



# Franklin County Communique to the Planning Board

## REQUEST FOR UDO AMENDMENTS 17-UDO-01

### STAFF ANALYSIS

#### 17-UDO-01

#### Staff Discussion

After discussions with Franklin County Economic Development, Planning Staff is proposing an amendment to the UDO, requiring a Special Use Permit for solar farms within the Light Industrial (LI) and Heavy Industrial (HI) zoning districts. Special Use Permits require a public hearing. The hearing process determines whether a solar farm would be the best use of parcels within these districts. The amendment is intended to protect the limited number of industrial-zoned parcels within the County. These parcels are located along major thoroughfares, specifically US 1 HWY and NC 56 HWY. In addition, the County has made significant investments in water and sewer infrastructure in the affected areas to encourage industrial development.

#### Section 2-1: Word Interpretation

(340) Solar Energy Farms. A facility used to convert solar energy into electrical power for interconnection with the power grid for primarily off-site energy consumption.

#### Section 6-1: Table of Permitted Uses

PERMITTED USES	AR	R-1	R-8	R-15	R-30	R-40	R-80	PUD***	NB	RB	HB	TND	MU	O/I	CON-D	LI**	HI**	GB
Solar Energy Farms	S	S	S	S	S	S	S									<u>XS</u>	<u>XS</u>	

#### Section 6-2: Notes to the Table of Permitted Uses

#### Note 16. Solar Energy Farms.

- (1) A Special Use Permit is required as outlined in Article 9 (Special Uses) for Solar Energy Farms locating in the following zoning districts: AR, R-1, R-8, R-15, R-30, R-40, ~~and R-80~~, LI, and HI.
- (2) Structures shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height, as measured from the finished grade at the base of the structure to its highest point.
- (3) Solar farm facilities and structures shall conform to the principal building setbacks of the underlying zoning district which they are located.
- (4) Solar farm facilities shall be enclosed by a six (6) foot high fence.

- (5) Solar farm facilities shall not create a visual safety hazard for passing motorist.
- (6) Lighting. Lighting shall be such that it is not directed onto any adjacent properties or right of ways.
- (7) Screening. Shall conform to Article 14, Landscape Requirements and Section 8-1 Notes to the Table of Area Height and Yard Requirements Note 6. Buffer Strips. Landscaping shall be a minimum of six (6) feet tall at time of planting.
- (8) Minimum lot area. Minimum lot area shall be the same are required by the underlying zoning district.
- (9) Parking. There must be an area designated outside of DOT right-of-way to accommodate a minimum of three maintenance vehicles.
- (10) Solar farm facilities shall be removed, at the owner's expense within one hundred eighty (180) days of a determination by the Administrator that the facility is no longer being maintained in an operable state of good repair. Financial assurance may be required of the applicant to provide for the removal of solar facilities.

#### **PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING BOARD**

Recommend approval of the requested UDO amendments as noted above.