to ensure timely removal of equipment if the project ceases operations.
- 5) A screen should be kept up perpetually along all wetlands within 50' of the development. As defined by the forest statues including but not limited to the gravel pathways.
- 6) Applicant should comply with section 74-66A-J of the City's code and state statutes regarding tree removal.
- 7) They must go along with any state and federal permitting and other regulations that apply to solar farms.

Mr. Patterson then answered questions. Questions related to location, explanation of what the special exception is and proportions of undeveloped vs developed area. Mr. Taylor stepped forward to answer the last section of questions and said there is about 1000 acres total between Marion County and the City of Dunnellon and they are using approximately 400 acres total.

The applicant John Taylor with Renewable Management Services, 1160 Island Rd, Riviera Beach came forward and thanked the Board for allowing him to come speak. He said this location was chosen because of the capacity availability on the grid. Florida is the 3rd largest state to provide Solar and there are approximately 20 projects under construction. When they presented the project two-years ago they took into consideration the needs of the state and the community and strived to limit the impact to the area as much as possible. Even though they have 1100 acres they chose to only utilize 400 so they would not overlap any wetlands and avoid impact to any environmental or threatened species. The State Historical Society said there are no impacts to the historical value of the area. 2/3rds of the project falls in the County and 1/3 in the city. They have an approved special use permit already at the County level. They have agreed to donate 20 acres to the Florida Greenways program. They have been working with DEP and Greenways

to create a 55' bike trail that will join the existing bike trails. Another benefit to the community is the tax revenue that will be generated and it is projected to be hundreds of thousands of dollars annually for the County and the City. The project will go out as far as 30 years with an option to extend 15 more. Lastly it is generating clean energy for the community and will power 15,000 homes. The power generated in minimally invasive, modules are low to the ground, quiet and made from silicate which is extracted from sand providing no negative impact to the environment. They are encased in glass and the racking system is pile driven into the earth meaning no cement is used. It is their obligation to return the land to its original condition after the life cycle is complete. It will take between 9 and 12 months to build. 6 months will create traffic issues. Once operational, the level of traffic would equate to a residential household. Anticipate starting construction the first of the year. He then answered various council questions, regarding herbicides, substation utilization, holes in the fencing to allow animals to pass through, wildlife impacts, relocating tortoises, wind speeds (max 125mph), storms, pre-road prep for heavy equipment, battery storage, wiring and inverters.

Chairwoman D'Arville closed the Quasi-Judicial Hearing and opened the Regular Hearing at 6:22 p.m.

3. Resolution – RES2021-03 Application PZ20200259 Dunnellon Farms Solar

RESOLUTION - 2021-03 Application PZ20200259 Dunnellon Farms Solar

RESOLUTION - RES2021-03 Application PZ20200259 Dunnellon Farms Solar
Resolution #RES2021-03 finding of consistency and forwarding a recommendation of approval / approval with conditions / disapproval to City Council for consideration

Kathy Dunn moved Resolution #RES2021-03 be ready by title only and David Lancaster seconded. Vote passed 5-0

Chairwoman D'Arville read:

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF DUNNELLON, FLORIDA, MAKING RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL TO GRANT APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO ALLOWA 75-MEGAWAT (MW) SOLAR FARM ON PORTIONS OF PROPERTIES TOTALING ±82 ACRES (TOTAL PARCELS 437 ACRES) WITH AGRICULTURAL (A-1) ZONING AND AGRICULTURE AND CONSERVATION (REMAINDER OF PARCELS) FUTURE LAND USES PURSUANT TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS OF THE CITY OF DUNNELLON, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY AND; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Chairwoman D'Arville asked if there was a motion to approve Resolution #2021-03, Member Lancaster so moved and Vice-Chair Sheffield seconded. A vote was taken and passed 5-0.

Chairwoman D'Arville asked to delay Agenda item four and move to agenda item five.

4. Comprehensive Plan Design Review & Discussion

Chairwoman D'Arville said Mr. Brackins gave some really good insight which led them to decide to start with the Mission Statement. She then asked him to provide an overview as to why the Mission Statement is so important and some of the things we need to be focusing on. Mr. Brackins said the Mission Statement simply allows the opportunity to give brief comments on what the vision for the city is and it becomes part of the comprehensive plan. It is a clear way to tell future entities what the city is about and what our goals are for future development and conservation.

He also said the visioning statement is a substantive change that would require the ordinance the amendment process. Discussion followed about ADA compliance and what can and cannot be put online due to this.

5. Historic District Enhancement Plan DEO Technical Assistance Grant - Staff

Ms. Malmberg said she had discussion with Ken Metcalf regarding his final report to Council. He would like to present the second deliverable at the next special joint meeting on May 6, 2021 at 4:30 PM. He pulled the Boomtown Historic District documents from the national trust. There was discussion about what the second deliverable will look like and documents the board would like to see.

6. Public Comment – None.

Attorney Brackins reminded everyone that the quasi-judicial hearing has a possibility of coming back and to be mindful of the conversations the board members have with anyone about that issue.

Member Dunn asked if the vision statement should go before the public and Attorney Brackins said that it would be a good idea to advertise and allow the public to help craft it.

7. Adjournment

There being no further comments, Chairwoman D'Arville called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Lancaster made a motion to adjourn at 6:35 p.m. Commissioner Pierpont seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote, 5-0.

Penned Signature of
Brenda D'Arville
Chairwoman

Penned Signature of
Teresa A. Malmberg
Recording Secretary