



VIRGINIA SOLAR LAND USE NEWS OF NOTE

April 14, 2023

Franklin County

On Tuesday, April 11, the Planning Commission unanimously voted to reject an SUP application sought by Mountain Brook Solar, a 20 MW, 258 acre facility developed by Energix. The Planning Commission suggested it would be a detriment to the community. This recommendation to deny will go on to the Board of Supervisors for a final vote on May 16. [Read more here.](#)

Halifax County

Longroad Energy's 108 MW, 1,479 acre Foxhound Solar project is to be acquired by Dominion Energy. Foxhound is Longroad's first solar project in Virginia. The acquisition is expected to close upon completion of the project, which is anticipated in January 2024. [Read more here.](#)

James City County

On April 11, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to halt new utility scale solar projects, pending a new policy developed by the Board and staff. The Supervisors cited a need to clarify where solar projects fit in the County's overall land use plan. The County staff will develop a plan for the "necessary scope of work" by July, and the Supervisors plan to hire a consultant to help write a policy, which the Supervisors hope to see in place by December. [Read more here.](#)

Montgomery County

Pivot Energy has withdrawn its SUP application to build Kumis Solar, a 5 MW, 30 acre facility. The Board of Supervisors was scheduled to make a decision on the SUP on Monday, April 10. Pivot Energy's director of project development, Buzz Becker, said that they heard from public commenters that they would feel more comfortable evaluating the project after solar is contemplated in the Comprehensive Plan. It is expected that the Board will soon direct staff to initiate a working group to evaluate an amendment to the existing Solar Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan. That same night, the Board of Supervisors sent a resolution to its Planning staff asking them to study and seek public input on large scale solar energy systems. [Read more here.](#)

Madison County

The Planning Department has conducted a series of meetings this week to get input from local residents on a new large-scale Solar Ordinance. The Department hopes to present the draft Solar Ordinance to the Planning Commission in July and have it adopted by the end of the year. Residents have raised concerns about the potential impact on farming and long-term environmental consequences. [Read more here.](#)



Shenandoah County

The Planning Commission unanimously approved a draft of a Solar Ordinance at its meeting on April 5. The approved version did not include the aggregate county cap of 900 acres and individual project cap of 50 acres that were in the circulated draft. The Board of Supervisors will vote on adopting the Solar Ordinance on April 25. [Read more here.](#)

Smyth County

The Board of Supervisors passed a Solar Ordinance on Thursday, April 13. The vote followed a joint public hearing with the Planning Commission on March 23. It includes a \$1,400 per MW revenue share and a required bond for decommissioning. An estimated 14-16 projects are exploring land acquisition in the County. [Read more here.](#)

City of Staunton

Oikos, a Richmond based contractor, has submitted an SUP for Staunton Solar, a 95 acre solar facility that would include a 60 acre, 15.75 MW utility scale installation, and a 30 acre, 5 MW community-scale installation. The proposal will go before the Planning Commission on April 20. [Read more here.](#)

Surry County

The Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the County's 2040 Comprehensive Plan that limits utility scale solar projects to 10% of the County's developable land and sets an acreage cap of 15,278 (not counting water and wetlands). Currently, 9,263 acres are already taken up by existing or approved projects. The policy passed 4-0 with Supervisor Calhoun abstaining from the vote due to his employment with Dominion. [Read more here.](#)