

**SPECIAL CALLED WORK SESSION MEETING
BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2024
9:00 A.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, Ronnie Gaskins, called the regular session meeting of the Berrien County Board of Commissioners to order on Thursday, June 13, 2024, at 9:13 a.m. Members of the Board of Commissioners present were Commissioners Robert Griner, John Nugent, Pixie Harrod and Jimmy Parker.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. SOLAR ORDINANCE – Chairman Gaskins stated that the purpose for this meeting is for the Board of Commissioners to work out the details to the solar ordinance and see if we can get it suitable for all citizens. He stated to please refrain from commenting unless called upon. Chairman Gaskins stated that on Page 2 of the ordinance item 7 under definitions feels like it can be deleted completely. The board was in agreement. Another item for discussion is Page 3, Definitions item 18 in reference to the 75 acres. Commissioner Nugent asked if the bond requirements in the ordinance reflect what the state requirements are. County Attorney, Jennifer Herzog, assured the board that it will address the language to be compliant with the State requirements. Another item of topic was on page seven of the ordinance under Solar Energy Production Facilities, also known as Category 4 Solar Farms (1) Setback Requirements (A) with the ordinance reading currently of 150 feet from all property lines and/or public roads. (B) A Category 4 Solar Farm shall have a minimum Setback of 1,200 feet from any property line of a church or school structure present at the time of the application. (C) A Category 4 Solar Farm shall have a minimum Setback of 1,000 feet from the property line of any residence or residentially zoned district. There was discussions on setbacks of 300 feet, 500 feet and 650 feet. There was discussion about having, as an example, a 500 acre farm and would just the residential 2 acres have to comply with the setback or the who parcel. Commissioner Harrod asked about adding voluntary waivers which property owners would have to sign to not comply with the setback on their own property. Jennifer Herzog passed out handouts provided from UGA and Pinegate Renewables.

Item 18 under Definitions states the footprint of the solar system is greater than seven acres and less than or equal to 75 acres. Commissioner Harrod suggested a 1% cap of the acreage in the county which is 2,930 acres. Commissioner Nugent said he would go along with 2% which is 5,860 acres. The board is in agreement with a 2% for the County.

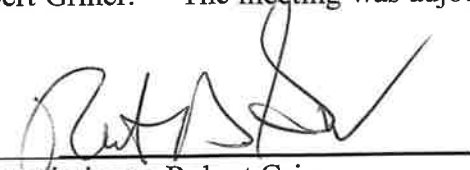
Commissioner Robert Griner stated that the planning and zoning commission also recommends that you have to apply for a special exception. After a brief discussion the consensus of the board is not in agreement with that. Commissioner Griner asked about soil testing. He stated it's not burdensome. The issue would be if it comes back bad, then what happens.

County Attorney, Jennifer Herzog stated we are not required to send changes back to the Planning Commission. She clarified changes that would be made and will start making those.

ADJOURN


With no other business to come before the Board, Commissioner Jimmy Parker made the motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m..


Chairman, Ronnie Gaskins


Commissioner, Robert Griner


Commissioner, Pixie Harrod


Commissioner, Jimmy Parker


Commissioner, John Nugent

ATTEST: 
County Clerk