

Supervisors to hear solar appeal

By Crystal Vandegrift
The K-V Dispatch

The Lunenburg County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to hear an appeal for the proposed Red Brick Solar project at its Thursday, May 13, meeting.

The applicants for the Red Brick Solar project were dealt a blow in April when the Planning Commission tied in a vote to decide if the project was in accordance with the county's comprehensive plan.

Red Brick officials proposed to construct and operate a utility-scale solar facility located on 21 individual parcels of property. The project would place a solar photovoltaic power plant across 935 acres situated in north-central Lunenburg County, about four miles southwest of Victoria.

John Puvak of Gentry Locke Attorneys, who represents Red Brick Solar, has requested that the Lunenburg Board of Supervisors overrule the Planning Commission's action and present his client's contention that the Red Brick Project is in substantial accord with the county's comprehensive plan.

"Our team is confident that the Red Brick Solar project is substantially in accord with the county's comprehensive plan, which was amended in 2019 and called for the consideration of the safe development of solar energy," Natasha Montague, public engagement manager for the project, said. "In addition, consistent with the comprehensive plan, Red Brick Solar will protect and

preserve the natural resources of the community while also promoting the expansion of a diversified economy and a clean-living environment. Finally, the Red Brick Solar project will provide significant long-term revenue to the county, which is estimated to be approximately \$12.1 million over the life of the project."

According to the grounds for appeal document submitted by Gentry Locke Attorneys,

Red Brick Solar has demonstrated that the project is substantially in accord with the Lunenburg-Kenbridge-Victoria Joint Comprehensive Plan dated 2019-2024.

"The applicant has reduced the size of the project based on public and county feedback," the document states.

According to appeal documents, a staff report prepared by the Planning and Economic Development office misstated the project's important character, one of that being where the project is located.

"The staff report states that the project is located in an area of rural residential and farmland. The application property is 100% timber use," the document said.

Puvak said the first goals stated in the county's comprehensive plan relate to the economy and employment.

"This project will have a meaningful impact on the county's commercial tax base," Puvak said.

"This project will create \$197,000 in additional tax revenues/revenue share in the first year of operations

and every year over the life of the project with 10% increases in this amount every five years."

According to Puvak, this results in a \$12.1 million in cumulative county revenue of the projects' anticipated 40-year life span.

The Lunenburg Planning and Economic Development office's response to the appeal noted that the project location is not ideally suited to the property chosen and represents an undesirable land-use decision to some members of the Planning Commission.

The Planning and Economic Development office also stated that the project did not add community value and adds little when it comes to economic development.

"The staff recommendation concluded that the proposal only added tax payments and a share of the revenue based on the amount of power produced and sold, which cannot be determined at present," the response stated.

"It does not add community value. It provides little in the way of economic development, community involvement, environmental sustainability, local infrastructure or support of local forestry and agricultural industry."

According to the Planning Commission, the projected revenue share has yet to be determined and does little for economic development.

"Tax payments are not and should not

be confused with economic development," the commission said. "Electrical power is a fungible commodity, not necessarily a catalyst for development."

According to Montague, if the BOS determines that the solar project is substantially in accord with the county's comprehensive plan, Red Brick will be submitting a conditional use permit (CUP) application to be reviewed through a public hearing process with the county Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Assuming the CUP is approved, the Red Brick Solar project will still need to obtain state-level water and environmental permits from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

CRASH: Four others injured

FROM PAGE ONE

The 17-year-old female driver from Chase City was transported to a nearby hospital for the treatment of serious injuries. She was not wearing a seat belt at the time of the accident.

A 5-year-old male was also transported to a nearby hospital for the treatment of serious injuries. He was not secured in a seat belt.

A 3-year-old male was taken to the hospital as well for treatment of minor injuries. He was not secured in a child safety seat.

A 17-year-old female passenger was wearing a seat belt and was treated at the scene for minor injuries.

None of the victims of the accident were identified by the Virginia State Police. The crash remains under investigation.

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Teresa Sandlin

MARKET: 'Is a big morale boost for many in the community'

FROM PAGE ONE

produce was good for the community.

"I believe everyone was affected one way or another by COVID-19," Puleo said. "However, for many, it was the first time they had socialized with the community outside of a grocery store or cell phone call."

Puleo said the market was able to open by taking many steps to follow all guidelines they could to make shopping a safe experience for both vendors and customers.

Though the market got off to a small start over the weekend with just three vendors, Puleo said many more vendors have signed up for the season.

The market is open each Saturday through the last weekend in

October from 8:30 a.m. to noon or until supplies last.

Those interested in

selling their goods at the Kenbridge Farmers Market may call (434) 676-2452.

Kenbridge VIRGINIA

PUBLIC HEARING

The Kenbridge Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on May 18, 2021 at 6:50 PM in the Conference Room on the first floor in the Kenbridge Community Center to hear comments on sewer rates for town utilities. It is the intention of the Kenbridge Town Council to comply with the Americans with Disability Act. Should you need special accommodations, please contact the Town Office at 434.676.2452 prior to the meeting.

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